



Don't Let Your Dog Do Time: The Hawaii Pet Move Mistake That Costs \$1,000+ and 120 Days

A single paperwork mistake can mean **up to 120 days of quarantine** and a bill north of **\$1,000** — versus walking your dog out of the airport the *same day* for under \$200.

This isn't a fine. It's your dog sitting in a facility for four months while you settle into a new home without them. There's a right way to do this where your pet skips quarantine entirely. We'll walk you through it step by step.

What's Your Next Step?

Get the Full Guide

Everything you need to know about moving to hawaii with a dog — in one place.

[Link to Youtube Description]

Book a Meeting with the Experts

Talk directly with someone who knows Hawaii real estate and can help you plan your move.

[Link in Youtube Description]

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Why Hawaii Is Different



The 3 Doors Your Pet Walks Through

Hawaii is the only U.S. state with mandatory pet quarantine laws — it's one of the only **rabies-free** places on Earth. Every dog or cat entering the state goes through one of three "doors."

✓ Direct Airport Release

Pet goes home from the airport, same day, no quarantine.

~\$185 · A few hours

⚠ 5 Day Or Less

Short stay at the quarantine station while minor issues are sorted.

\$244 · Up to 5 days

✗ 120-Day Quarantine

The nightmare. Pet held at the Halawa Valley station.

\$1,080+ · Up to 120 days

⚠ Hawaii makes **no exceptions**. No appeals, no expedited reviews. ESAs are *not* service animals under Hawaii law. No multi-pet discounts — two dogs means two full sets of fees.

Alternatives to Flying Commercial

If your pet doesn't meet commercial airline requirements — or you simply want a better experience — **pet charter transport** is a growing alternative. It comes with real advantages, but also meaningful trade-offs for Hawaii-bound travelers.

Pet Charter / Pet Planes

Main Cabin Travel

Pets ride in the **main cabin** — not the cargo hold. Far less stressful and safer than standard checked baggage handling.

Ideal for Larger Dogs

Commercial airlines cap in-cabin pets at **~20 lbs.** Charter services accommodate larger breeds that have no other safe option.

No Cargo Hold Risks

No temperature fluctuations, rough handling, or time alone in the dark. A dramatically better experience for the animal.

Premium Pricing

Expect to pay **significantly more** than a commercial ticket. The comfort and safety come at a real cost.

What to Know Before You Book

Companies like **Pet Airways** and similar pet-specific carriers operate dedicated flights staffed with pet attendants. However, Hawaii routes are not like the mainland.

- Flights to Hawaii are **infrequent** — this is not a daily or even weekly option on most carriers
- Availability is limited; popular dates book out **months in advance**
- Always verify the carrier meets Hawaii's AQS import requirements — charter does not exempt you from documentation rules
- Confirm the carrier is approved for Hawaii routes specifically before planning anything

  **Key Trade-Offs:** Limited flight schedules to Hawaii mean you **cannot count on flexible dates**. Combined with significantly higher costs than commercial options, charter transport requires early planning and a larger budget — but for large dogs or anxious animals, it may be worth every penny.

The Winning Path: Same-Day Release

Direct Airport Release isn't hard — but steps must be done in the **exact right order and within specific time windows**. Order matters more than effort. Minimum prep is **4 months**; recommend starting **6–7 months out** — labs run 1–2 months behind during peak season (May–Sept).

01

Microchip FIRST

ISO 11784/11785-compatible chip implanted *before* any rabies shot counts. This is the #1 sequencing trap.

02

Two Rabies Vaccinations

Given more than 30 days apart, both *after* the microchip, and neither expired at arrival.

03

OIE-FAVN Blood Test

Drawn by a USDA-accredited vet, sent to Kansas State, Auburn, or the DOD lab in Texas. Result must be **≥ 0.5 IU/mL**.

04

30-Day Wait

Counts from the day the **lab receives** the sample — not the draw date. The single most misunderstood rule.

05

Submit Docs + Health Certificate

AQS documents at least **10 business days before arrival**. USDA health certificate issued within **14 days of travel**.



How Dogs End Up "Doing Time"

The Top Mistakes That Trigger Quarantine

Almost nobody fails because the rules are impossible. They fail on small technicalities. Here are the greatest hits — each one is an automatic quarantine trigger.

● Microchip After Rabies Vaccine

The vaccine doesn't count — you restart the entire timeline from scratch.

● Wrong 30-Day Count

Counting from the blood draw instead of the **lab-received date** is the most common timing error.

● Microchip Mismatch or Typo

If the chip can't be scanned or doesn't match documents exactly — automatic 120-day quarantine.

● Expired Vaccine, Old Health Cert, or Late Paperwork

Rabies vaccine expired at arrival, health certificate older than 14 days, or docs submitted under 10 business days before arrival.

● Flying Direct to a Neighbor Island

Direct release only happens at **Honolulu (HNL)**. Flying to Kona, Kahului, or Lihue requires a Neighbor Island Inspection Permit (NIIP, \$165).

⊗ **2026 Enforcement Update:** Hawaii's Animal Quarantine Branch tightened document-package review starting February 2026. Incomplete paperwork that used to slide now bumps pets into the 5 Day Or Less program — or worse.

The 2026 Money Game Plan

Real Budget Breakdown Per Pet

\$265

FAVN Blood Test

\$115 lab fee (up from \$90 in 2026) + \$80–\$150 vet draw

\$300

Microchip + Vaccines

Two rabies vaccinations + microchip implant at your home vet

\$185

Airport Release Fee

Direct Airport Release fee paid to Hawaii AQS at arrival

\$950

All-In (Done Right)

Roughly \$600–\$950 per pet when everything goes to plan

 **If you blow it:** 120-day quarantine at Halawa Valley costs **\$1,080+** — plus the emotional toll of being separated from your pet for four months.

2026 airline update: Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines now cap in-cabin pets at **~20 lbs combined (pet + carrier)**. Larger dogs ship cargo only, adding cost and planning time.



Start Here: Your Action Plan

1 Call Your Vet 6–7 Months Out

Say the exact words: *"Hawaii Direct Airport Release."* Confirm the microchip goes in **first**, before any rabies vaccine.

2 Map the Calendar Backward

Work from your arrival date. Account for vaccine spacing, the 30-day lab wait, and the 10-business-day AQS submission window.

3 Bookmark the Official Checklist

Use **dab.hawaii.gov/ai/aqs** as your source of truth. Health cert within 14 days. Honolulu only for direct release — neighbor islands need NIIP (\$165).



No exceptions · No ESA exemptions · No multi-pet discounts · Labs run 1–2 months behind in summer — **start early.**



Mahalo for Watching!

Visit us at livinginhawaii.com