

# Importing animal data

RescueGroups.org provides the capability to upload a CSV animal data file to be imported into RescueGroups.org service.

A RescueGroups.org [FTP account](#) is required to upload the data file. RescueGroups.org provides an FTP account for free for every organization that requests one.

The data file must have a header row, and use only the supported values.

Each row (animal) in the CSV data file must have an externalID. The externalID should be a unique value that is used everytime that specific unique pet is uploaded to us. The externalID is used by our import system to match up the animals in your data file to the animals that have already been uploaded to our system.

Please be sure to remove all line breaks (\n, \r\n, etc) from the animal descriptions. Although line breaks are officially supported by the CSV standard, we do not support them in our data files. Either remove them entirely, or replace them with HTML <br> tags.

Be sure to remove all line breaks in your descriptions and other strings. Each animal should take one and only row in the data file.

Pictures can be handled in one of two ways -- either by uploading the image files to our FTP server or by providing an Internet address (URL) where our system can download the picture. Either way you should provide the image file name or image URL in the picture fields in the data file.

To delete an animal, simply do not include that animal in future data files. The animal will automatically be deleted. This is done by tracking each animal's externalID, which must be unique for each animal.

To import an animal data file, be sure to do the following:

1. Enable your organization's FTP account. See the [FTP section](#) of this User Guide.
2. Create an [Import Account](#) by going to Animals > Imports.
3. Create your data file with a header row and values described on the [Data Format](#) page.
4. Upload the data file and pictures to your FTP account. See the [Upload page](#) for more information.

The RescueGroups.org animal data import runs about once an hour. Pictures are processed shortly after the data is imported. The entire process can take up to two hours.