

Adopt-a-Pet.com

AutoUploading Software Documentation for Shelters

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Introduction

This document provides initial documentation for using the AutoUploading feature of Adopt-a-Pet.com. It is a technical document intended for use by the person(s) who will coordinate the generation of the pet data export and the configuration of related importing processes on our site. This document is subject to change. Any suggestions or questions are welcome and can be sent to helpdesk@adoptapet.com.

AutoUploading Process Overview

Here's how AutoUploading works:

1. Your shelter management software generates pet data export as a comma-delimited file
2. The Pet data export file, import configuration file (explained below), and any related pet photos are transferred via FTP to the Adopt-a-Pet.com servers.
3. Assuming there are no problems with the pet data and configuration, the Adopt-a-Pet.com AutoUploading software takes care of importing the pet data onto the site.

The Pet Data Export File

The Pet Data Export file is a comma-delimited file generated by your shelter management software that contains all of the information about your pets available for adoption that you want to appear on the Adopt-a-Pet.com website and partner sites.

The file should be a list of pet data records, one record per line, using the standard CSV format. Most shelter software programs can generate this format by default, but you may need to work with your software vendor to create a custom export.

Make sure that somewhere in your pet export, you have a unique identifier code for each pet. Most shelter software will have this identifier built in, usually in the form of a number. You can use the Pet name as an identifier, but it will need to be present in the export file twice (once as the unique identifier, and once for the actual pet name), and you are responsible for insuring that the pet names are unique across all pets.

Your CSV file may or may not have a header line on the first line of the file, listing the field names for the export. You can use the "Shelter Zone" interface on our site to tell the AutoUploading software whether or not to expect this line in the data file.

If possible, try to avoid including extraneous data in your export file that will not be included on the site. While our system should ignore any fields not configured for export, reducing the amount of data included in your export can help speed up the AutoUploading process.

The data file you send to us should be named "pets.csv" when it is FTPed to our server. PLEASE NOTE: filename "pets.csv" MUST be in all lowercase letters.

The Import Configuration File

The import configuration file is what tells our system how to read the data in your import file and make it match up with the fields we use to store pet information in our database. This allows you to store and export pet information in whatever format is convenient for you.

The import configuration file should just be a plain text file named `import.cfg` (again, filename MUST be all lowercase), uploaded along with your pet data export and any photos you might have. You should only need to revise the import configuration file

until it is working correctly for your setup, and then you will be able to re-use it for each import without further modification.

The import configuration file must contain mappings for at least the “Id”, “Animal”, and “Breed” fields that we use on the Adopt-a-Pet.com site. However, the more fields you can provide, the better the site can do in showing your pets to potential adopters. More information about fields available for mapping is below.

Import Configuration File Details

This section describes the detailed formatting and content requirements for the import configuration file. As noted above, this file should be a plain text file named:

```
import.cfg.
```

Comments

All lines beginning with a semicolon will be treated as comments and disregarded by our configuration file parser. All blank lines will be ignored by our configuration file parser.

Field Assignments

Each line beginning with a pound sign is a field assignment line. These lines should be in the format:

```
#3:shelterfieldname=adoptapet-fieldname
```

- The **number** is the position in the CSV record line of the field being described here, e.g. column #1, column #2, and so on
- The **label after the colon** is the name your shelter uses for this field.
- The **label after the equal sign** is the name our software uses for the field, which you must make sure to match. See the list of possible fields below.

You don’t have to have a field assignment line for every field/column in the CSV file – in fact, you’ll probably have fields you want us to ignore.

Mapping Data

All of the information between two field assignment lines, or a field assignment line and the end of the file, is considered mapping data for the possible values of that field, in the form:

```
sheltervalue=adoptapet-value
```

where the **left label** is the CSV data file’s version, and the **right label** is the Adopt-a-Pet.com translated value for use in AutoUploading.

If no value mapping for a given field is present, then we will assume that you are using the same values that we are for that field. You can also specify only partial mappings,

e.g. if you use “Tiny”, “Medium”, “Large” and we use “Small”, “Medium”, “Large”, you would only need a mapping for “Tiny” to “Small” – “Medium” and “Large” would be accepted without mapping.

Field Names Common to All Animals

These are the possible field names you can define in your import mapping file that are common to all types of animals. The only three required fields are “**Id**” (your internal unique id for the pet), “**Animal**” (what kind of animal it is) and “**Breed**” (the primary breed of the animal, not required for Rabbits), although inclusion of as many fields as possible is strongly encouraged.

All field names must be mapped, even if your field name is exactly the same as our field name.

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Id	Plain text, 50 chars max	<i>Required, values must be unique across all animals.</i>
Animal	Dog Cat Rabbit Small Animal Bird Horse Reptile Farm Animal	<i>Required.</i>
Breed	See spreadsheet of breed names	<i>Required except for Rabbits.</i>
Name	Plain text, 100 chars max	
Age	See acceptable ages for each animal type below	
Sex	M F	
Description	Plain text, 51,200 chars max	<i>See accepted HTML below.</i>
Status	Available Adopted Deleted Hidden	<i>Adopted - it is not recommended to upload adopted pets. If uploading adopted pets, please do not upload more than 100.</i> <i>Deleted - pets marked “Deleted” will be removed from the site.</i>
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWCats	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWDogs	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
SpecialNeeds	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
NeedsExperiencedAdopter	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
SpecialDietaryNeeds	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
PhotoURL	Website address, 256 chars max	<i>See notes on pet photos.</i>
PhotoURL2	Website address, 256 chars max	<i>See notes on pet photos.</i>

PhotoURL3	Website address, 256 chars max	<i>See notes on pet photos.</i>
PhotoURL4	Website address, 256 chars max	<i>See notes on pet photos.</i>
YouTubeVideoURL	Website address, 256 chars max	

Accepted Description HTML Tags:

Text & Formatting:

- `<p>` `<br>`
- `<strong>` `<em>`
- `<blockquote>`
- `<pre>` `<code>`

Lists:

- `<ul>` `<ol>` `<li>`

Headings (Restricted) - used only for sectioning within descriptions:

- `<h2>` `<h3>` `<h4>`

Headings Restrictions:

- `<h1>` is not allowed (page-level heading already exists)
- Headings should not be used for visual styling
- Excessive heading depth is discouraged

Links (Optional & Restricted):

- `<a>`

Links Rules:

- Allowed protocols: http, https, mailto
- `rel="nofollow noopener noreferrer"` is enforced
- `target="_blank"` is enforced
- JavaScript and data URLs are stripped

In addition to these common fields, each type of Animal has its own additional acceptable fields:

Dog Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Breed2	See spreadsheet of breed names.	<i>See note below about "Mix" value.</i>
Size	S M L XL	<i>You can also map numeric weights to one of these four sizes (see "Using Numeric Size Ranges" below).</i>
Age	Puppy Young Adult Senior	<i>We will also accept "Baby" as a substitute for "Puppy".</i>
AdoptionFee	Whole number, no decimals or currency indicators	<i>50 not \$50, \$50.00 or CDN\$50.</i>
BirthDate	mm/dd/yyyy	<i>Exact birth date if known. Will show exact current age (Years and Months) on the site.</i>
NeedsFoster	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	<i>Will cause needs foster banner to display under pet photos.</i>
Color	See spreadsheet of color names.	
Purebred	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWCats	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWDogs	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
SizeCurrent	Whole number only, no decimals	<i>Estimated or exact weight in pounds or kilograms.</i>
SizeUOM	Unit of Measurement as lb or kg	<i>Plural also acceptable, as lbs or kgs.</i>
SpayedNeutered	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
ShotsCurrent	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
CrateTrained	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
HeartwormNegative	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
HeartwormPositive	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
LeashTrained	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

To accommodate some shelter software programs, we allow the value of "Mix" to appear as a secondary dog breed (Breed2 field) in the `pets.csv` file, although this data is discarded since it doesn't correspond to any specific breed. The recommended way to note a mix is to set the "Purebred" field to "No" (or "0"). You cannot map to the Mix breed in your `import.cfg` file. You can map a primary dog breed (Breed field) in your `import.cfg` to any of the following values:

Mixed Breed (Large)
Mixed Breed (Medium)
Mixed Breed (Small)

Cat Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Age	Kitten Young Adult Senior	<i>We will also accept “Baby” as a substitute for “Kitten”.</i>
HairLength	Short Medium Long	
Color	See spreadsheet of color names.	
AdoptionFee	Whole number, no decimals or currency indicators	<i>50 not \$50, \$50.00 or CDN\$50.</i>
BirthDate	mm/dd/yyyy	<i>Exact birth date if known.</i>
NeedsFoster	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	<i>Will cause needs foster banner to display under pet photos.</i>
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWCats	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWDogs	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
SizeCurrent	Whole number only, no decimals	<i>Estimated or exact weight in pounds or kilograms.</i>
SizeUOM	Unit of Measurement as lb or kg	<i>Plural also acceptable, as lbs or kgs.</i>
SpayedNeutered	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
ShotsCurrent	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
Housetrained	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
Declawed	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
IndoorOnly	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
FIV+	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

Rabbit Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Age	Young Adult Senior	
Size	S M L	
HairLength	Short Long	
Color	See spreadsheet of color names	
Color2	See spreadsheet of color names	
Purebred	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
SpayedNeutered	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
Housetrained	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
Declawed	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

Small Animal Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Age	Baby Young Adult Senior	
Size	S M L	
HairLength	Hairless Short Medium Long	
Color	See spreadsheet of color names	
Color2	See spreadsheet of color names	
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWSmallAnimals	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
Housetrained	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

Bird Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Age	Baby Young Adult Senior	
Size	S M L	
Color	See spreadsheet of color names	
Color2	See spreadsheet of color names	
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWBirds	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

Horse Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Breed2	See spreadsheet of breed names	
Size	S M L	<i>You can also map numeric weights to one of these three sizes (see “Using Numeric Size Ranges” below).</i>
Age	Baby Young Adult Senior	
Color	See spreadsheet of color names	
Purebred	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
SpayedNeutered	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	<i>Used for Gelded.</i>
ShotsCurrent	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	
Rideable	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

Reptile Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Age	Baby Young Adult Senior	
Size	S M L	
GoodWKids	Y or N (or, 1 or 0)	

Farm Animal Fields

Field Name	Acceptable Values	Notes
Age	Baby Young Adult Senior	
Size	S M L	

Example Import Configuration File

Below is an example of what an import configuration file might look like:

```
; My mapping file
#1:internal_pet_id=Id
#2:name=Name
#3:type=Animal
#4:breed=Breed
Poodle=Poodle (Standard)
#5:age=Age
Adult=Senior
#6:status=Status
In-House=Available
Homestay=Available
N/A=IGNORE
#7:color=Color
Calico=Calico or Dilute Calico
#8:size=Size
Small=S
Medium=M
#9:Notes=Description
#10:Misc=Description
; End of mapping file
```

If you need assistance creating your import configuration file, please let us know and we'll be happy to help.

Other Field Mapping Notes

Including Additional Unmapped Field Values

Note that multiple shelter fields may be mapped to the “Description” field, in which case the values will be concatenated together into the resulting information displayed on the site. This could be useful in putting several different fields you maintain in your shelter software onto the site where there is no other acceptable “mapping” for them.

Excluding Specific Field Values

In some cases, you may have fields that contain values that are not applicable or otherwise un-mappable in our system. In these circumstances, the best solution is to have the AutoUploading system ignore the inapplicable value while leaving the other fields intact, thereby still allowing the pet to be uploaded. This can be achieved by using the special IGNORE keyword on the right-hand side of a field mapping. Here's an example of how this would work in your `import.cfg` file:

```
#7:color=Color
Hairless=IGNORE
```

If your data file contains any pets with a color of “Hairless”, the software would see how you mapped that to the IGNORE directive in your `import.cfg` file. As a result, all of

your pets with a color of “Hairless” would still be uploaded, but without any color data. Note that because it results in the removal of data for a particular field, the `IGNORE` directive may **not** be used with the required “Id”, “Animal”, and “Breed” fields.

If cases arise where you need to avoid mapping data for a required field (in which case `IGNORE` cannot be used) or if you need to prevent certain pets from being uploaded, you may use the special `SKIP` directive. Here's an example of how the `SKIP` directive can be used in your `import.cfg` file:

```
#4:breed=Breed
Coyote=SKIP
```

If your data file contains any animals with a breed of “Coyote”, the `SKIP` directive in your `import.cfg` file will prevent any such animals from being uploaded to our system. Please note: `IGNORE` is different from `SKIP` in that the `IGNORE` directive ignores data for a particular pet field, whereas the `SKIP` directive skips processing for a pet altogether. Also unlike the `IGNORE` directive, the `SKIP` directive may **only** be used with the required “Id”, “Animal”, and “Breed” fields.

Mapping Identical Field Values to Different Animals

If your pet data uses the same field values for multiple animals, you will need to use a special mapping syntax so our system can tell which animal type you're trying to map with each value. This will primarily happen with Color and Breed. This syntax involves using a special animal-specific field name on the right-hand side of your field mapping.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| • DogColor | • RabbitSize |
| • CatColor | • ReptileSize |
| • RabbitColor | |
| • SmallAnimalColor | • DogBreed |
| • BirdColor | • CatBreed |
| • HorseColor | • RabbitBreed |
| | • SmallAnimalBreed |
| • RabbitColor2 | • BirdBreed |
| • BirdColor2 | • HorseBreed |
| • SmallAnimalColor2 | • ReptileBreed |
| | • FarmAnimalBreed |
| • DogSize | |
| • BirdSize | • DogBreed2 |
| • FarmAnimalSize | • HorseBreed2 |
| • HorseSize | |

This will signify that the color mappings in that section are meant to correspond to the animal type mentioned in the field mapping. Here's an example of how this would work in your `import.cfg` file for a color mapping:

```
#7:color=DogColor
Brown=Brown/Chocolate
#7:color=CatColor
Brown=Brown Tabby
```

In this case, if your data contains a color `Brown` that applies to both dogs and cats, the mappings above will allow you to correctly translate this color to two different species-specific colors (namely, `Brown/Chocolate` for dogs and `Brown Tabby` for cats) in our system.

Note that you do not have to use these additional fields if you don't have any field value conflicts. The “Color,” “Color2,” “Size,” “Breed”, and “Breed2” fields will still work fine, but need to come *before* any animal-specific names listed above. For example:

```
#7:color=Color
Brown=Black
#7:color=DogColor
Brown=Brown/Chocolate
#7:color=CatColor
Brown=Brown Tabby
```

Using Numeric Size Ranges

If you assign individual weights to pets, instead of mapping every number to a size, you can use a size range notation (a range surrounded by brackets) that allows you to specify numeric ranges so you can map an entire interval of weights to one of the allowed sizes. For example, you might use the following in your `import.cfg` file:

```
#8:size=Size
[1-19]=S
[20-59]=M
[60-99]=L
[100-250]=XL
```

Then in your data file, if one of your pets has a size value of 22, the software would recognize that the value 22 falls within the `[20-59]=M` range and the pet would therefore be imported with a size of “M”.

Notes on this feature:

- The beginning and ending points of each interval are inclusive, so there's no need to make the end point of one interval overlap with the beginning point of the next.
- Numeric ranges only work for whole numbers, not fractions or decimals. That is to say, only whole numbers are allowed as the starting and ending points of the intervals themselves, and only whole numbers that lie within the intervals will get mapped to the correct size. For example, if you have a pet in your data file with a size of say, 77.5, this weight will NOT get mapped to any size, even though it falls within the `[60-99]=L` range.
- The maximum number you can specify in a numeric range is 500. Mappings that include ranges with numbers exceeding 500 will not be processed.

Pet Photos

AutoUploading allows you to upload up to four photos for each pet in your export. The photos should be in the JPEG, GIF, or PNG format.

We provide two methods for transferring photos to the server:

- 1) You can upload photo files into a subdirectory called “photos” (directory name MUST be in all lowercase letters). The photo filename should be formatted like “A3.JPG”, where “A3” is the internal unique identifier used to identify that pet in your export file. Photos will be automatically resized for use on the site, so no need to do this before uploading them as long as they are under 25MB each.

Following the example with "A3" as your unique ID, to upload up to four photos per pet, name the photos like "A3-1.jpg", "A3-2.jpg", "A3-3.jpg" and "A3-4.jpg". Either “A3.jpg” or “A3-1.jpg” works as a way to specify the first pet photo. If your unique ID contains a "/", you may substitute "%2F" instead to make it a valid file name.

- 2) You can include data fields in the pet data export file called "PhotoURL", "PhotoURL2", "PhotoURL3" and "PhotoURL4". If the value of one of these fields for a pet is a valid website address for a valid image, we will download the image to the server automatically. You should make sure that the image is publicly accessible on that site, that it is less than 25MB in size, and that all of your pet photos can be downloaded in a reasonable amount of time without taxing your site. You can use photo extensions ".jpeg", ".jpg", ".gif" or ".png"; if no extension is given, we'll assume the photo is in the JPEG format.

Whether you are handling photos through FTP or URLs, it is required that that you always have a primary photo if you supply photos 2, 3 or 4.

NOTE: You should check with your website hosting provider to ensure that your account allows for sufficient bandwidth and connection speeds to facilitate the regular downloading of pet images. If your host does not respond to our download requests quickly enough, pet images may not be included or updated. Also, be aware that there is a limit of 25MB per photo for PhotoURL downloads. Images larger than 25MB will not be downloaded, and an error will be logged for such cases to notify you that the download failed.

Lastly, Adopt-a-Pet recommends photo dimensions of at least 1024 px tall or wide for photos to display clearly on pet listings.

FTP Uploading

The FTP server connection information will be provided to you in the Shelter Zone interface when you set up AutoUploading there, but in general, you should connect to “autoupload.adoptapet.com”.

The username and password to use will be provided to you in the Shelter Zone interface.

When you connect to the server (either manually or through an automated process), the `import.cfg` and `pets.csv` files can go directly in the “top level” directory you’ll already be in when you connect. The pet photo files should go in a subdirectory named `photos`, which you may need to create if you are connecting for the first time.

If you have deleted pets with photos from the system, make sure you remove their photo files from the remote FTP server as well, especially if there’s any chance that you’ll be re-using their unique identifiers in the future. If stored files exceed 750MB per account, you will not be able to upload any more files until some files are deleted to make room.

Testing Your AutoUpload Configuration

Once you have generated your pet export data file, generated your import configuration file, and any related photos, and uploaded them to our server, you can test out the AutoUploading feature to make sure everything will run smoothly when our server begins the import process. Simply login to your publicist account and go to the “Manage My AutoUpload Account” area. When AutoUploading is turned on for your account, you will see a button at the bottom labeled “Test Import Now”. This will run a check on your configuration and import files and give you feedback about any problems.

If you do encounter problems, simply make any needed changes, upload the updated files, and run the test again.

Note that this test will not actually make any changes to pet information on your site.

If for some reason the import fails when we try to run it automatically, we will send an e-mail to the AutoUpload contact for your shelter detailing the problems encountered.

For More Information

If at any point along the way you encounter problems or have questions, please feel free to contact us at helpdesk@adoptapet.com.

Thanks for helping us help you save pets!

Version History

- v3.11 – July 6, 2026** – Add accepted attributes (Crate Trained - dogs only, Heartworm Negative - dogs only, Heartworm Positive - dogs only, Leash Trained - dogs only, Indoor Only - cats only, FIV+ - cats only, Special Dietary Needs - all pets)
- v3.10 – February 21, 2026** – Added accepted description HTML tags
- v3.9 – January 16, 2026** – Added recommended adopted pet uploading parameters
- v3.8 – December 16, 2025** – Added recommended photo dimensions
- v3.7 – November 14, 2025** – Updated PhotoURL download limit to 25MB
- v3.6 – March 22, 2019** – Added new fields for AdoptionFee, BirthDate, NeedsFoster, SizeCurrent, and SizeUOM
- v3.5 – June 17, 2015** – Clarifying note about Deleted status; fixing inconsistent mention of photo URL limit
- v3.4 – February 25, 2014** – Documenting PhotoURL limits
- v3.3 – April 21, 2013** – Adding support for Hidden pet state
- v3.2 – July 23, 2009** – Adding documentation for SKIP directive, removing instructions regarding case sensitivity
- v3.1 – July 23, 2009** – Updated HouseTrained to be Houestrained (note case change)
- v3.0 – March 5, 2009** – Reworked for new animal types and related fields.
- v2.0 – July 21, 2008** – Added documentation for YouTubeVideoURL field, as well as support for uploading multiple photos per pet
- v1.8 – April 28, 2008** – Clarified support for JPG, GIF and PNG image formats
- v1.7 – February 15, 2008** – Updated Description field to have 51,200 character max
- v1.6 – January 10, 2008** – Added section describing how to map identical color names to different species
- v1.5 – February 16, 2007** – Added explanation of IGNORE config file directive
- v1.4 – February 7, 2007** – Misc. text updates and procedural clarifications
- v1.3 – July 17, 2006** – Added various dog breeds, cat breeds, and cat color
- v1.2 – May 1, 2006** – Breed and age updates
- v1.1 – February 17, 2006** – Added and updated dog breeds and colors
- v1.0 – September 2005** – First production version