

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

# Changes to TB Cattle Movement Controls – removal of the pre-movement testing exemption for Sole Occupancy Authorities

## Bovine TB information note 04/14

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## Introduction

Bovine TB is the most pressing animal health problem facing our cattle farmers. The crisis facing cattle farmers, their families and their communities cannot be overstated. It is a devastating disease that threatens our cattle industry and presents risks to other livestock, wildlife species such as badgers, domestic pets and humans. In line with the Government's strategy for achieving Officially Tuberculosis Free status for England by 2038, we need to develop new measures to deal effectively with the disease.

## Sole Occupancy Authorities (SOAs)

Sole Occupancy Authorities (SOAs), a concept created in 2003, permit livestock keepers to link different holdings which fall under their sole management and control. Livestock standstill rules do not apply for movements within a SOA. Similarly, until 2012 TB pre-movement testing was not required for movements of cattle between holdings in the same SOA. There is no distance limit set for holdings within the same SOA.

## Cattle herds affected by TB pre-movement testing rules in England

Cattle moved from Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) herds subject to annual TB surveillance testing must have been tested for TB with negative results within the 60 days preceding their movement.

## Changes to pre-movement testing rules for SOAs in 2012

In July 2012 we abolished the TB pre-movement testing exemption for cattle movements within SOAs which include holdings in the TB Low Risk (4-yearly testing) area and other higher TB risk (annual testing) areas of the country. However, the pre-movement testing exemption was retained for movements within SOAs in which all the holdings are situated in the High TB Risk or Edge of high TB risk areas.

## Effect of changes from 1 October 2014

On the **1<sup>st</sup> October 2014** English legislation changed such that the remaining TB testing exemption for cattle moved between holdings that are part of the same SOA has been removed. From this date the default position is that cattle moving between holdings within a SOA must be pre-movement tested.

However, to ensure that our TB controls are proportionate and consistent with planned changes to the structure of holdings in England (flowing from [the Farming Regulation Task Force's 2011 report](#)), pre-movement testing will not be required for moves between holdings within the SOA which are **within a 10 mile radius of the main holding within the SOA**. Such movements will be permitted under the terms of a general licence at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-licence-for-the-movement-of-cattle-within-sole-occupancy-authorities>. These movements will also have to meet the conditions of the general licence for the movement of cattle.

## Q&A

### How can I calculate the 10 miles?

The grid references provided to AHVLA, now known as the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), for the locations of the Place of Business for each of the holdings included in the SOA will be used to determine this. In most cases this will be the farmyard, unless the reference for an approximate central point of the fields where livestock graze has been provided.

### I operate a SOA in the annual TB testing area of England, but am not clear whether I will need to pre-movement test?

Defra has written to the SOA operators that we believe are impacted by the new rules. It will be the responsibility of cattle keepers to ensure they comply with pre-movement testing rules. Please contact APHA if you are uncertain whether you are impacted by this policy change.

### The holdings in my SOA are all within 10 miles. Do I need a licence to prove that I don't need to pre-movement test?

No - Cattle keepers will not need to apply for a licence. Defra has published a general licence at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-licence-for-the-movement-of-cattle-within-sole-occupancy-authorities> that will permit movements within certain SOAs (those that only include holdings within 10 miles of the main premises) without a pre-movement test.

This general licence is different from other licences that APHA issue to enable certain movements of cattle from/to holdings affected by TB breakdowns, etc. If you are in doubt as to whether you need a licence to move cattle, please contact your local APHA office.

## **My SOA includes one or more holdings more than 10 miles from my home farm. Will I still be able to move cattle between other holdings within the SOA without pre-movement testing?**

No - even if just one of the holdings within your SOA is beyond 10 miles you will need to pre-movement test all cattle moving between any holdings within the SOA. This is necessary so that the new testing requirement can be effectively policed by APHA. To overcome this problem, you can choose to de-register from the SOA the holding that is beyond the 10 mile limit, which would mean that you could continue to move cattle between the remaining SOA holdings without pre-movement testing (see below).

## **Some of the holdings within my SOA are further than 10 miles from my main premises, can I de-register them from the SOA?**

Yes, and if you did that you would not be required to pre-movement test cattle within the remainder of the SOA. For further information please contact your local APHA office.

## **Why is this change necessary?**

TB pre-movement testing (PrMT) rules in England require that cattle moved from herds subject to annual TB testing must be tested with negative results in the 60 days preceding the movement date. There are some exceptions to this default position. One of the few remaining pre-movement testing exemptions – movements within a SOA – represents an unacceptable risk which potentially undermines other TB controls and our ultimate goal of obtaining officially TB free status for England.

## **Why will pre-movement testing not be required for SOAs that only include holdings within 10 miles of the main farm?**

Most SOAs are made up of holdings within close proximity of the home holding. We are mainly concerned about the longer distance movement of untested cattle within the annual TB testing areas of England, as these present a significant risk of spreading TB to other herds. The 10-mile rule ensures consistency with wider CPH rules, both now (where movements of cattle within the same CPH, which can cover land within 10 miles, do not

require pre-movement testing), as well as in the future once changes flowing from the Farming Regulation Task Force's recommendations on CPHs are made.

### **Can I set up a new SOA?**

No, the moratorium on the establishment of new SOAs, which was introduced in July 2012, remains in place.

### **All of the cattle in my SOA are subject to 4-yearly surveillance testing for TB. Am I affected by this policy change?**

No. Pre-movement testing rules apply only to herds on annual surveillance testing for TB.

### **Can I use the routine surveillance TB test or other Defra funded TB test as the pre-movement test?**

Yes, provided the cattle are not under restrictions and it is completed in the 60 days before the movement taking place. Otherwise, cattle keepers will need to pay their own vet to test the animals that are going to be moved.

### **Do I need to report the movements between different parts of the SOA?**

Yes, having a SOA does not affect cattle movement reporting requirements (unlike CTS links). You must report all movements between the different holdings of a SOA. Failure to do so may result in an unsatisfactory cattle identification inspection and reduction in single farm payment.

### **The grid reference for one of the holdings in the SOA is within the boundary of 10-mile limit from the main holding but the holding contains land that is beyond 10 miles. Will I still be required to pre-movement test?**

No, you will not have to pre-movement test your cattle provided the point reference for the holding is within the 10 miles.

## **The grid reference for one of the holdings in the SOA is outside of the 10 mile limit but some of the land is within the 10 miles. Will I still be required to pre-movement test?**

Yes, as the grid reference and other land is beyond the 10 miles.

## **I need further guidance. Who should I contact?**

Please contact your local APHA office if you need further advice.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/bovine-tb-information-notes>

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