

EXPORT OF FISHERY PRODUCTS TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA - 7208EHC

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF OFFICIAL INSPECTORS AND EXPORTERS

1. ******IMPORTANT**** GENERAL PROCEDURES**

These notes provide guidance for certifying 'Official Inspectors' (including Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) in Local Authorities and Official Veterinarians, acting on behalf of Defra or a devolved administration (DA)). These notes also provide guidance for exporters.

Completion of export health certificate 7208EHC can be carried out at the place of production/processing or at another place, such as at the airport/port of export from the UK, provided that the relevant supporting evidence is available.

Production establishments must be UK food establishments approved under Regulation (EC) 853/2004 to handle fresh or processed fishery products and can include factory and freezer vessels approved by a UK Authority.

These NFG should have been issued to an Official Inspector together with export health certificate 7208EHC. The NFG should not be read as a standalone document but in conjunction with export health certificate 7208EHC. We strongly suggest that exporters should obtain full details of requirements from China, or their representatives in the UK, in advance of each consignment.

2. **SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE**

Export health certificate 7208EHC must be used **only** for the export of fishery products for human consumption to The People's Republic of China.

7208EHC may be used for the export of fishery products, including molluscs and crustaceans for human consumption, whether fresh, prepared or processed; however, 7208EHC must **NOT** be used for the export of live aquatic animals and the propagation materials thereof, whether or not for human consumption.

7208EHC may also be used for the export of composite products, i.e. products containing ingredients of plant or other animal origin, added to processed or unprocessed fishery products (such as fish pies, pastas, pizzas, etc.) for human consumption.

However, exporters are strongly advised to seek specific confirmation from the importing country, People's Republic of China, that 7208EHC is acceptable for the composite fish product to be exported.

You may wish to discuss with your importer.

For the purposes of 7208EHC:

- 'Fishery products' means all seawater and fresh-water animals (except for live bivalve molluscs, live echinoderms, live tunicates and live marine gastropods, and all mammals, reptiles or frogs), whether wild or farmed, and including all edible forms, parts and products of such animals.
- 'Fresh fishery products' are defined as unprocessed fishery products, whether whole or prepared, including products packaged under vacuum or in a modified atmosphere, that have not undergone any treatment to ensure preservation other than chilling.
- 'Prepared fishery products' means unprocessed fishery products that have undergone an operation affecting their anatomical wholeness such as gutting, heading, slicing, filleting and chopping.
- 'Processed fishery products' means processed products resulting from the processing of fishery products or from further processing of such products.
- 'Processed products' means foodstuffs resulting from the processing of unprocessed products. These products may contain ingredients that are necessary for their manufacture or to give them specific characteristics without these products becoming composite products - see 'composite products below'.

- 'Processing' means any action that substantially alters the initial product, including heating, smoking, curing, maturing, drying, marinating, extraction, extrusion, or a combination of these processes.

7208EHC must NOT be used for the export of live fishery products (such as crustaceans and molluscs).

3. CERTIFICATION BY AN OFFICIAL INSPECTOR

7208EHC may only be signed by an Official Inspector (namely, a Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO) or an Official Veterinarian (OV)*.

See also, section 5 of these notes relating to the provision of specimen signatures and stamps to China.

*An Official Veterinarian (OV) holding the OCQ(PX) qualification and designated or a food competent Officer designated on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland.

4. ELIGIBILITY OF PRODUCTION PLANTS (AND COLD STORES, IF INVOLVED) FOR EXPORT

Paragraph II. a) of 7208EHC refers.

Plants wishing to export fishery products to China must be listed by China as approved premises. This includes production plants, freezing vessels, transporting vessels, factory vessels and cold stores. The list maintained in China is based on information provided by Defra. Plants wishing to be approved for export to China must be in full compliance with UK hygiene rules.

***** IMPORTANT *** REFERENCES TO APPROVAL NUMBERS FROM 31/12/2020**

The UK has reached an agreement with China to update the details of the approval numbers of all UK establishments requiring listing with China. With effect from 00:01 on 31/12/2020 the approval/registration numbers for establishments listed to export fisheries products to China must cease to have references to "UK" or "EC". From that time, approval/registration numbers will include the central unique identifier code ONLY [five/six alpha-numerical digits for fishery products handling and processing establishments subject to local authority approval and audit].

The format of the approval/registration number including the "UK" prefix and the "EC" suffix shall continue to be used and entered in the relevant sections of 7208EHC export health certificates signed before and up to 23:59 on 30/12/2020. The format of the approval/registration number without the "UK" prefix and the "EC" suffix shall be used and entered in the relevant sections of 7208EHC export health certificates signed after 30/12/2020.

Illustrative example:

Format to be used in export health certificates SIGNED BEFORE 31/12/2020	Format to be used in export health certificates SIGNED on 31/12/2020
UK AB 123 EC	AB 123

EHCs for fish consignments intended for departure to China on or after 31/12/2020 must not be signed before that date and must include the new format approval code (see table above). Chinese customs will check the date of departure on the Cargo Manifest and will expect the approval code format to match.

THE NEW FORMAT APPLICABLE FROM 31/12/2020 MUST BE USED IN ALL DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH EXPORTS OF FISHERY PRODUCTS TO CHINA, INCLUDING INTERNAL MOVEMENT CERTIFICATES OR SUPPORT HEALTH ATTESTATIONS SIGNED FROM THAT DATE.

The Chinese authorities will expect that the details of the establishments entered onto the certificate are both correct, consistent and in accordance with their own records of approved establishments. Approval codes, and other details, should match the details as listed on the China GACC veterinary authorities' website.

A list of producers/processors registered to export fishery products to China can be found at:
<http://jckspj.customs.gov.cn/spj/zwgk75/2706880/2811812/2812040/2812041/2812897/index.html>

Applications for listing by China should be made to APHA or to DAERA:

APHA Centre for International Trade in Carlisle
Tel. 03000 200 301
E-mail: Product.Exports@APHA.gov.uk

DAERA Trade Team
Tel. 028 7744 2060
Email: vs.implementation@daera-ni.gov.uk

5. **REGISTRATION OF CERTIFYING OFFICER STAMPS WITH GACC**

Exporters and Official Inspectors should note that China requires that all Official Inspectors carrying out this export certification must provide specimen copies of their signatures and stamps to China before exports take place, and that these must be linked to the production plant. Signatures and stamps should be provided for a sufficient number of Official Inspectors, to allow for absences, such as sickness and holidays.

The Official Inspectors must submit, on Form ET133 (an electronic version of Form ET133 is available from APHA Carlisle or DAERA), a table providing full plant details, including name, address, post code and registration number, Official Inspectors' names and qualifications, Official Inspectors' stamps and Official Inspectors' signatures.

The ET133 form must be scanned and sent by e-mail to APHA Carlisle for plants in GB and to DAERA for plants in NI.

APHA and DAERA will send the information on to Defra in London for onward transmission to China. Several weeks should be allowed for this process to be completed. The Official Inspectors and exporters should note that exports may be at risk if exports commence before China has received the specimen signatures and stamps.

These signatures and stamps must be officially listed by GACC, and available to CIQs (border points of entry) **before** the FCCO can apply the (new) stamp to EHCs.

UPDATED GUIDANCE ON STAMPS FOR DESIGNATED FOOD COMPETENT CERTIFYING OFFICERS (FCCOs)

NOTE:

- ❖ Certifying Officers must use whichever stamp they have currently registered with GACC, which, in most cases, will be the LA stamp.
- ❖ They should take the opportunity to change their LA stamps to their APHA personalised stamps in a routine notification manner via form ET133 starting now. The new unique personal APHA stamp should **ONLY** be used once this stamp has been registered and updated by GACC.
- **FCCO STAMP transition procedures**
 - All Certifying Officers (FCCOs) in GB, who are certifying consignments to China, should be designated Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs);
 - The unique FCCO stamp, issued by APHA to each designated FCCO, should replace any stamps (such as the general Local Authority stamp previously used via the notification process described above).
 - It should become the **ONLY** stamp for use on APHA-supplied official certificates.

- **All Local Authorities** that had previously submitted copies of form ET133 to APHA for registration with GACC, **will need to submit new ET133s for all their relevant FCCOs to register their new stamps with China.**
 - The designated Certifying Officers must submit, on Form ET133 (an electronic version of Form ET133 is available from APHA Carlisle or DAERA), designated Certifying Officers' names, Designated Certifying Officers' stamps and Designated Certifying Officers' signatures in relation to the approved premises as required by China.
 - The ET133 form must be electronically copied in colour and sent by e-mail to APHA Carlisle for plants in GB, and to DAERA for plants in NI.
 - On receipt and quality assurance, APHA will forward the completed forms to the Policy Team in London.
 - Policy makes submissions of all submitted forms to GACC in China, once every quarter.
 - Several weeks should be allowed for this process to be completed after submission to GACC
 - The FCCOs and exporters should note that exports may be at risk if exports under new stamps commence before China has received **and published** the specimen signatures and stamps.
- **IMPORTANT GUIDANCE:**
- The information provided (name/ signature) must be **typed** and clear.
 - The specimen stamps must be fully legible and not smudged.
 - The specimen stamps must be **fully upright, printed and legible, i.e. the whole surface intended to print must make contact with the paper.**
 - The specimen stamps must be submitted/applied in any colour other than black.

6. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATE

HANDWRITTEN OR ALTERED VERSIONS OF 7208EHC ARE INVALID. Any insertions must be typed. The only permitted handwritten entry is the signature of the Official Inspector. If necessary, the final date of certification can be entered using an inked rubber stamp in any ink colour **OTHER THAN BLACK.**

Any authorised deletions that cannot be entered electronically or typed must be made using a ruler and a fine black pen. Diagonal deletions must **NOT** be used. Each line to be deleted must be ruled out providing an effect similar to that of typewritten deletions.

Certificate numbering: Each certificate will be uniquely numbered when it is issued by APHA or DAERA. Local Authority inspectors should note that they do not have to produce a separate numbering system.

Foreign text: The Official Inspector should note that the foreign text in 7208EHC is an official translation of the English text and the Official Inspector is accordingly authorised to complete the 7208EHC, even if they are unable to read and understand the meaning of the foreign text.

The Certificate should be signed and stamped with the Official Inspector's stamp in any colour **OTHER THAN BLACK.**

Once a certificate has been issued, a certified copy must be sent within 7 days of signature to APHA Carlisle or DAERA. The Official Inspector should keep a copy for his/her own records.

7. GUIDANCE ON CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

- 7.1. Export health certificate 7208EHC must be completed according to latest guidance.

Guidance for Official Veterinarians is available at:

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/certification/>

The Official Inspector may wish to seek guidance from other Official Inspectors or from APHA or DAERA (see paragraph 4 above) if they need advice on completion of certain parts of this certificate.

- 7.2. The inspection of the products for export is at the discretion of the Official Inspector based on objective evidence. When each consignment is not examined completely, the Official Inspector must be able to justify what proportion of the consignments for export are inspected, either routinely or randomly, to be able to provide certification. An audit trail should be kept in case discrepancies with any consignment are subsequently identified and, also, in case audits are required. See the paragraphs below on certification procedure for further guidance.

The Official Inspector must exercise reasonable precautions and due diligence when relying on information provided by the exporter or other third parties to ensure that the information is correct and that certification can be carried out. It is suggested that the Risk Based Fish Export Certification Guidance for exports to the EU may act as appropriate guidance in this respect.

7.3. (REMOTE) CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Completion of export health certificate 7208EHC can be carried out at the place of production/processing or at another place, such as at the airport/port of export from the UK.

If export certification is provided at a place remote from the production plant (such as an airport or port), it is the responsibility of the exporter to liaise well in advance with the certifying Official Inspectors at the port/airport to:

- a) inform the Official Inspectors of the need for such certification and the expected timings;
and
- b) ensure that all necessary documentation, **as determined by the Certifying Officer**, is provided.

Certification is based on the satisfaction of the Official Inspector that:

- The product meets the conditions of the Health Attestation in Part IV of the Export Health Certificate (See Section 8 of these Notes)
- Any supporting evidence is correct, accurate, and pertains to the product intended for export
- There are no apparent discrepancies between the consignment and the documentation accompanying it (not limited to the Export Health Certificate)

A number of checks will be relevant, to satisfy the Official Inspector of the points above.

When exporters have demonstrated consistent compliance with the export requirements, including:

- o Traceability;
- o product labelling and identification; and
- o consistency between consignments and documentation,

Official Inspectors/FCCOs may use their professional judgement to decide on/against the need for specific checks if they (do not) have reasons to consider that they are necessary.

Also see paragraph 11. below

Before certification is provided, a check should be carried out to ensure full compliance with food safety requirements. A visit for these purposes is not necessary if such checks have already been made and the Official Inspector has no reason to consider that there has been a significant change since then. It is for the Official Inspector to decide if, depending on the timing of the last inspection, an additional inspection is required. For remote certification, the Official Inspector may wish to obtain confirmation of compliance from the appropriate Authority in any format agreed between the two parties.

- 7.4. Before issuing 7208EHC to a particular company for the first time, **in all cases**, an additional full audit should be carried out on the company's traceability systems. If significant concerns are noted, 7208EHC must not be issued. Subsequent audits should be carried out based on the judgement of the Official Inspector.
- 7.5. When carrying out documentary checks, the documents with the consignment must be checked to ensure that the details of the premises of origin are correct, that those premises are UK approved, and that the documented nature of the product is consistent with the consignment. The documents should contain details of UK approval of the plant, species of the product, exporter and importer details, number of pieces and weights (gross as well as net), identification marks (e.g. batch/package numbers) and temperature of the fishery product being exported (chilled/frozen or ambient), and provide means to correlate them to the consignment.
- 7.6. The consignment details, for example, the number of boxes and weights, must be in conformity with the products specified on the documentation and labelling. This examination should include verification of the number of packages / boxes / containers. In large consignments, an estimate of the number of packages / boxes / containers in the consignment may be carried out.
- Temperature of the consignment** - Paragraph 1(d) of 7208EHC refers: The Official Inspector must check the recorded temperature on the documentation and use available information to check on the temperature of the consignment. This may include checks on the physical condition of the containers such as condensation on the outside of the boxes or the lack of fluid run-off. If containers are opened, the temperature of the consignment may be checked and recorded. Thermometers in/on the transportation container/vehicle, if present, should also be checked.
- 7.7. The packaging must be new (or clean, if re-usable), in good condition, and not broken or visibly contaminated.

Broken seals or packages are not acceptable and must trigger a thorough inspection, if observed.

Verification of the contents of packages / boxes / containers is at the Official Inspector's discretion and it is for the Official Inspector to decide whether they need to open some, any, or all, of the containers / boxes in a consignment to establish that the contents are as described on the accompanying documentation.

If any containers/boxes in a consignment are opened, this inspection must be carried out in appropriate conditions and using procedures to avoid contamination of the product.

If packaging is opened/undone during this inspection, the product should be closed/repackaged as necessary and the seal numbers amended accordingly and as necessary on the documentation.

When checks, specific for export purposes or otherwise, raise concerns that export requirements are not consistently met, Official Inspectors may refuse further certification until deficiencies are rectified, or require additional checks and/or inspections to be completed, until they are satisfied that they are no longer required.

- 7.8 **Inconsistent information:** If documentary, identity or physical checks suggest

inconsistencies between the information provided and the products for export, the Official Inspector should inform the APHA Centre for International Trade at Carlisle.

8. **PROCESSING METHOD**

Paragraph I(b) of 7208EHC refers: If certification is provided at the place of production, this paragraph can be certified from personal knowledge or by reference to information provided by the food business operator.

If certification is provided at a place remote from the place of production (such as an airport), the exporter should liaise, well in advance, with the certifying Official Inspector to ensure that this information is provided.

9. **PLACE OF ORIGIN/CATCH AREA/AQUACULTURE AREA AND CATCH VESSEL NAME**

Table II of 7208EHC refers: For each different product in a consignment, the exporter must declare whether the product was wild caught or farmed (aquacultured), the area of culture or catch, and for wild caught products, the name and number of the vessel.

Enter an 'x' in the appropriate box above the table at paragraph IIB of 7208EHC for aquacultured or wild caught products.

The place of origin is the smallest descriptor available:

- examples for seawater products: 'Loch Fyne', 'North Sea', 'English Channel', 'Irish Sea', 'Atlantic Ocean', etc.
- examples for freshwater products: 'River Test', 'Loch Tay', etc.

The Food and Agriculture Office Major Fishing Areas code must be inserted in the appropriate Catch area column (Wild Caught or Aquaculture area). See:

<http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en>

The area coding may, as far as possible, be reduced to an area as described in the FAO link.

For freshwater / inland products the catch area / aquaculture area is 'UK Inland'.

Not applicable boxes must be left blank.

10. **LABELLING**

10.1. The packaging / containers must be marked with the approval number for the production plant. The packaging / containers should be marked with the country of origin, if not already included in the establishment stamp.

10.2. Labelling must be present in line with China's requirements: (The following notes are adapted from the Chinese Regulations on Inspection and Quarantine of Entry and Exit Aquatic Products)

The products shall have on their internal and external packaging, clear and distinguishable Chinese* and English marks, which shall indicate the following matters:

- Commodity name and formal (Latin) name, specification (i.e. quantities), date of production, batch number and preservation conditions of the aquatic products;
- Production method, including: sea fishing, freshwater fishing and breeding;
- Producing area, including: fishing sea areas of the sea fishery and country or region where the freshwater fishery products come from, and the country or region where the last breeding phase of the bred products is located;
- Names and registration numbers of the production and processing plants;
- **People's Republic of China** must be indicated as the destination.

(*Regarding Chinese text/characters on labels/packaging: The Official Inspector should note that it is the responsibility of the producer/exporter

to ensure that the Chinese text/characters on the label/packaging are a correct translation of the English text/characters, even if the Official Inspector is able to read and understand the meaning of the Chinese text/characters).

11. HEALTH INFORMATION

- 11.1. Paragraphs IV. (i), (ii) and (iv) of 7208EHC may be signed on the basis of compliance with UK Regulations 853/2004 and 2017/625. In the UK, the Regulations are implemented by [The Food Safety and Hygiene \(England\) Regulations 2013 or similar in the devolved administrations](#). Compliance with the Food Hygiene Regulations can be accepted, provided the UK Identification Mark is present on the packaging of the products.

Paragraph IV. (iii) of 7208EHC may be signed on the basis of compliance with the applicable requirements in retained EU law. In respect of certifying the absence of pathogenic bacteria and harmful and foreign substances, if the certification is carried out at the production plant, the Official Inspector may certify this on the basis that the premises have approved status, combined with personal knowledge of the plant, and/or by reference to records provided by the plant operator and on the basis of the presence of the GB/UK Identification Mark. Equivalence of the UK's Regulations with the Chinese Regulations on Inspection and Quarantine of Entry and Exit of Aquatic Products can be certified on the basis that 7208EHC has been agreed with the Chinese authorities.

If the export certification is carried out at a place which is remote from the production plant, the certifying Official Inspector may certify this on the basis of the presence of the GB/UK identification mark and/or, at the discretion of the Official Inspector, by reference to records provided by the plant operator. If such records are required, where possible, the Official Inspector should request access to such records in advance. The Official Inspector should note that obtaining documentary evidence of monitoring is not a routine requirement.

- 11.2. As regards pathogenic bacteria, the presence of the UK identification mark indicates compliance with UK rules, under which an established microbiological testing programme appropriate for the product concerned must be present at the processing premises, and satisfactory results must have been maintained. If satisfactory results have not been maintained, it is the responsibility of the producer/exporter to cease exporting, until satisfactory results have again been achieved.
- 11.3. As regards harmful and foreign substances, the presence of the GB/UK identification mark indicates compliance with GB/UK rules, specifically, the Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations 1997, and a programme referred to as the National Surveillance Scheme (NSS). On this basis, it can be considered that animal products for human consumption do not contain levels exceeding the limits permitted in the GB/UK of any antibiotic/veterinary medicinal product; any beta-agonist or any substances having a thyrostatic, oestrogenic, androgenic or gestogenic action, which do not occur naturally; any pesticide; or any heavy metal, known to be harmful to human health. The NSS also covers PCBs. If satisfactory results have not been maintained, it is the responsibility of the producer/exporter to cease exporting, until satisfactory results have again been achieved.
- 11.4. The UK has specific microbiological criteria for cooked crustaceans and molluscs - Regulation No 2073/2005 on the microbiological criteria for foodstuffs refers. This Regulation is implemented in the UK by the Food Hygiene Regulations 2013. Cooked crustaceans and molluscs must comply with these Regulations.
- 11.5. In this context, the word 'quarantined' in paragraph IV.(iii) of 7208EHC, means that the products must have been kept separate from products that were not authorised to be exported to China.

12. CONTACT INFORMATION AND PRE-NOTIFICATION

If certification is to be provided at a place remote from the place of production (such as an airport), the exporter will need to liaise, well in advance, with the local Environmental Health Office for the production plant and the certifying Official Inspector at the place of certification, to inform the certifying

Official Inspector of the need for such certification, the expected timings, and to ensure that all necessary contact information and required documentation is provided by the exporter (and, if required by the certifying Official Inspector, any documentation from the local FCCO for the plant). If certification is carried out at a place remote from the plant, the documents sent with the consignment must be in a format acceptable to the certifying officer. It is suggested that documents such as microbiological records (if required) may be provided electronically.

It is the exporter's responsibility to ensure that communication with the Official Inspector occurs. If this does not take place, it is likely that the export may be delayed and the consignment may then not be exported.

13. COSTS OF EXPORT CERTIFICATION

Official Inspectors and exporters should note that charging for this export certification is a matter for them to agree on.

14. DISCLAIMER

This certificate is provided on the basis of information available at the time and may not necessarily comply fully with the requirements of the importing country. It is the exporter's responsibility to check the certificate against any relevant import permit or any advice provided by the competent authority in the importing country. If these do not match, the exporter should contact the APHA Centre for International Trade, Carlisle or DAERA, via the link or e-mail address below:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening>

DAERA - Email: vs.implementation@daera-ni.gov.uk

¹ As at 22/05/2019, we understand that 7208EHC may be used for the export of composite fishery products to China.