



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

BORDER CONTROL POST (BCP) LEAFLET



A one-stop guide to importing plants and plant products to GB via
Border Control Posts (BCPs).

KNOW YOUR RISK TO BE READY FOR CHANGE



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INTRODUCTION

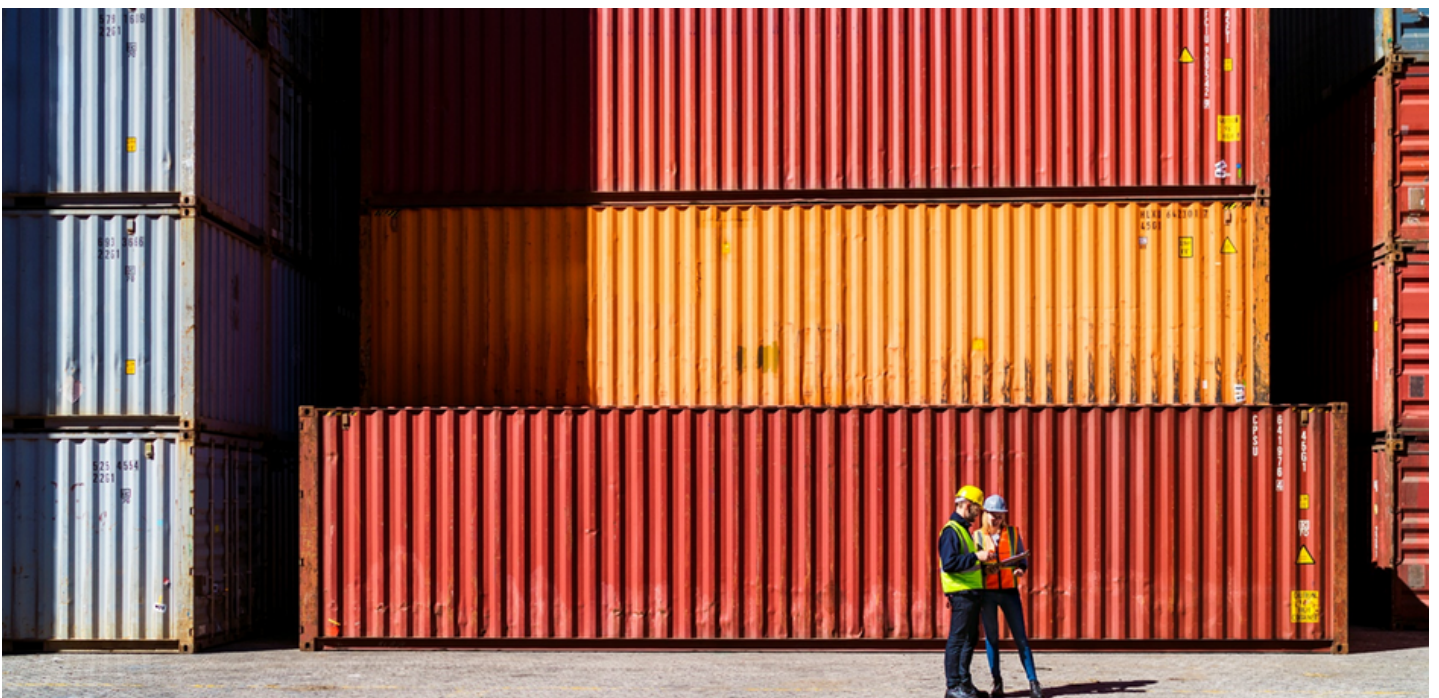
As the Place of Destination (PoD) scheme draws to a close on 30 April 2024, Border Control Posts (BCPs) will become fully operational with physical and identity checks on all regulated plants and plant products being carried out at BCPs or Control Points (CPs).

BCPs have long-since been used to manage import inspections of goods from non-EU countries and are an essential component of the UK's biosecurity regime. The personnel at these sites are experienced and knowledgeable in the field, meaning they are equipped to identify issues of non-compliance and ensure Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) goods are handled safely and with care.

£705 million is being invested in border infrastructure, staff and technology in Great Britain (GB), to ensure our border systems operate effectively and maintain efficient border flow.

The PoD scheme not only afforded flexibility to businesses as they adjusted to the new requirements following the end of the transition period, but also allowed the UK government time to thoroughly design BCP infrastructure and processes, maintaining frictionless trade, while protecting GB biosecurity.

The selection of consignments for physical checks is risk-based, so that lower risk goods receive a lower frequency of checks. GB's plant health regime is risk-based, and the history of compliance of specific trades (where the trade is the combination of a specific commodity from a specific origin), is a significant factor in determining biosecurity risk. Consequently, trades with a proven track record of compliance and meeting prescribed eligibility criteria may also be subject to a reduced frequency of checks. Reason: The change is to the frequency not to rigour with which a consignment is inspected.



WHAT IS A BCP?

A Border Control Post is an inspection post designated and approved in line with GB legislation for carrying out checks on plants and plant products arriving at the GB border. These checks are carried out to protect biosecurity.

BCPs are designed to handle high volumes of imported SPS goods and offer extended opening hours.

Staff will be working shifts on site to carry out reliable checks which minimise friction on traffic flow



Most BCPs can process multiple vehicles at the same time with ample space to remove or inspect products. Systems are in place to ensure importers are updated on the progress of their consignments through the import control process. The import IT system IPAFFS alerts the importer that an inspection is required as soon as the respective pre-notification is submitted. When pre-notification is submitted with the required notice, the inspection status of the consignment can be ascertained before the goods arrive at the border.

FEES AND CHARGES



The highest risk commodities from the rest of the world are subject to 100% documentary, identity and physical checks.

The level of identity and physical checks on other commodities is based on the risk presented by the import of different plants and goods from different origins.

This risk assessment and risk management approach also applies to goods from the EU since 1 January 2021 and consequently, high-risk items are subject to import checks to protect GB biosecurity.

For consignments eligible for reduced levels of physical checks a proportionally reduced fee is applied to every imported consignment.

Each consignment will receive a document, identity and physical inspection charge regardless of whether they are inspected.

The methodology used to calculate these fees was fully consulted on in 2017 and has not changed. Fee income is carefully monitored to ensure there is no over or under recovery and any discrepancy would normally be rectified in the following year.

Since 22 July 2022, for consignments of plants for planting and cuttings, a flat rate fee has been applied. This was applied regardless of the intended use of the goods and is in line with the previous [consultation](#) on this matter.

Further information on flat rate fees can be found via the [Plant Health Portal](#).

A 'Common User Charge' will apply to consignments that enter GB via Government-run BCPs in England and Wales, and potentially Scotland in the future. Additionally, each private BCP will charge user fees. More information will be available on this shortly.

INSPECTION SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAs)

Inspection service level agreements (SLAs) define the time in which consignments will either be inspected or released from plant health control. The SLA applies from the time APHA are presented the consignment for inspection, not when a consignment lands in GB.

APHA will aim to inspect your consignment within those four hours of being presented for a physical inspection. If APHA are unable to inspect the goods within those four hours, the goods will be released. The only exceptions are that some plants for planting will require an inspector-led decision to add extra reassurance, before being released from a BCP to ensure that the highest risk plants that are more susceptible to pests and diseases, such as woody plants for propagation, are inspected more frequently. (For reference, inspector-led decisions should be made within four hours on average).



LAB TESTING SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAs)

LABORATORY TESTING

The time taken to provide an official laboratory diagnosis varies depending on the condition of the sample and the type of organism found. Turnaround times start when a sample is received by the laboratory. Most samples are diagnosed within 24 hours. But for more complex samples the turnaround will be longer and can be up to 20 days.

Goods inspected at a BCP, which subsequently need to be held pending a laboratory diagnosis, will be required to stay at the BCP. Storage of these goods is the responsibility of the operator and for this purpose they have bio-secure storage facilities.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PEST/DISEASE IS FOUND?

The way APHA handle an incident depends on the location (seaport/airport), the person who is deemed responsible for the consignment (importer/agent/shed operator), and the nature of the problem (phytosanitary certificate issue or identification of a pest.)

The following actions may be taken when a pest is found:

- Following confirmation of a pest or prohibited product, Plant Health & Seed Inspectors (PHSIs) will take action. Depending on the type of non-compliance action will either be taken against the whole consignment or only the affected part of the consignment the outcome will be recorded on IPAFFS.
- Splitting is the separation of individual commodities within a consignment. Where the PHSI permit splitting, this will need to be arranged by or carried out by the person responsible for the load prior to customs clearance. Splitting will require the agent to resubmit the CDS and Defra's IPAFFS entries for the infested and non-infested part of the consignment. If the importer cannot arrange splitting of the application, the PHSI must take action on the whole consignment.
- The PHSI will decide on the most appropriate action taking based on the risk posed to UK biosecurity, the most common types of action taken are:
 - Re-export to the country of origin provided that country will accept return of the consignment and there is no biosecurity risk to the UK. Such requests for re-export must be made in writing.
 - Requiring the goods to be treated provided this poses no increased biosecurity to the UK
 - Destruction of the goods, this is the most common form of action.



NOTIFYING YOUR DRIVER

As the importer, it is your responsibility to inform the delivery driver if your consignment has been selected for an inspection and that they must present to the nominated BCP or CP once they arrive in GB.

As the importer (or an agent acting on your behalf), it is your legal responsibility that a consignment is presented to the nominated BCP (you specified on the pre-notification) for checks on arrival into GB. This has always been the approach for non-EU imports of plants and plant products that attend checks at BCPs.

The person who submitted the pre-notification on IPAFFS will be notified immediately on the system if they are required to route their goods to their nominated BCP for physical and identity checks.

APHA and the Scottish Government reserve the right to override the immediate risk-based decision on IPAFFS so the pre-notifier should regularly monitor the IT dashboard for any updates to the status of their goods.

The person who submitted the pre-notification must then inform the haulier or haulage company that the goods have been selected for checks and instructs them to drive to the BCP. It is the legal responsibility of the importer to route a consignment that has been selected for checks to the nominated BCP.

When submitting a pre-notification on IPAFFS, the pre-notifier will be asked to input an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) for the goods to reach their nominated BCP.

This time should be as accurate as possible, to ensure that the checks can be conducted as efficiently as possible.

Within IPAFFS - at the time of pre-notification - you can add up to five contact names and numbers who will receive a text message if your consignment is selected for inspection. We recommend that one of these contacts is for the driver or the haulage company. Two hours ahead of the inspection ready time entered in your pre-notification, you and all the named contacts will receive a reminder text message if your goods are selected for inspection.

Defra would urge importers to get in contact early with their haulage or freight company, to manage this process as efficiently as possible.

COMPENSATION

Staff are trained to handle all goods carefully and in a bio-secure manner. If destructive sampling is required, or evidence of pests /disease is found during import inspections, the importer bears the cost of the loss of the consignment and its disposal.

It has been the policy of successive governments not to pay compensation in such circumstances, as we believe that resources should be directed at the detection of pests and diseases, risk management, and research.

Experience with non-EU imports, which have been subject to systematic import checks for many years, is that instances of damaged consignments are rare.

Handling and the removal of consignments from transport vehicles is carried out by operators at BCPs.

Plant health inspectors are not responsible for removing goods and are instructed to wait until a consignment has been moved to an inspection area to carry out checks.

Where damaged is alleged to have been caused in circumstances different to those described in the previous paragraph a complaints procedure is available.

Complaints are assessed on a case-by-case basis by an independent team.

We take all such complaints very seriously and aim to resolve them in a timely manner.

Details of this process can be found on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), and will be published on the Plant Health Portal in due course.



MOVEMENT OF PARCELS

Movements of parcels from one business outside of GB to another in GB are subject to the same risk-based requirements (import notification via IPAFFS, health certification and checks, dependent on risk) as any other import of SPS goods. Parcel movements of this kind will also follow the same implementation timeline for SPS controls.



Please find below the contact details for APHA, Scottish Government and the Forestry Commission:

For plants and products inspected by APHA:



Call the dedicated imports helpdesk on **0300 100 0313** (available between 07.00 until 23.59)

or



Email the PHSI Importers helpdesk mailbox: phsi-importers@apha.gov.uk

For plants and products inspected by SASA:



Email the Horticulture & Marketing mailbox: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For wood, wood products and isolated bark inspected by the Forestry Commission:



Call the Cross Border Plant Health Service on **0300 067 515**

or



Email: plant.health@forestrycommission.gov.uk

If you or your driver has any questions about your consignment, it is important to have the following details in order to get the most up to date and accurate information:

- CHED-PP Reference
- BCP
- Export Country
- Document Reference
- Customer (Importer)
- Inspection Location

If you are an agent or importer, please ensure that your driver has all the information required in case they have a question about inspection location or timing. CIT and APHA cannot provide accurate information about consignments without those details.

For advice on the best packaging and loading practice for lorries so that checks can be carried out easily if necessary, please visit the [Plant Health Portal](#).

FURTHER RESOURCES

Further information on BCPs can be found on the following pages:



PLANT HEALTH PORTAL:

- [BCP Guidance](#)
- [BCP Video](#)



GOV.UK:

- [BCP List](#)

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CONTACT US



Email: planthealtheuexitqueries@defra.gov.uk
