



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

IMPORT NOTIFICATIONS



This guide will help you through the process of submitting your import notification. It is not a definitive guide, and you must follow the guidance on GOV UK for the type of commodity that you are importing.

KNOW YOUR RISK TO BE READY FOR CHANGE



You must notify the competent authorities in advance of a consignment arriving in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales), when it includes:

- live animals
- animal products including animal by-products and products for direct human consumption (products of animal origin)
- high risk food and feed not of animal origin
- plants and plant products

and that consignment is subject to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls.

Following the guidance on GOV UK for the commodity type you are importing will help make sure that the import process is completed successfully and avoid unnecessary contact with authorities.

Links to GOV UK guidance can be found in Section 5.

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.

Texts provided in this section guide are intended for information only - these texts have no legal value. For legal purposes please refer to the texts published in [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

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1 INTRODUCTION

When live animals or consignments of animal products for human consumption, animal by-products, high risk food and feed of non-animal origin or germinal products are imported into Great Britain (GB), the person (or business) responsible for the load when it arrives in GB will need to take action to notify the authorities in advance of the animals or products arriving. There may also be additional actions you will need to take - always check the guidance for the commodity type you are importing - the list of links to guidance is in section 5 of this leaflet.

If you or your business will be responsible for imports once they arrive in GB, this guide will help you understand import notifications.

Following the guidance on GOV UK for the commodity type you are importing will help make sure that the import process is completed successfully and avoid unnecessary contact with authorities. Links to GOV UK guidance can be found in section 5.



1.1 Animals and commodities covered by this guide

This guide will be useful to you if you are based in the UK and import:

- products of animal origin (POAO) – such as dairy products (cheese, milk, yoghurt), eggs, meat, fish and products containing these.
- composite food products – such as pizza, pies and lasagne – that are not exempt from import controls.
- regulated plants and plant products that require SPS import controls
- live animals - such as livestock (cattle, chicken, turkey, sheep, pigs, horses and more), fish or ornamental fish (not for consumption).
- germinal products – such as semen, embryos, oocytes collected or produced from breeding animals for the purpose of assisted reproduction.
- animal by-products (ABP) - such as animal manure, feathers, skin and bones, blood, fat and offal not for human consumption.
- high-risk food and feed not of animal origin (HRFNAO) – such as ground nuts, raisins and herbs from certain countries.

1.2 Import notifications for imports from the island of Ireland

Import notifications will be required from 31 January 2024 for EU consignments of animal products and some plants and plant products imported from the island of Ireland that are not Northern Ireland Qualifying Goods. This is a new requirement. Import notifications must be made in advance of the goods arriving in the UK using the [Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System \(IPAFFS\)](#). Always check the GOV UK guidance for your commodity type - links to commodity guidance are in section 5 of this leaflet.



2 WHAT IS AN IMPORT NOTIFICATION?

An import notification is a document submitted to the competent authorities by the person in Great Britain (GB) who will be responsible for a consignment when it reaches a GB port of entry.

The import notification provides the GB competent authorities with information about the consignment, including:

- Commodity information: including commodity code, description and species, weight and packing information.
- Geographical information: the country of origin, the country of consignment (exporting country), GB port of entry and destination address
- The date and estimated time of arrival at the port of entry/border control post
- Transport information: mode of travel for the consignment and identification details for the transport such as vessel name or trailer ID.
- Contact details for the consignor (person/company sending the consignment to GB), the person responsible for the consignment once it arrives in GB and the consignee (the person/company receiving the import in GB if different from the responsible person).
- Supporting documentation such as an export health certificate, commercial invoice, waybills or bill of lading etc.

Submitting an import notification to the competent authorities in Great Britain is mandatory for commodities subject to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls.

Always check the GOV UK guidance for your commodity type - links to commodity guidance are in section 5 of this leaflet.

2.1 Person responsible for the consignment

The person who will be responsible for the consignment when it reaches a GB port of entry must use the **Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS)** online system to create and submit the import notification one working day in advance of the consignment arriving in Great Britain. There is more information in section 4.

From 31 January 2024, the import notification will change from an IMP format to the Common Health Entry Document (CHED) format for EU/EFTA imports of animal products.

The person submitting the CHED import notification on IPAFFS will need to tick that they agree with a declaration that they are the person responsible for the consignment in GB and that the information in the notification is true and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief, and that they agree to comply with the official control requirements including paying any official controls charges and taking the actions required as a result of the inspection, when checks start to be applied. Check GOV UK for the latest guidance for your commodity type in section 6.

For this reason, the person responsible for the consignment will also need to have a physical UK address. EU/EFTA-based producers and exporters who are responsible for the end to end import process, for example Delivery Duty Paid, but are not UK entities and do not have a UK address, need to plan now to meet this requirement.

The CHED import notification was introduced for the commercial movement of live animals from EU/EFTA countries in November 2023.

2.2 Additional processes

There may be additional processes, such as health certification or checks and inspections, that you will need to follow for the import of specific live animals, animal products, germinal products, high risk food and feed not of animal origin, plants and plant products. Always check the page on GOV UK relevant to your commodity type for the most up to date information – check the table in section 5.

2.3 Import notifications and customs declarations

Import notifications are submitted on IPAFFS, and customs declarations are submitted on HMRC's Customs Declaration Service (CDS) or CHIEF. IPAFFS and CDS/CHIEF are separate services. You may already use a customs agent or freight forwarder to complete the customs declaration on your behalf.

The import notification reference number is included in the customs declaration, so it's useful to create the import notification first. The import notification reference number is required in a different format in the customs declaration:

- Import notification in IPAFFS: CHEDP.GB.2023.1234567
- Import notification in CDS: GBCHD2023.1234567

Whether you submit the import notification and the customs declaration yourself or use a service provider such as a freight forwarder or customs agent, make sure that both submissions have consistent information about the consignment, specifically the:

- import notification reference number
- Net weight
- Commodity (CN) code

Always check submissions made on your behalf and ask for any errors to be fixed in a timely manner.

From 31 January 2024 document code 999L will no longer be used for Customs Declaration Service (CDS) import declarations. For further information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/customs-declaration-service-cds-waiver-codes-for-imports-replacing-999l>





3 TIMEFRAME FOR MAKING AN IMPORT NOTIFICATION

The person responsible for the consignment must submit an import notification to the competent authorities **one working day** before the expected arrival of a consignment at a port of entry or border control post in Great Britain. You can submit your notification up to 30 days in advance of your consignment's arrival.

Where checks at the border are in place for specific commodities, some ports or border control posts support businesses that have logistical constraints, such as short shelf-life products, by offering a **reduced import notification** timeframe of a minimum of **4 hours** before the consignment is due to arrive.

Contact your chosen port of entry or border control post to find out if they offer this solution, which is called a **derogation**.

You may need to provide evidence of the need for a derogation.

A derogation will only be needed if checks are part of the import controls for the commodity type you are importing.

Please check the GOV UK import pages for your commodity type for more information – links are in section 6.

There is a list of border control posts at seaports and airports on [**GOV UK**](#). This is regularly updated as new BCPs become operational.



4 HOW TO MAKE AN IMPORT NOTIFICATION

4.1 Register for IPAFFS

If you don't already use **IPAFFS – the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System** – which is the UK's online import notification system, you'll need to register. You should use a UK address to register – see section 2.1 for more information.

During registration it will ask you to set up a Government Gateway account – you may already have one if you use other Defra or HMRC online services. You can then set up IPAFFS with your UK registered business information.

If you are registering on behalf of a company, the first person to register on IPAFFS will be the administrator for the company's IPAFFS account.

Register for IPAFFS:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-of-products-animals-food-and-feed-system>

The Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) **[YouTube channel](#)** has step by step videos on registering for IPAFFS and making import notifications.

The Defra Plant Health Portal has step by step guides and videos on using IPAFFS to pre-notify plants and plant product imports **[IPAFFS for Plants Guidance - UK Plant Health Information Portal \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)**

4.2 Request supporting documents for the consignment

Most of the import notification questions ask for information that can be found within Export Health Certificates (EHC), where these are required for the type of commodity you are importing. Where there is no EHC or you need additional information, check the **commercial documents** commonly created for importing consignments. These can include customs documents, commercial invoices, waybills, bill of lading, ship manifests. Check Appendix 2 for more information for low risk category products.

Requesting these documents from the exporter (consignor) before you start to create an import notification can speed up the import notification process.

You can save a partially completed import notification as a draft in IPAFFS if you need to request extra information. Remember to go back and complete and submit the import notification.

4.3 Check the commodity code (CN code) for the commodities in the consignment

Look up the commodity code (also called the Commodity Number or CN code) on the Trade Tariff tool **Trade Tariff: look up commodity codes, duty and VAT rates - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** for all commodities contained in the consignment. It may also be on the health certificate or customs documentation.

You will need the commodity code when you create the import notification and also the customs declaration – both the notification and the declaration should always have consistent information.

IPAFFS has a commodity code picker based on the commodity name, but it helps to have checked the commodity code beforehand if you are unsure.

Important: From 31 January 2024, for imports of animal products from the EU/EFTA, you will also need to know the import risk category of the commodity type. There may be additional actions you need to take if your product is high or medium risk. Guidance is available on GOV UK for **EU imports** to GB.

4.4 Create the import notification on IPAFFS

To create a notification, log in to IPAFFS and select 'Create a notification'. Select the type of import notification you need to make ie for products of animal origin.

IPAFFS will prompt you to answer a series of questions on the consignment, including:

- country of origin
- commodity code and species
- net weight
- reason for movement into GB (eg to be sold in GB, for transit)
- exporter (consignor), importer and/or consignee contact details
- place of destination and the address
- GB port of entry
- date of entry to GB
- transport details, for example vehicle registration, trailer chassis ID
- contact details (email and phone number) for those involved in the movement of the consignment, for example driver, haulier, carrier, agent etc

The full list is in the annexe to this document.

Use the information button (i) that appears on screen for each question if you need help to understand what the question is asking for.

You can save the import notification as a draft at any time. Use the Dashboard to review any remaining information required.

Important: From 31 January 2024, for imports of animal products from EU and EFTA countries, you may see an additional question asking you to select the import risk category (medium or low), depending on the commodity. Please check the guidance on risk categories on GOV UK for [EU imports](#) to GB.

4.5 Upload supporting documents

You should upload supporting documents as part of the import notification. This may include:

- Export Health Certificate signed by the official vet in the exporting country (if required)
- Import license
- Waybill or bill of lading
- Commercial invoice or other commercial documents

For more information on importing specific commodities, including documents required, use the table in section 5.

There is also a guide to export health certificates, including the use of validated PDF certificates, on GOV UK.

4.6 Review the import notification

When you have completed all the sections the import notification, you will have a chance to review the information you have provided and upload any further supporting documents.

The review stage is important so do not skip it. You must make sure that the information you have provided is correct to avoid your consignment being held at the border for additional checks.

As part of the import notification, you will be asked to indicate that you have read the declaration at the end of the notification. Read and tick the box, and then click Submit.

Important – the import notification will NOT be submitted to the competent authorities until you have manually clicked the Submit button. You must remember to click Submit.

When you submit, you will be given the opportunity to download the import notification and you will see it listed on the Dashboard section of IPAFFS.

5 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Before you import a consignment to Great Britain, check the process you will need to follow on GOV UK for the commodity you are importing:

| | |
|--|---|
| Live animals or animal products from non-EU countries | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-live-animals-or-animal-products-from-non-eu-countries |
| Live animals and germinal products from the EU to Great Britain | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-live-animals-and-germinal-products-from-the-eu-to-great-britain |
| Fish for direct human consumption and fishery products | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-or-moving-fish-to-the-uk |
| Food and drink from the EU and Northern Ireland to Great Britain. | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-or-move-food-and-drink-from-the-eu-and-northern-ireland-to-great-britain |
| Composite products from the EU and Northern Ireland to Great Britain. | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-or-move-composite-products-from-the-eu-and-northern-ireland-to-great-britain |
| Plants and plant products | https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/trade/imports/ |
| Groupage and mixed loads (animal products) | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-groupage-or-mixed-load-consignments-of-animal-products-into-great-britain-from-2024 |
| Transits and GB landbridge | https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transiting-animals-and-animal-products-through-great-britain#eu-to-great-britain-to-eu-transits |

If you need technical help with import notifications on IPAFFS:

- call the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) helpline on **0330 041 6999**
- email **APHAServiceDesk@apha.gov.uk**

If you need help to complete import notifications on IPAFFS for:

- live animals or POAO, email **imports@apha.gov.uk**
 - HRFNAO, email **imported.food@food.gov.uk**
 - plants and plant products, you can read the IPAFFS for plants guidance or email **phsi-importers@apha.gov.uk**
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THE COMMON HEALTH ENTRY DOCUMENT

IMPORT NOTIFICATION FOR ANIMAL PRODUCTS IMPORTED FROM THE EU/EFTA

An indicative list of import notification questions (fields) for the Common Health Entry Document (CHED) Part 1 for animal products **from 31 January 2024**

| Topic | Field | Notes |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Creating the right CHED for your consignment | What are you importing? | Choose from: Live animals; Products of animal origin; High risk food and feed of non-animal origin; Plants, plant products and other objects. |
| Geographical information | Country of origin | Country of origin of the commodity in the consignment |
| | Country of consignment/ dispatch | Country that the consignment was exported from |
| | Region of origin | Yes/No - answer yes for animals or products affected by regionalisation measures. Information may be given on the EHC (where an EHC is required) or check the latest GOV UK information or guidance for your commodity type - links in section 5 |

The new Common Health Entry Document – indicative list of import notification questions (fields) from 31 January 2024 continued

| Topic | Field | Notes |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Commodity information | <p>Commodity code, type of commodity and species</p> <p>Approved establishment of origin</p> | <p>Picker tool to help choose commodity code based on commodity description.</p> <p>List of approved establishments (on GOV UK)</p> |
| Consignment | <p>What is the purpose of the consignment?</p> <p>Consignment details such as weight (net and gross), number of packages, type of packaging.</p> <p>Does the consignment confirm to regulatory requirements?</p> | <p>Select from options.</p> <p>Take from documents provided by exporter, eg health certificate, bill of lading.</p> <p>Yes/no declaration - section 5 has links to guidance on GOV UK by commodity type - always check the guidance before import.</p> |

The new Common Health Entry Document – indicative list of import notification questions (fields) from 31 January 2024 continued

| Topic | Field | Notes |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Contact details | Importer and consignee (if different from importer) | Consignee is auto-filled from the importer details but can be over-written if they are different. |
| | Consignor or exporter | |
| | Nominated contact details | Add contact details for all agencies involved in the consignment journey, including transporters – emails and mobile phone numbers to receive SMS texts. |
| | Organisation (branch) address | For person responsible for the consignment in GB |
| Entry to Great Britain | Port of Entry | |
| | Estimated arrival time | |
| | Place of destination | |

The new Common Health Entry Document – indicative list of import notification questions (fields) from 31 January 2024 continued

| Topic | Field | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Accompanying documents | Upload PDF versions of accompanying documents. Add document reference numbers (where relevant) | Upload documents that help PHAs to assess the consignment, such as health certificates, bill of lading, airway bill, commercial documents such as invoices. |
| | IUU documents | From 30 April 2024, IUU documents should be uploaded where the commodity type is non-exempt fish or fishery products. |
| | Documentation for non-SPS controls | Always follow the guidance on GOV UK. |
| Export Health Certificate (for high and medium risk category commodities) | Upload a PDF file of the Export Health Certificate. This may be a verifiable PDF certificate. Check the guidance for your commodity type - links in section 5. | Check the GOV UK page for the commodity type you are importing for information on whether an export health certificate is required. |
| Declaration | The person submitting the import notification is requested to declare that they will be the person responsible for the load when it reaches a GB port of entry. | |

The new Common Health Entry Document – indicative list of import notification questions (fields) from 31 January 2024 continued

| Topic | Field | Notes |
|-------------|---|---|
| Transport | <p>Mode of transport (eg ship)</p> <p>Transport identification (vessel name, vehicle registration)</p> <p>Container or trailer (yes/no) - if yes, identification number (and seal number if official seal used)</p> <p>Transport conditions (temperature)</p> | |
| Declaration | The person submitting the import notification is requested to declare that they will be the person responsible for the load when it reaches a GB port of entry. | From 30 April 2024 (excluding EU consignments from the island of Ireland) this includes making sure that the consignment is presented at a BCP if called for checks, and paying any fees. |



LOW RISK COMMODITIES

APPENDIX 2

IMPORT NOTIFICATIONS FOR LOW RISK ANIMAL PRODUCTS IMPORTED FROM THE EU/EFTA

From 31 January 2024, there will be a new risk-based approach to SPS import controls on consignments imported from EU and EFTA countries. Low risk animal product commodities will not need an Export Health Certificate, but you will need information from the producer/exporter to show that the product is low risk, including commercial documentation. Guidance is provided on GOV UK on commercial documentation for the type of commodity you are importing (see section 5 of this leaflet).

Insight from traders shows that some businesses want to know where to obtain the information needed to complete their import notification on IPAFFS when there is no EHC. Most of the information that you will need to be able to complete the import notification on IPAFFS will be found in the commercial documentation that is supplied by your exporter.

Trader insight also identified several fields where the information may not be supplied as standard by the exporter. The following page provides some examples of where to find this information.

Import notifications for low risk animal product commodities from 31 January 2024 - additional information

| Field | Where to find the information |
|-------------------|--|
| Commodity code | The Trade Tariff tool will help you find the internationally recognised commodity code (CN code) for your goods. |
| Type of commodity | <p>This field asks for additional information on the commodity, such as treatments and provides a variable drop-down list of options, based on the commodity code provided. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meat commodity codes: list may include farmed or game (wild)• Fish commodity codes: list may include farmed or wild-caught• Dairy commodity codes: list may include treatments such as UHT, pasturised, raw milk. <p>The information may be available on the commercial documentation provided by the producer/exporter to determine the risk category of the product or the product packaging, otherwise request the information directly from the producer/exporter you are working with.</p> |

Import notifications for low risk animal product commodities from 31 January 2024 - additional information

| Field | Where to find the information |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Species of commodity | <p>This field provides a list of Latin species names associated with the commodity code. Choose one – this information may be in the commercial documentation, the product packaging or you may need to ask the producer/exporter for this information directly.</p> <p>Common examples include bos taurus (cattle), capra hircus (goat) and gallus domesticus (chicken).</p> <p>You may also be asked for the classification, based on the commodity code.</p> |
| Purpose of consignment | <p>The intended use/purpose of the goods (e.g., for human consumption or feedstuff). Choose one – this information may be in the commercial documentation, the product packaging or you may need to ask the producer/exporter for this information directly.</p> <p>Example: for an internal market import, you could select:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• human consumption• animal feeding-stuff• pharmaceutical use• technical use• other |

Import notifications for low risk animal product commodities from 31 January 2024 - additional information

| Field | Where to find the information |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Temperature | <p>The required temperature of the goods during transport. Choose one:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ambient• chilled• frozen <p>This information may be in the commercial documentation, the product packaging or you may need to ask the producer/exporter for this information directly.</p> |
| Approved establishment of origin | <p>There is a full list of EU approved establishments on GOV UK.</p> |
| Place of destination | <p>Enter the address/destination of where the goods are being sent to in GB. If you are not the importer and are acting on their behalf (e.g. an agent or freight forwarder), you will need to obtain this information from them.</p> |



Last updated December 2023

Importers should note this is an introduction to import notifications, and not guidance. It does not give guidance on animal health and public health conditions of import or other conditions that may need to be met. **Always check the guidance on GOV UK for the commodity type you are importing.**

Texts provided in this section guide are intended for information only - these texts have no legal value. For legal purposes please refer to the texts published in legislation.gov.uk

KNOW YOUR RISK TO BE READY FOR CHANGE

