



Export declarant checklist – moving to the Customs Declaration Service

All export declarations are due to move from our Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system to the new Customs Declaration Service (CDS) by 30 March 2024.

If you have been told by HMRC or your software developer that you can move to the Customs Declaration Service for exports, please follow the 6 steps outlined below.

If you are an export declarant and have not been contacted by HMRC or your software developer, you can still prepare by completing steps 1-3. We will tell you when you can take the remaining steps.

If you already make import declarations through the Customs Declaration Service or view your postponed import VAT statements online at www.gov.uk/get-postponed-import-vat-statement, you will be subscribed to the Customs Declaration Service and should begin at step 3.

6 steps to move to the Customs Declaration Service

Step 1: Apply for an Economic Operator Registration and Identification number

You need an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number that starts with 'GB'. Most businesses moving goods in and out of the UK already have one.

If you already have an EORI starting with 'GB', go to step 2.

You can apply for an EORI number if you don't have one already. It's free and it only takes 10 minutes to apply. Go to www.gov.uk/eori.

To apply for an EORI number you need to have a Government Gateway user ID. If you don't already have one, you will create one during the application process.

You should receive your EORI number within a week, but it can take longer during busy periods.

When applying for a new EORI you'll be automatically subscribed to the Customs Declaration Service. Once you have received your EORI go to step 3.

Step 2: Subscribe to the Customs Declaration Service

If you use the Customs Declaration Service for imports, or you already have an EORI starting with 'GB' and you received this by applying online at www.gov.uk/eori, go to step 3 as you will have already subscribed to Customs Declaration Service.

You need to subscribe to the Customs Declaration Service, this can take up to five working days. Go to www.gov.uk/hmrc/cds-get-access.

You'll need your Government Gateway user ID and password for yourself or your business. You will also need:

- your EORI number that starts with GB
- your 10-digit Unique Tax Reference (UTR) number – you can find this on any HMRC payment reminders, or in your personal tax account
- the address for your business that we hold on our customs records – please tell us if your address has changed, you can do this using your Personal Tax Account
- your National Insurance number (if you're an individual or sole trader)
- the date you started your business

Step 3: Check the guidance

The Customs Declaration Service is aligned to the Union Customs Code and the World Customs Organisation data model.

You can read the latest Customs Declaration Service guidance to familiarise yourself with the Customs Declaration Service. Go to www.gov.uk/hmrc/cds.

You can also read the Customs Declaration Service communication pack at www.gov.uk/hmrc/cds-communication-pack. This also includes the Key differences between CHIEF and the Customs Declaration Service to help you understand how this change impacts you and the declarations you intend to make.

Step 4: Speak to your software provider

If you already have a software provider for the Customs Declaration Service for imports and you intend to use them for exports, you may need to check that they have a software product available. If they do, you do not need to take the action shown in this step, go to step 5.

You need to link your software to your Government Gateway user ID by authorising your software provider to make declarations on your behalf. Your software provider will tell you how to do this.

If you're acting on behalf of multiple clients, you may need to authorise the software for each client. Your software developer will be able to help you with this. You may need to regularly refresh this authorisation with your provider.

If you don't already have a software provider, you can check the list of software developers providing customs declaration software. Go to www.gov.uk/hmrc/cds-software-developers.

If you currently use the National Export System (NES) web service to submit your export declarations on CHIEF, then you will be invited to join the private beta for the new HMRC Make an Export Declaration Online service.

The service will replace NESweb after 30 March 2024 and allow you to continue submitting export declarations through CDS.

Step 5: Get access to the Trader Dress Rehearsal service

The Trader Dress Rehearsal service is a free service that lets you practice submitting declarations using test data. Go to www.gov.uk/trader-dress-rehearsal-guide.

You should speak to your software provider who can tell you whether you can use the service yet and grant you access.

You can also use the Trader Dress Rehearsal Service through the new HMRC export declaration online service once it is available on GOV.UK.

You can continue to practice submitting declarations with test data on the Trader Dress Rehearsal service after you start making live declarations through the Customs Declaration Service.

Step 6: Submit live declarations

If you use third-party software, you should contact your software provider once you're ready to begin submitting declarations. They'll make the request for access to the live service for you.

You'll find help and guidance such as:

- navigate the CDS Declaration Instructions for Exports at: www.gov.uk/hmrc/cds-export-instructions
- the CDS Declaration Completion Instructions for Exports at: www.gov.uk/hmrc/cds-export-guide

You should use the secure upload service at www.gov.uk/send-cds-documents when you submit your supporting documents like licenses or certificates of origin. There is help available for the service on the Customs Declaration Service playlist on the HMRC YouTube channel. Go to www.youtube.com/HMRCgovuk.