

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Notes for Guidance: Export Health Certificate for entry to the European Union or Northern Ireland of queen honeybees 8464

October 2025

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NFG No. 8464

EHC for entry into the EU or NI of queen honeybees.

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE (NFG) FOR THE CERTIFYING OFFICERS (CO) AND EXPORTERS

IMPORTANT

These notes provide guidance to COs and exporters. The NFG should have been issued to you together with the relevant export certificate applicable for entry into the EU of queen honeybees.

The NFG should not be read as a standalone document but in conjunction with the health certificate.

We strongly suggest that exporters obtain full details of the importing country's requirements from the veterinary authorities in the country concerned, or their representatives in the UK, in advance of each consignment.

[NFG could be further amended to provide specific guidance. Traders should look at NFGs regularly for any updates]

A declaration by the master of the ship, as set out in Annex III of Commission Regulation (EC) No 403/2021, shall be attached to veterinary certificates for imports into the EU of terrestrial animals where the transport of those commodities includes transport by ship, even for part of the journey. You can find Master of the ship declaration here:

<https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates/master-of-the-vessel-declaration-8466>

1. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) [2019/2035](#) [2020/692](#), [2020/688](#)

Regulation (EU) No [2016/429](#), [2021/403](#)

[Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2024/351 - Model EHC amending Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/403](#)

Any EU legislation referenced in the certificate must be complied with and EU legislation can be accessed on the following link. You should ensure you use the latest version:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

Consolidated legislation

Consolidated texts, which integrate the basic instruments of EU legislation with their amendments and corrections in a single, non-official document, are available. Each consolidated text contains a list of all legal documents taken into account for its construction.

You can search for consolidated texts by using the 'find results by document number' option on the European Commission website. Once you have selected the relevant legislation, click 'document information', and then scroll down to 'all consolidated versions' and select the most recent version.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

Please note that the consolidated text may not contain the latest amendment to the legislation, as it takes several weeks for this to be updated.

Texts provided in this section are intended for information only. Please note that these texts have no legal value. For legal purposes please refer to the texts published in the 'Official Journal of the EU'.

2. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

This certificate is for the commercial movements into the EU or NI of queen honeybees. Queens can only be exported with maximum 20 attendants.

Honeybees means animals of the *Apis mellifera* species.

This EHC is to be signed by an OV with the Essential Skills (ES) and Exports General (EX) modules. [Official Veterinarian Training \(improve-ov.com\)](https://www.improve-ov.com)

Where necessary, a combined visit between the certifying OV and a Bee Health inspector should be planned on the day of inspection of the consignment and signing of the EHC.

Information on finding an OV can be found in the link below:

[Find a professional to certify export health certificates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

To find or to verify the credentials of a Bee Health Inspector please use the contact below:

- For England and Wales - National Bee Unit (nbu@apha.gov.uk)
- For Scotland - Scottish Bee Inspectorate (Bees_mailbox@gov.scot)

3. CERTIFICATION BY AN OV

In **England, Scotland and Wales**, this certificate must be signed by a Government Veterinary Officer (e.g. APHA, FSA or FSS employed veterinary officers) or by an OV appointed by APHA on behalf of Ministers in Defra, the Scottish Government or the Welsh Government and who hold the appropriate Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ (V)) authorisation.

OVs must sign and stamp, with the OV stamp, the certificate in ink of a different colour to that of the printing of the EHC. There is no requirement to sign and stamp in a specific colour.

The OV should keep a copy of the signed certificate and any supporting documents for at least two years after signature or receipt/dispatch of the consignment, whichever is later. These can be electronic copies.

EHC in foreign language/s of the EU Member States (MSs).

EHC should be in English and the foreign language of the Border Control Post (BCP) of entry in the EU. The original copy of the required EHC must accompany the consignment to the BCP of entry.

Listing of the EU MS BCPs can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/vet-border-control/bip-contacts_en

The foreign language certificate as received from the APHA Centre for International Trade at Carlisle or via the Export Health Certificates Online system (EHCO) and bearing the same unique reference number as the English certificate, should be considered an official and accurate translation of the English, as published in EU legislation.

The (sub-) paragraphs / options and how they are numbered and formatted is identical in the English and foreign language editions and to the legislation published by the European Commission. Therefore, the same phrases/sentences in the foreign language versions as in the English version should be struck through and these deletions should be stamped and initialled in both versions. Both versions must also be signed (as opposed to being initialled) and stamped by the OV, the foreign language certificate is deemed to be a genuine and properly authorised translation of the English version.

This also applies to any instructions in the guidance notes to strike out certain paragraphs or to certify statements that the country is free of certain notifiable diseases etc.

Additional information can be found in APHA Official Veterinarian Training: <https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php>

SIGNING AND STAMPING

When signing a certificate, the CO should ensure that the certificate contains no deletions or alterations, other than those which are indicated on the certificate to be permissible and any corrections to permitted entries, subject to such changes being initialled and stamped (in the margin) by the CO. Permissible deletions are normally indicated in the 'Notes' section at the end of the certificate, with the instruction 'Keep as appropriate' or 'delete if not applicable'.

- Where the certificate contains optional or contextual statements, the statements which are not relevant shall be crossed out, individually initialled, and stamped by the CO, or completely removed from the certificate.
- Permitted paragraphs and sections may be crossed out by applying a 'Z' across the section or paragraph rather than crossing out line by line.
- There is no requirement for a date and time to accompany each stamp. The date is only entered at the required entry field in Part I of the certificate, and at the end where the CO signs, stamps and dates that action.
- We are aware of some BCPs demanding that all handwritten information in Part 1 of the EHC is initialled and stamped, including handwritten scoring out of otherwise blank boxes. There is no legal requirement in EU legislation that all the handwritten information entered in the certificate must be signed and stamped. It is only in the case of correction, in any part of the certificate, or in the case of statements to be crossed out, that the certifier must add signature (or initials) and stamp. This has been confirmed by the European Commission. The Commission noted however, in the case of a handwritten certificate, it is expected that the same one person completes the document. If not, the BCP might suspect that empty boxes were completed by another person after the certificate has been signed by the official.

You should consider checking with the specific BCP regarding their preference when it comes to the stamping and initialling of handwritten scoring out of otherwise blank boxes in Part I of the EHC.

- **Clarification from the European Commission means that all pages (as opposed to sheets of paper) are signed and stamped once individually in place of fan stamping and in addition to any permitted alterations. There is no requirement to fan stamp.**
- COs are reminded to consult the NFG prior to the certification of each EHC. NFG will be updated with this new information in due course.

For further Information COs should make sure they are familiar with all relevant guidance and other documents relating to EHCs and that they discuss requirements with exporters in advance.

See <https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=8>

You can also contact APHA's Centre for International Trade (CIT) on 03000 200 301.

PART I: DETAILS OF THE CONSIGNMENT

All boxes in Part I of the certificate must be completed. When a box is not applicable/optional, and not filled, please score it through.

Please use schedule to be attached to the certificate if there is not enough space to fill the information. See Section 'Addition of Schedules' below.

Please complete all the boxes in Part I of the certificate in accordance with the guidance laid down in Chapter 4 of Annex I to [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/2235, Amended by Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2744](#).

Box I.8 and I.10 should be crossed out as this commodity is not currently subject to regionalisation.

Box I.27

The relevant CN code needs to be added

The Harmonised System (HS) Code is a commodity classification system used as a basis for customs tariffs and for international trade statistics.

It is the exporter's responsibility to ensure that the HS code is entered correctly and accurately reflects the product(s) being consigned.

Further information on HS Codes can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/trade-tariff/sections> and <http://madb.europa.eu/madb/euTariffs.htm>

PART II: CERTIFICATION

The OV signing the export veterinary certificate must ensure that the health attestations set out in Part II of the veterinary certificate have been complied with.

The OV must ensure that they are aware of the relevant provisions of aforementioned regulations laying down the animal health requirements applicable to the dispatch of queen honeybees from the UK into the EU.

II.1 – Enter GB-0 which is the country or zone code for GB, see Annex VII to Implementing Regulation (EU) [2021/404](#).

II.2, II.3, II.4, II.5.1, II.5.4 – OV can certify these statements based on personal knowledge and/or the keeper's declaration.

II.5.2, II.5.3- OV can certify these statements based on freedom of visible pathogens at visual inspection and/or a declaration made by the Bee Health Inspector (BI) accompanying during inspection of the consignment.

II.6- Where appropriate, in order to certify this requirement, the OV may rely on collaborative input from an authorised BI or vet with relevant expertise, who is at the exporting premises and carrying out a health inspection on the animals. The OV should direct the BI/vet to provide evidence needed by the OV to certify this requirement.

II.7- This can be certified on the basis of a declaration by a BI.

II.8- This paragraph can be certified based on negative results for American foulbrood from a test of the comb within the period of 30 days prior to the date of export. The test will typically be carried out by the BI on the day of examination of the consignment.

II.9- The list of EU territories which are approved as Varroa free or have an approved eradication plan should be checked. It can be found in Annex IX to [Regulation 2021/620](#). If the destination is in an area listed the export may not take place.

4. COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE

Evidence provided by an authorised Bee Health Inspector may be used (see Annex 21.A of [RCVS Code of Professional Conduct](#))

Certification Support Officers may not be utilised for gathering evidence relating to this certificate.

5. CLINICAL EXAMINATION

The inspection must be carried out within 24 hours of loading.

OVs must use their professional judgement to determine the level of inspection required in order to ensure that no animal is exported which shows signs of infectious disease and that animals are fit to travel to their intended destination.

6. ADDITION OF SCHEDULES

When the space in Part I or Part II of the certificate is insufficient to accommodate full details of the consignment a schedule may be used. In the relevant section of the certificate the CO should annotate the certificate 'see attached schedule'. A new schedule should be created (typed or clearly written) containing the same information as that required in the

certificate. The schedule must include the certificate reference number on each page and must be signed, dated, and stamped by the CO in a colour other than the printed text on each page and under the last entry. The schedule forms part of the certificate. All pages of the certificate, including the schedule, must be sequentially numbered. Any blank spaces in the schedule or the certificate should be struck through with diagonal lines.

Further guidance is available here:

<https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=8>

7. CERTIFIED COPIES OF EHCs

When completing export certification, the CO and, if applicable, FCCO must make photocopies of, or scan and save all documents they certify. OVs must retain copies of certification documents in accordance with RCVS Certification principles.

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

COs must retain copies of all export documentation for a period of two years. A certified copy of this EHC does not need to be returned to the APHA CITC. For the purposes of completing routine Quality Assurance checks on export certification, CITC may request certified copies of certification from COs.

Further details on Post Certifying Procedures, ‘certified copies’ of certification and the types of documents that should be retained by COs can be found on [APHA Official Veterinarian Training](#).

8. LEGAL STATEMENT

References in this guidance to “assimilated EU Regulation” should be interpreted as references to assimilated law, as defined under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

9. DISCLAIMER

This certificate and NFG are 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 APHA in Carlisle.

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PB 8464 NFG

Version History

EHC

2025

II.5.1. – Lettering (a, b and c) changed to (i, ii, and iii)

II.7.1. – Numbering (i and ii) changed to lettering (a and b)

II.7.2. – Numbering (i, ii and ii) changed to lettering (a, b and c)

II.9.1. – Numbering (i and ii) changed to lettering (a and b)

NFG

Version 4: Published 29 October 2025

References to Vet Gateway updated to Official Veterinarian Training throughout.

Legal Statement: Wording updated.

Version 3: Published 31 July 2024

Applicable Legislation: Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/351 added