

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Notes for Guidance: Export Health Certificate for entry to the European Union or Northern Ireland of dogs, cats, and ferrets 8454

October 2025

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NFG No. 8454

EHC for entry into the EU or NI of dogs, cats, and ferrets.

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 dogs, cats, and ferrets.

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.

[Please note, policies are being reviewed. NFG will 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](#), [2018/878](#), [2020/688](#)

Regulation (EU) No [576/2013](#), [577/2013](#), [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'.

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2. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

This certificate is for commercial movements into the EU or NI of dogs, cats and ferrets, including when they are destined to a confined establishment or to an approved quarantine establishment, and when the EU is not the final destination of the animals.

It may also be used for non-commercial movements of dogs, cats or ferrets moved in accordance with Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) No 576/2013, where the number of pet animals being moved into the EU exceed the maximum outlined for that particular species.

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 translations 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 hand-written 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 hand-written 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.

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 current 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>

For Species and Subspecies/category – insert as relevant: Dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), Cats (*Felis silvestris catus*), Ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*).

Identification system – insert the term "Transponder" for a microchip or "Tattoo"

Nature of commodity – strike through this section

Test – enter N/A if there is no requirement for testing

PART II: CERTIFICATION

The OV signing the export veterinary certificate must ensure that the public and animal 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 dispatchment of dogs, cats and ferrets from the UK into the EU.

II.1 – Enter the country or zone code as required, see Annex VIII to Implementing Regulation (EU) [2021/404](#). This regulation has been amended by [Implementing Regulation 2021/634](#), adding the GB and the Crown Dependencies to the relevant lists.

II.2 – [Either/Or]

Either: The OV signing the certificate must ensure the animal/s will not stop or pass through any other establishment on export to the EU. Declaration from the owner must be sought. And for example, the journey log can be provided as evidence.

Or: The second option may be certified when the OV has personal knowledge that the animals have been assembled in a single assembly operation, and that the assembly operation took place in an establishment which is listed by APHA as being approved for such operations. Documentation of such approval must be evidenced by the OV. The owner of the Assembly Establishment must provide a declaration that the assembly operation took no longer than 6 days. Approved assembly centres in UK can be found [here](#). Animals exported from an assembly centre to a Member State must, for entry into the assembly centre, be accompanied by support health certification showing that they are eligible for exports to the EU. Further details of assembly centre approval may be obtained from APHA, Carlisle.

Or: The third option cannot be certified and should be deleted, as GB does not approve animal shelter establishments.

II.3 – The OV should ensure they check for clinical symptoms of diseases relevant to dogs, cats and ferrets as listed in Annex I to Regulation [2020/692](#). This refers to listed diseases in the Annex to Regulation [2018/1882](#), which includes: rabies, brucellosis and *Echinococcus multilocularis*. See section 6 below for more information on the clinical exam.

II.4 – [Either/Or]

Either: has two sub clauses. The first sub-clause is to be certified for dogs, cats and ferrets destined to an approved body, institute or centre approved under Regulation 2016/429. The Second sub-clause is for animals destined to an approved quarantine centre as defined in Regulation 2020/688. Declaration from the owner may be required to evidence this.

Or: Should be certified for animals not destined for approved quarantine or confined establishments. The “either” sub-option under this II.5, should be certified for animals originated in the UK and that are only transiting EU countries or countries listed in Annex II of Regulation 577/2013. The “or” sub-option under this should be deleted, unless the animal/s is/are transiting a country not listed in Annex II Regulation 577/2013 and undergone a rabies antibody titration test in which case this sub-clause needs to be certified.

Rabies vaccinations used must be licenced in the UK and administered by an OV or a registered veterinarian (MRCVS). The identity of the animals (microchip number) must have been checked and verified prior to administration of vaccination. A certified copy of the

identification and vaccination details of the animals must be attached to the certificate. This must demonstrate that any booster vaccination given, is given within the period of validity of the preceding vaccination. If rabies vaccination lapses then any subsequent vaccination must be considered a primary vaccination (requiring a post vaccination waiting period before travel and, if necessary, a repeat rabies antibody blood test).

A rabies serology blood test must be collected 30 days after the preceding vaccination (whether this is a primary vaccination or a booster vaccination) and tested at an approved lab for a sufficient titre. A minimum three month wait after the date of the successful blood test is required before the animal can be exported.

Where a blood sample has been taken following a previous rabies vaccination and the subsequent booster vaccinations have been kept up to date, details of these vaccinations should be attached to the certificate.

Where the certificate states “blood sample taken by the veterinarian authorised by the competent authority” OV’s are permitted to certify this clause on the basis of written or documentary evidence provided by another registered veterinary surgeon (Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) demonstrating that the blood sample was taken by a registered veterinary surgeon, that the identity of the animal was checked prior to blood sampling and that the identity (e.g. microchip number) matches that shown on the official rabies serology lab report.

It is advised to personally contact the laboratory concerned in providing the blood sample results to verify the authenticity of the results before certifying the certificate.

II.5 – [three Either/Or options]

This section is for dogs only. Only one option may be certified.

Either: This option must be selected if the dogs in the consignment are travelling from the UK to EU or NI listed tapeworm free countries including Malta, Ireland, NI and Finland. Dogs must be treated for tapeworm prior to travel in accordance with EU requirements.

The treatment must be carried out not less than 24 hours and not more than 48 hours before the dog arrives in the EU destination country. The administering veterinarian (who does not necessarily have to be an OV) should record tapeworm treatments by completing the table on the certificate. If the veterinarian administering the treatment is an OV, they should apply their OV stamp in the box. If the veterinarian is not an OV they should use their practice stamp. The treatment used must contain praziquantel or an equivalent containing a product (active substance) proven to be effective against *Echinococcus multilocularis*.

Or: Certify this option if no tapeworm treatments have been administered to the animals described in Part I. Tapeworm treatment is not required for dogs travelling from the UK to non- ‘tapeworm free’ countries in the EU.

Or: this may be certified if the animals described in Part I are destined for isolation in either, a confined establishment, or an approved quarantine establishment.

II.6 – The certifying OV must ensure that the transport was cleaned and disinfected with an authorised disinfectant before loading in accordance with the relevant provisions of Assimilated EU Regulation No 1/2005 and that other parts of the attestation are complied with. See section 5 on Animal Transport Attestation and Gov.uk for further information on

approved disinfectants. Every animal should be fit for the journey that is planned. A declaration from the owner / transporter must be sought to confirm relevant requirements have been met. Keep if applicable, see footnote 3 in the certificate. This paragraph can be deleted if the certificate is used for the movement of cats/dogs/ferrets that are not for commercial propose but they cannot comply with the conditions lay down in Art(25) or Art 246 (1) and (2) of regulation 2016/429. (e.g. travelling more than 5 days apart for the movement of the owner)

4. COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE

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

5. ANIMAL TRANSPORT ATTESTATION

Council Regulation EC No 1/2005 (EC) is implemented under the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 and parallel legislation in Scotland and Wales. If transported by air, animals should be transported in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards.

Every animal should be fit for the journey that is planned. Animals should be in good health, free of illness, free of significant wounds and able to walk without pain on all legs. Animals that are in sufficiently good health, should be able to withstand the stress of a journey without experiencing any unnecessary pain or distress, and should arrive at their destination in good health.

Animals that are injured or that present physiological weaknesses or pathological processes shall not be considered fit for transport and in particular if:

- they are unable to move independently without pain or to walk unassisted;
- they present a severe open wound, or prolapse;
- they are pregnant females for whom 90% or more of the expected gestation period has already passed, or females who have given birth in the previous week;
- they are new-born mammals in which the navel has not completely healed; they are pigs of less than 3 weeks, unless they are transported less than 100km.

If the place of loading and holding of origin is different, then the OV must obtain a written declaration from the owner/transporter/exporter that the animals were transported from the holding in vehicles previously cleansed and disinfected with a Defra approved disinfectant and “in such a way as to provide effective protection of the animals’ health status”. This means transport without coming into contact with cloven hoofed animals other than those of a similarly certified level of health status. In this case, where a consignment is grouped in an assembly centre and comprises animals that were loaded on different dates, the date at which the journey commenced for the whole consignment is considered to be the earliest date when any part of the consignment left the holding of origin. OVs should also receive a declaration from the exporter/transporter that the animals will be transported to the place of destination in vehicles which have first been cleaned and disinfected with a Defra approved disinfectant and without coming into contact with cloven hoofed animals other than those of a similarly certified level of health status.

- Except animals are accompanied by their mother, long journeys should only be permitted for domestic Equidae and domestic animals of bovine and porcine species if:
 - calves are older than fourteen days;
 - pigs are heavier than 10 kgs.
- Except if animals accompanied by their mother, long journeys should only be permitted for domestic Equidae species if domestic Equidae are older than four months, with the exception of registered Equidae; Unbroken horses shall not be transported on long journeys”.

6. CLINICAL EXAMINATION

The inspection must be carried out within 48 hours of loading. The pre-export inspection should consist of a visual appraisal and, if deemed appropriate, physical examination of the animals for export. Each animal subject to an inspection must be assessed as an individual.

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.

7. 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>

8. 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](#).

9. 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.

10. 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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This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at liveanimalexports.carlisle@apha.gov.uk

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Version History

EHC

2025

II.2. – Lettering added – first ‘or’ option (a, b, c and d) second ‘or’ option (a, b and c)

II.3. – Attestation moved to the end as II.6. Numbering changed for subsequent points.
Lettering (a, b and c) added.

2024

II.2: New deletable ‘or’ option added for dispatch from an approved animal shelter (Not GB applicable).

NFG

Version 7: Published 29 October 2025

References to Vet Gateway updated to Official Veterinarian Training throughout.

Part 2: Numbering updated for II.3 – II.6

Legal Statement: Wording updated.

Version 6: Published 31 July 2024

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

Part 2: Text explaining new deletable ‘or’ option for II.2.