



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Guidance updates for certification of POAO exports to the EU and movements to Northern Ireland: Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs)

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Purpose

To inform Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) of information to be aware of in relation to the certification of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) for export to the EU or movement to Northern Ireland. This Briefing Note will be updated as new information becomes available.

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Background

- Since 1 January 2021, exports of certain POAO from Great Britain (GB) to the European Union (EU) require an export health certificate (EHC) signed by an officially designated Certifying Officer.
- This guidance document highlights common issues that have arisen from the certification of consignments dispatched from GB to the EU, since the end of the Transition Period, and provides further information to help resolve these issues.

v1.1 Stamping and signing

- When signing a certificate, a Certifying Officer (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'.
- Where the certificate contains optional or contextual statements, the statements which are not relevant shall be crossed out, **individually initialled** and stamped by the certifying officer, 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.
- 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 the stamping of any permitted alterations. There is no requirement to fan stamp and the Notes for Guidance may be disregarded in this respect and will be updated as soon as possible.
- The certificate reference number must be provided on each sheet, the pages must be sequentially numbered to span the languages included and any schedules, and each page must bear the signature and official stamp of the CO, i.e. if two A4 pages are printed back to back on one sheet of paper, both pages must be stamped and signed. Certifying Officers will have to make handwritten corrections to pages numbering as may be required.
- Quick reference to guidance on fan stamping and ink colour can be found at <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/exports/guidance-ehc-certifiers.pdf> and [http://apha.defra.gov.uk/External OV Instructions/Export Instructions/Certification Procedures/index.htm](http://apha.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/Export_Instructions/Certification_Procedures/index.htm)

- The colour of the official stamp and the signature must be different to the colour of the printed text of the certificate. We have had feedback that some EU BCPs are requesting specific colours. The EU Commission have confirmed that there are no requirements for specific colours.
- Certifying Officers are reminded to consult the Notes for Guidance (NfG) prior to the certification of each EHC.

v1.2 Time of departure

- Specific EU BCPs may request that box I.14. includes the time of departure, as well as the date. This is not a requirement for POAO, for which only the date is required. Defra has confirmation on this from the EU Commission and expects that BCP officials will be revising their requirements in this regard.

v1.3 Commodity Codes (HS Codes)

- The CO should confirm with the exporter that the HS Code used correctly describes the products being consigned. Further information on HS Codes can be found online at:
<https://www.gov.uk/trade-tariff/sections>
<http://madb.europa.eu/madb/euTariffs.htm>
- There is information at the bottom of the majority of EHCs, in the notes section, with example commodity codes of 4 digits. If there is not enough space in Box I.19 to include all the commodity codes needed, please use a schedule.
- Information on how to create a schedule is available on [APHA's Vet Gateway](#).
- The European Commission has confirmed that CN codes (8 digits or more) cannot be required in the official certificate (EHC), as only HS codes (max 6 digits) are required here. In any case, the best accuracy for the classification of the goods is expected in the CHED, not in the certificate.

v1.4 Description of Goods Box I.24

- Where the exporter requires more than 5 species or products to be listed in box I.28, the information should be added in a schedule. Please ensure you follow the requirements for adding a schedule as it becomes part of the certificate.
- Information on how to create a schedule is available on APHA's Vet Gateway

v1.5 Re-exporting POAO to the EU

- Most products of animal origin from the EU will not require an EHC to be imported into GB until April 2021. During this period, products that are being re-exported to the EU will need to be certified with an EHC and the CO will require the relevant health and traceability information. Unless exempted from certification, this product will also need certification if moved to Northern Ireland. There are a number of options for obtaining this information.
- Commercial documentation or PVS attestation from the EU Member State can be accepted, if the EU supply chain is stable. The stability can be attested to based on a one-off certificate from an EU vet.
- Where supply chains are not stable (one-off or irregular) then COs may request a higher level of proof rather than just commercial documentation.
- The NfGs contain information regarding evidence needed for EU (and NI) origin product (imported before April 2021) are sufficiently flexible for OVs to accept appropriate documentation.

v1.6 Certified Copies of EHCs

- A certified copy should only be made for the Certifying Officer (CO) to retain themselves; or
- In the specific case of unattended consignments by prior agreement with the BCP when the risk of the certificate getting lost is high and the original is forwarded to the BCP by post or courier and the certified copy accompanies the consignment.
- A certified copy should not be made to forward to the importer for completion of CHED Part 1 or as an electronic copy to the BCP for advance checks as the BCP will expect the EHC that travels with the Consignment is an exact match copy, i.e. not annotated as 'certified copy'. A standard colour or black and white copy of the original EHC is the better format for advancing to the importer and to the BCP for advance checks prior to arrival of the goods with the EHC attached.

v1.7 Composite products

- BCPs and BCP officials are under instruction to check products and determine whether products are composite products or not as this has legal context for importation checks and requires specific certification and checks accordingly. In order for BCP officials to make this assessment, they will or may need information on both the ingredients of and the processes that are involved in producing the product. This is usually only the case with new products and when a BCP is familiar with the product and source does not require this on an ongoing basis.

Further Information

For further information, please visit the ['Information for Food Competent Certifying Officers \(FCCO\)'](#) heading on the 'Preparing local government for 1 January 2021' GOV.UK page.