



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 50/25

Guidance for Certifiers of Export Health Certificates

Date issued: 30 December 2025

Purpose

1. To inform certifiers (Official Veterinarians (OVs) and Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs)) of the correct procedures that exporters and exporting agents (export applicants) must follow when applying for Export Health Certificates (EHC) and other associated procedures relating to export trade. This is in response to issues that have been identified during 2025.
2. These processes will be implemented from 1 January 2026.

Background

3. Communications have been issued to export applicants outlining the correct procedures to follow when applying for EHCs. This APHA Briefing Note provides notification for certifiers of the information provided to export applicants and additional information on certifier responsibilities within the EHC and export trade process.

Block Certificates

4. The amount of EHCs that export applicants apply for in a block should be the quantity that will be used by time the 618NDC (notifiable disease clearance) has expired. 618NDCs are issued with a standard 15-day validity from the date of issue of the EHC(s). Restricting a 618NDC validity to 15 days provides assurance to APHA in the event of a disease outbreak, that EHCs have been certified during the 618NDC validity period and reduces the need for contact during an outbreak. Applying for 15 days' worth of certificates in a block also means that certifiers do not need to request the reissue of 618NDCs.

Communications between Export Applicant Agents and Certifiers

5. When applying for an EHC, an export applicant should always communicate with their nominated Certifier in advance of submitting the application. This is to ensure that they are nominating a Certifier who holds the correct qualifications to certify the EHC and the Certifier is available to complete the certification procedures.
6. If you receive a case on the EHC Online service where you have been nominated as the Certifier without knowledge of the export and you will not be acting as the Certifier for the export, please provide the CASE ID number via email to processingteam@apha.gov.uk who will advise the export applicant that you will not be acting as the Certifier for the export consignment. You should then cancel the case on the EHC Online service. To cancel a case in EHC Online, follow this procedure:
 - In 'Case management' select 'Cases to review' which will show you all the cases ready to certify where you have been selected as the nominated Certifier
 - Select the 'Summary' link next to the case you want to cancel
 - Under the Actions column, select 'Review certificate'
 - Scroll to the bottom of the 'Review these answers' page and select 'Continue'
 - In 'Decision and confirmation' select 'Cancelled'. You will need to enter a reason for cancelling the certificate
 - Enter your details and select 'Accept and submit'.

Applying for the reissue of a 618NDC

7. When applying for the reissue of a 618NDC:
 - It is the responsibility of the Certifier to ensure that the 618NDC is valid at the time of certification
 - Any requests for a 618NDC to be reissued must be submitted to the Processing Team via email at processingteam@apha.gov.uk by the Certifier, listing the CASE ID number and any certificate serial numbers that relate to that case that you require updated clearance for

- APHA have a one working day Service Level Agreement (SLA) for reissuing 618NDCs, however, in the event of a disease outbreak this SLA may change
- When the Processing Team provide disease clearance by issuing the 618NDC, this will be uploaded to the case on EHC Online for the Certifier to view, including the new validity period of the reissued 618NDC. Reissue of the 618NDC will also be confirmed to the Certifier by return email
- The 618NDC is required to be in date for the date of certification, not the date of export, unless the Notes for Guidance state otherwise
- If the application that you have requested a 618NDC reissue for requires a postcode schedule to be submitted, the export applicant will be required to provide a copy of the postcode schedule in conjunction with the request for the 618NDC to be reissued
- If you are requesting a reissued 618NDC for an EHC or serially numbered EHC within a block application that have already been updated on EHC Online as 'CERTIFIED', the reissued 618NDC will either not be provided or will not include the serially numbered EHC(s) already certified
- If the 618NDC reissue is requested by any party other than the Certifier, the request will be rejected.

Applying for an EHC in good time

8. When applying for an EHC, export applicants have been advised to submit applications in good time ahead of the date of export. APHA have a one working day SLA for any applications where the export date is within seven working days from the date of submission. If the export date is less than seven working days from the date of submission, APHA will aim to process the application the next working day.
9. Export applicants have additionally been advised that it is not recommended to apply the day before the appointment for certification as there is no guarantee what time the EHC will be made available to you on EHC Online.

Application Queries

10. When an application is submitted and APHA require further information or the application is incomplete, APHA's one working day SLA will recommence again from the day the correct information is supplied.

Disease outbreak – prioritisation by export date

11. Upon confirmation of a notifiable disease outbreak, additional crucial checks are required by the Processing Team at APHA to provide notifiable disease clearance to enable you to certify the EHC. Although we will do our best to continue to meet our one working day SLA timescale, during a disease outbreak we may have to prioritise applications by export date. EHCs will still be dispatched in good time ahead of the export date provided within the application, however, APHA may need additional time to process the application. APHA may also require additional information to be able to process the necessary disease clearance checks and may request this via email from the export applicant.

Countersignatures

12. If the EHC requires a countersignature from an APHA Veterinarian, we require at least two working days' notice to organise an appointment. The APHA Veterinarian undertaking the appointment will contact the export applicant or certifier who has submitted the Request for APHA Vet Countersignature of an EHC (ET145) document either via phone or email to confirm the appointment. Any further communications regarding the appointment will be between the export applicant or certifier who has submitted the ET145 and the APHA Veterinarian. If you have submitted an ET145 and have not had confirmation of your appointment after two working days, please contact processingteam@apha.gov.uk, providing a copy of the ET145 document.

New Export Health Certificates

13. If an EHC does not exist for the commodity and country an export applicant wants to export to, it is the export applicant's responsibility to obtain the import conditions from the competent authority in the destination country. If an EHC is required, the export applicant will need to provide the import conditions in writing to exports@apha.gov.uk and confirm that they can comply with all of those conditions, so that an EHC can be created.
14. If the export applicant has been provided with the import conditions in the language of the destination country, it is their responsibility to provide a translation of the conditions into English. Once APHA have received the import conditions, it can take several months for the relevant Defra Policy team to review and formally agree an EHC with the destination country. Certifiers are reminded to follow the [Summary of good certification practice and procedures to prevent fraud](#) on page 19 of the OV Instructions: Exports on the Improve International website, and never use an OV stamp on Non-Defra documents. If presented with documentation for export that has not been produced through EHC Online or by Defra/APHA, please inform

APHA via the processingteam@apha.gov.uk mailbox who will confirm if the documentation is legitimate and can be certified using your OV stamp.

Online Portals

15. If you are experiencing technical issues with your Government Gateway or EHC Online account, or you need assistance with registering and inviting your colleagues to join your online account, you will need to contact the APHA Service Desk at aphaservicedesk@apha.gov.uk or call 03300 416999.
16. If you are experiencing technical issues with your GOV.UK One Login, contact the GOV.UK One Login Team using one of the contact methods on [the Contact GOV.UK One Login Team](#) webpage.

Form Finder documents

17. You can access documents that are related to an EHC via the '[Find an export health certificate](#)' page on GOV.UK. You can view a specimen of the EHC, any supporting documentation and the Notes for Guidance (NFG), which are specific to that EHC and should be read alongside the EHC. The NFG are a useful document for both the export applicant and the Certifier, providing information on testing, approval requirements and certification guidance.

Action for Certifiers - Summary

- If you receive a case on EHC Online and you will not be acting as the nominated Certifier, inform APHA and cancel the case on EHC Online
- Ensure you apply for any 618NDCs to be reissued prior to the previous 618NDC validity expiring. 618NDC reissue requests submitted by an export applicant will be rejected
- For Online Portal user account queries, contact the APHA Service Desk
- For GOV.UK One Login queries, contact the GOV.UK One Login Team

Where to direct queries

Queries on the following subjects should be directed to ProcessingTeam@apha.gov.uk:

- Waivers and Derogations
- EHCs that require an APHA Veterinarian signature

- China Tables and Belarus Notifications
- Countersignatures
- Scrapie requests
- 618NDC reissues
- Queries related to an application that had been submitted on EHC Online. The following application statuses on EHC Online application are:
 - PROCESSING – this status means the application has been received by APHA and is awaiting processing before being sent to the nominated OV or FCCO
 - DISPATCHED – this status means the application has been received and processed by APHA and has been dispatched to the nominated OV or FCCO on EHC Online
 - CERTIFIED – this status means your application has been received, processed, dispatched and has been certified by the nominated OV or FCCO.

Queries on the following subjects should be directed to Exports@apha.gov.uk:

- POAO and animal by-product queries
- Certifier onboarding queries
- Third Country Establishment Approvals and Registrations

Queries on the following subjects should be directed to Balai.Carlisle@apha.gov.uk:

- Balai Approved Premises or Balai Registrations
- Captive Birds Establishment Approvals
- Ungulate Establishment Approvals