

# Notes for Guidance for Animal Health Certificate for the non-commercial movement into a Member State from a territory or third country of dogs, cats, or ferrets in accordance with Article 5(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

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**Model Animal Health Certificate (AHC) for the non-commercial movement into a Member State from a territory or third country of dogs, cats, or ferrets in accordance with Article 5(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council**

**NOTES FOR GUIDANCE (NFG) FOR THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN**

**1. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION**

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 577/2013 as amended.

Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 as amended.

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 consolidated version including all updates and amendments:

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

**IMPORTANT**

**These notes provide guidance to Official Veterinarians (OV). The NFG should have been issued to the OV together with the relevant AHC for the non-commercial movement into a Member State from a territory or third country of dogs, cats, or ferrets in accordance with Article 5(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.**

**2. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE**

This AHC may be used for the non-commercial movement into an EU Member State from a territory or third country of dogs, cats, or ferrets in accordance with Article 5(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. This certificate may also be used for non-commercial movements into Northern Ireland from Great Britain, as non-commercial pet travel in Northern Ireland will continue adhere to Regulation (EU) No 576/2013. It is intended for the movement of up to five such pets. However, there is an option to certify more than five pets in specific circumstances detailed in the certificate (e.g. pets over six months old that are taking part in competitions). Certificates for movements to other countries that are not EU Member States can be found on GOV.UK.

A non-commercial movement is defined in Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 as a movement which does not have as its aim either the sale of or the transfer of ownership of a pet animal.

**3. CERTIFICATION BY AN OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN (OV)**

In Great Britain, this certificate shall be signed by an Official Veterinarian of the Department or by an Official Veterinarian (OV) appointed by the Department for

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Scottish Government or the Welsh Government as such and holding the appropriate Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ(V)) authorisation.

OVs must sign and stamp the veterinary certificate with the OV stamp in ink in a different colour to that of the printing.

You are advised to keep a copy of every AHC you issue for three years. The APHA Centre for International Trade Carlisle (CITC) may ask to review copies of any AHCs you have issued.

Further guidance for OVs on completing export certification is available here:  
<https://www.improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=7>

#### 4. **VALIDITY OF THE CERTIFICATE**

This certificate is valid for movements of up to five pets, (and a mix of species is permissible), dogs, cats, or ferrets from Great Britain to an EU member state (but see scope above) and is valid for 10 days from the date of issue by the Official Veterinarian.

The date of signing the certificate should be considered as day 1, with the certificate being valid up to and including day 10. For example, if signed on 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, the certificate will be valid until and including the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. When in doubt, the exporter should ask the authority of the point of entry in advance of the export.

Pets must enter the EU via a designated **Travellers' Point of Entry (TPE)** (see List of TPEs [https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/pet-movement/eu-legislation/noncommercial-non-eu/tpe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/pet-movement/eu-legislation/noncommercial-non-eu/tpe_en)).

**Pets need an AHC written in one of the official languages of the EU Member State in which it will enter the EU (or Northern Ireland) and the country of origin (in this case English).** For example, a pet entering the EU in France would need an AHC in French and English. All AHCs used to enter the EU, except the English only AHC, are dual language (they are written in English as well as one of the official languages of the Member State of entry).

If a pet is travelling DIRECT to an EU country with multiples languages, then exporter needs to confirm with TPE which language they should use. Following documentary and identity checks by the competent authority at a designated TPE this certificate is valid **for four months** for onward movement between EU member states or until **the date of expiry of the validity of the anti-rabies vaccination** (whichever is earlier).

The certificate is also valid for return to Great Britain from the EU or Northern Ireland within four months of the date of issue provided that the rabies vaccination is kept up to date and, for dogs, appropriate tapeworm treatment is administered 24

- 120 hours before re-entering Great Britain and endorsed on the certificate by the administering veterinarian in the EU.

## 5. **DECLARATION OF NON-COMMERCIAL MOVEMENT**

A **declaration** must be attached to this certificate confirming the non-commercial nature of the movement **and the OV must be content this is the case**. A copy of this declaration is included at the end of the certificate (Section A).

To be considered a non-commercial movement, either the owner or a person who has authorisation in writing from the owner to carry out the movement must travel within five days (either side) of the pet's movement.

The 'owner' is defined as the natural person indicated as the owner (singular) on **the identification document**.

The declaration should be completed by either the owner or the person authorised by the owner to carry out the movement (who is travelling within five days either side of the pet's movement). They should:

- enter their name in block capitals on the dotted line following 'I, the undersigned'
- delete all statements marked with a <sup>(1)</sup> that do not apply:
  - this includes deleting the non-applicable option to indicate:
    - whether they are the owner *or* the natural person (who has authorisation in writing from the owner to carry out the non-commercial movement on behalf of the owner) when completing and signing the declaration, *and*
    - whether it is the owner *or* the natural person (who has authorisation in writing from the owner to carry out the non-commercial movement on behalf of the owner), who will be travelling within five days either side of the pet's movement, see examples below:

“declare that the following pet animals are not subject to a movement that aims at their sale or a transfer of ownership and will accompany **the natural person who has authorisation in writing from the owner to carry out the non-commercial movement on behalf of the owner** <sup>(1)</sup> within not more than five days of his movement”

or

“declare that the following pet animals are not subject to a movement that aims at their sale or a transfer of ownership and will accompany the **owner** <sup>(1)</sup> within not more than five days of his movement”

- complete the table to include each animal's ID number and the corresponding AHC reference number for the movement
- state the place and date of signature, (place should include country and county as minimum)
- sign at the end of the declaration

This declaration itself, will contain a wet signed OV's signature at the page numbering as part of the general and whole health certification.

If it is not possible for the owner (or the natural person authorised by the owner to carry out the movement) to be physically present and sign (wet sign) the declaration, the owner should confirm with the TPE what the TPE will accept, e.g., scanned copy of declaration, electronic signature, etc. Regardless, the OV must be satisfied of the non-commercial nature of the export, with evidence, and the declaration attached to the AHC as described.

It is advised that the responsible person travelling with the animal carries the owner's authorisation letter in their hand luggage in case this proof is further required during documentary checks.

The declaration contains three options regarding 'person responsible during the movement'. Please see clarification below:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> option refers to a natural person, for example a family member or friend, who is to accompany the pet on behalf of the owner (not including a pet courier). This option requires an authorisation letter from the pet owner. This letter is not for inclusion in the AHC but must be reviewed, copied and a copy kept by the OV.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> option refers to a natural person nominated by the carrier to conduct the move on behalf of the company (for example, a pet courier or transporter) employed to conduct the movement by the pet owner.

The certificate must also be accompanied by **OV certified copies** of:

- the identification and vaccination details (e.g. a **copy** of relevant sections of a vaccination card/pet passport)

To make these certified copies, the certifying OV should photocopy the original document twice. On each copy, the OV should write the words 'Certified Copy' in the top right-hand corner and initial and add their OV stamp. The OV should attach one certified copy to the certificate and retain one copy along with their copy of the AHC. Retaining such copies may help provide future evidence in cases where certificate tampering is suspected.

**Each page of the certificate, declaration and certified copies of supporting documentation must have the certificate reference number at the top of each page. Each page must be numbered in the format 'Page x of y', where 'x' is the relevant page and 'y' the total number of pages, at the bottom of each page. Any blank page should be included in sequential numbering.**

**All documentation should be stapled together, and all pages (as opposed to sheets of paper) must be signed and stamped once individually. This is in addition to any other required stamps such as permitted alterations, (which must be stamped and initialled).** There is no requirement to fan stamp.

**GUIDANCE FOR ASSISTANCE DOGS:** Where someone is travelling with their assistance dog, but they are not the legal owner (as is common where the assistance dog organisation retains ownership), the EU Commission has clarified that the person travelling with the dog can be considered the owner for the purpose of the declaration.

## 6. **COMPLETING THE CERTIFICATE**

**Please ensure that the AHC is read in full, including all footnotes.**

**Please pay special attention to footnote (10) (this is the biggest reason for refusal of entry).**

**Please double check information on the AHC matches completely the information on all associated documents!**

The certificate should be completed in BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS. OV's must ensure that the animal's ID is verified (e.g. by scanning the microchip) **before** any entry is made in the AHC and that the date of microchip implantation (or tattoo if applied before 3 July 2011) is **on or before the date of the rabies vaccination**.

If the date of microchip implantation is unknown, the date of a microchip reading must be detailed, and this must be on or before the date of the rabies vaccination.

*Note: If a tattoo is used to prove animal ID the OV must verify that it is clearly legible and that it was applied before 3 July 2011.*

## **PART I: DETAILS OF THE CONSIGNMENT**

Please complete Part I of the certificate other than those boxes which are struck through with a diagonal line or prepopulated.

The following boxes should be struck through by default on the health certification: I.2.a, I.6, I.8, I.9, I.10, I.11, I.12, I.13, I.14, I.15, I.16, I.17, I.21, I.22, I.23, I.24, I.26, I.27. These boxes which have been struck through on this page do not need OV stamp and initial.

### **I.1 Consignor**

Details of owner

### **I.3 Central competent authority**

Defra

### **I.4 Local competent authority**

Animal and Plant Health Agency for export from Great Britain

## **I.5 Consignee**

This box must indicate the first country of entry into the EU, (an EU Member state or Northern Ireland) – for example if the traveller is going to Portugal via France, France must be indicated on the certificate (e.g. in the Address section, a full address is not essential). Consignee name should be the same as the consignor (Box I.1) as change of ownership is not permitted for a non-commercial move.

## **I.18 Description of commodity**

Enter 'Pet dogs', 'Pet cats' and/or 'Pet Ferrets' as applicable

## **I.20 Quantity**

Insert number of pet animals (up to five)

## **I.25 Commodity Certified for**

Tick the box 'Pets' to certify that the consignment contains only pet animals

## **I.28 Identification of the Commodity**

In the free text box include the following fields and the relevant data to identify the consignment:

- Species (scientific name):
  - Dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*)
  - Cats (*Felis silvestris catus*)
  - Ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*)
- Sex: as appropriate
- Colour: as appropriate
- Breed: as stated by owner and agreed by OV
- Identification number: microchip number (or tattoo number, if it was applied before 03/07/2011)
- Identification system: Use the term 'Transponder' for a microchip or 'Tattoo' o
- Date of Birth: as stated by owner and as far as OV can confirm on the basis of enquiries (e.g. dentition check) and evidence available

## **PART II: CERTIFICATION HEALTH INFORMATION**

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

OVs must ensure that they are aware of the provisions of Annex III to Regulation (EU) 576/2013, laying down the requirements on anti-rabies vaccinations.

OVs must ensure that they are aware of the provisions of Article 6 to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2018/772, laying down the

requirements on treatments for the consignment against *Echinococcus multilocularis*.

The animal does need to be physically presented to the practice so that the OV can verify the ID of the animal before the AHC can be signed (i.e. scan the microchip and be sure that the relevant records match the right animal). This should be done by the OV or by another veterinarian who can pass this information to the OV.

Clinical examination/assessment of fitness to travel may be desirable from a welfare perspective but it is not a current requirement in the AHC.

Applying a 'Z' across optional or contextual statements, sections or paragraphs that are not relevant (rather than crossing out line by line) is also permitted. Some certificates (and more will become available) give a tick box which will delete automatically the not relevant option. These must then be individually initialled and stamped by the OV to confirm the OV selection.

Deletions on the owner declaration (confirming non-commercial movement) is for the owner/natural person to delete and therefore these particular deletions do not require OV stamp and initial. However the page must be signed and stamped by the OV as part of the certification by the page numbering in the usual way.

Boxes within tables that do not apply should be struck through with a single diagonal line with the exception, for dogs only, of boxes in the anti-tapeworm treatment table referred to in clause II.4 (see below).

## II. Health information

OVs must read each statement carefully.

In the first paragraph, OVs completing the certificate **should ensure** that there is a strike through 'veterinarian authorised by the competent authority' in both the English text and the dual language text (where used).

**II.3** A non-OV can administer a rabies vaccination, but they must confirm the microchip before vaccination and ensure they make clinical records covering the vaccination. An OV can certify the vaccination for the purposes of completing an AHC based on these records if the OV is satisfied that the records are correct. However, if the records are not believed to be sufficient e.g. no record of microchip reading, then the OV may refuse to certify and should administer another vaccination themselves.

The first II.3 clause referring to the movement of unvaccinated animals less than 12 weeks old can only be completed when certifying an animal that is **destined for a country that allows for the movement of young animals** from a territory or third country.

**It is important to note** that the movement of pets into GB under 15 weeks old is not allowed. Owners should be made aware that if a young pet is certified for travel out of GB, it will not be able to return until that pet is 15 weeks old, and only if travelling to GB from a country listed in Part 1 of Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 577/2013 as retained under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

Before certifying the movement of young pets in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation 576/2013, the OV should check that the destination country accepts these movements from a territory or third country. Information on this can be found here:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02013R0577-20240916>

In these cases, the animals must be accompanied by either:

- a declaration of the owner (see: [model set out in Part 1 of Annex I to Regulation \(EU\) No 577/2013](#)) attached to the AHC that from birth until the time of dispatch, the animals have had no contact with wild animals of species susceptible to rabies, or
- their mother on whom they still depend on and from the AHC of their mother it can be established that the mother has received a valid anti-rabies vaccination before their birth.

The declaration shall also be drawn up in at least one of the official language(s) of the Member State of entry and in English.

The second II.3 clause referring to 'animals at least 12 weeks old' should be completed as appropriate. The second II.3 clause contains two sub-clauses: the first one is applicable to GB, as GB is listed in Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 577/2013.

**Note:** the certificate requires at least 21 days\* to have elapsed following the completion of the primary course of anti-rabies vaccination, i.e. before the certificate can be certified.

\*The period of validity of the vaccine starts from the establishment of protective immunity, in accordance with the manufacturer instructions. This should be at least 21 days following completion of the vaccination protocol required by the manufacturer for the primary vaccination. Please note, if the manufacturer states the protective immunity is demonstrated after 21 days then the animal must be certified after the onset of protective immunity established by the manufacturer.

The date of completion of the primary course of anti-rabies vaccination should be considered day 0. The day that the certificate can be certified is day 21. For example, if the primary vaccination course is completed on first day of the month, the certificate can be certified from day 22 of the month. When in doubt, the exporter should ask the authority of the point of entry in advance of the export.

The box detailing rabies vaccination information must contain details of the current anti-rabies vaccination.

**Note:** The certificate requires that animals were at least 12 weeks old at the time of vaccination against rabies. To calculate age, the date of birth should be considered as day 0. For example, if your pet was born on 1 May, the earliest your pet could be vaccinated would be 24 July.

**II.4** – This section is for dogs only.

Dogs travelling from GB to EU listed tapeworm free countries including Northern Ireland, Malta, Ireland, Finland, and Norway must be treated for tapeworm prior to travel in accordance with EU requirements. Tapeworm treatment is not required for dogs travelling from GB to non- 'tapeworm free' countries in the EU. Where tapeworm treatment is given, the second II.4 clause should be struck through and the table containing the details of anti-echinococcus treatment given should be fully completed. Where tapeworm treatment is not given then the first II.4 clause should be struck through but the boxes in the anti-echinococcus treatment table should be left blank (i.e. not struck through) in order to permit future anti-tapeworm treatments to be recorded if required (e.g. prior to re-entry into the UK from a non-'tapeworm free' country).

If it is not possible to fit in the information in print, handwriting may be permitted but it is advisable to confirm with the relevant TPE.

The box below the OV signature box at the end of the certificate for 'endorsement by the competent authority' should be struck through with a diagonal line as this is not necessary when the certificate is signed by an OV (this may have already been done).

## **7. PET DOGS RETURNING TO GREAT BRITAIN**

Before returning to GB, dogs must be treated against the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* by a veterinarian (who may or not be an Official Veterinarian) who is registered with the veterinary professional body in the country in which the treatment is administered. **Pets travelling directly to GB from Northern Ireland, Finland, Ireland, Malta, or Norway are exempt from this treatment.**

The treatment must be carried out not less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours before the pet is landed.

The administering veterinarian should record tapeworm treatments by completing the table referred to in clause II.4 of the certificate.

If the veterinarian administering the treatment is an Official Veterinarian, 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*.

Dogs leaving GB for a short trip (less than five days) to the EU will likely need to have this treatment administered prior to departure from GB. Pet owners should be reminded that they must wait for 24 hours after the dog receives the treatment before re-entering GB and must return within 120 hours of the treatment time or the dog will be required to get another treatment in the EU.

It is advisable in this case that dogs receive a follow up treatment 28 days later.

## 8. **WELFARE**

Welfare conditions during transport are laid down by Council Regulation EC 1/2005, implemented in England by The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006, and parallel legislation in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Exporters must comply with welfare laws in GB relating to the export of animals. If transported by air, animals should be transported in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards. Information about the necessary requirements may be obtained from the Animal Welfare Team at any of the offices mentioned below:

### **England, Scotland, and Wales**

Centre for International Trade  
Animal and Plant Health Agency  
Eden Bridge House  
Lowther Street  
Carlisle, CA3 8DX  
Tel: 03000 200 301  
Email: [wit@apha.gov.uk](mailto:wit@apha.gov.uk)

### **Northern Ireland**

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Animal Welfare Section  
Ballykelly House  
111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly  
Limavady  
BT49 9HP  
Tel: 0300 2007840  
Email: [WITPolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:WITPolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk)

## 9. **LEGAL STATEMENT**

The existing EU legislation that governs movements into GB has become domestic 'retained EU law' under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. References in our guidance and certification to such EU instruments should be taken to be references to this 'retained EU law'.

## 10. **ORDERING MORE ANIMAL HEALTH CERTIFICATE REFERENCE NUMBERS**

To request more AHC Unique Certificate Numbers please complete the (PETS10) order form available on Improve International: [https://www.improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=ta\\_search](https://www.improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=ta_search) and email it to the [PetPassports.Carlisle@apha.gov.uk](mailto:PetPassports.Carlisle@apha.gov.uk) mailbox.

You must complete all the sections on the (PETS10) order form.

## 11. **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 the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in Carlisle, contact details can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency>

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