

Guide for Export Health Certificates for fish and fish products in the event of a No Deal exit

Introduction

If the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement on 29th March 2019 and it is accepted as a 'third country' by the EU, businesses like yours will have to follow new rules and processes to continue to trade with the EU.

To help your business prepare, the following guidance sets out the requirements for Export Health Certificates for exports of fish and fisheries products to the EU if we leave without a deal. If you have questions regarding no deal EU exports, please email EUexit.exports@defra.gov.uk

Guide to export fish and fish products to the EU

To move fish or fishery products from the UK to the EU:

- Businesses will need an Export Health Certificate (EHC) for all consignments due to arrive in the EU after 29th March 2019, except for direct landings from UK registered fishing vessels to EU ports.
- Export Health Certificates are used to provide assurances regarding the health and hygiene standards of animals and animal products for export – they are currently used for UK exports to third countries.
- An EHC will be required for each consignment – a consignment is considered to be a product (or group of products) that fall within a single EHC category, share same animal and public health status and is sent to a single destination. There is no limit on the size of a consignment.
- The EHC must be signed by a Certification Official - currently an official veterinarian (OV) or local authority environmental health officer (EHO) to confirm the quality and health of the consignment.
- All consignments of UK-caught fish and fishery products must travel by sea, air, road or rail and enter the EU through a [border inspection post \(BIP\)](#) approved for the products.
- Further guidance is available from HMRC to support businesses preparing for day one if we leave the EU without a deal [[Link](#)].

There are three existing different model EHCs, available for use by listed third countries, covering exports of fresh and processed fish, shellfish and farmed fish for human consumption to the EU.

1. [Export of fishery products intended for human consumption](#)
2. [Export and store live aquaculture animals, fish eggs and uneviscerated fish intended for human consumption](#)
3. [Export live bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods intended for human consumption](#)

These forms are available now (with accompanying guidance notes) on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Process improvements

The fishing industry is being encouraged to start preparing their businesses for no deal to ensure they can continue to export fish and fish products, once the UK leaves the EU.

The government is also stepping up its preparations for no deal, including work to simplify and streamline the process for issuing and certifying EHCs. This includes:-

- Introducing a new Certification Support Officer (CSO) role – to support OV's and EHOs to carry out the checks needed before an EHC can be certified.
- Delivering free online training for CSOs.
- Launching a new helpful [tool](#) to help export businesses find authorised signatories in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Publishing three fish related EHCs for EU exports of fish and fish products for human consumption on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) alongside new guidance. For export of ornamental fish and fish for breeding, please contact the Aquatic Trade and Technical Advice team.
- Issuing 'blocks' of serially numbered Export Health Certificates to OV's and EHOs in advance to be used over a period of time. The exporter will need to request the block certificates from APHA, which will then be provided to the authorised OV or EHO. This will help those exporters that require certificates at pace, especially for frequent and regular consignments to the same country.

Exporting from an Approved premise

In the event of a No Deal, the EU will require that animal and fishery products being exported from the UK to the EU are dispatched from an UK Approved Food Establishment that has been approved (Listed) under Article 12 of Regulation (EC) 854/2004 by the Commission to export products of animal origin to the EU. In response to this requirement, UK businesses that currently operate from Registered Premises and intend to export animal or fishery products to the EU should either:

- Plan for products to be dispatched from an UK Approved Food Establishment that is listed with the EU – for fishery products this could mean selling the goods at a fish market that is an Approved Food Establishment, and from where the products can be issued with an Oval Identification Mark and Export Health Certificate; OR
- Discuss requirements for becoming an Approved Food Establishment with your relevant Local Authority – this would require demonstrating that there has been a change in activity and that the activity is now captured under Regulation 853/2004. More information on securing Approved Food Establishment status is available [here](#).

Exports to non-EU third countries

In no-deal, the requirements for trade to countries outside of the EU would not change. However, exporters to non-EU countries should check they are using the latest version of the EHC (different from the three models referred to above) for that particular destination via [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Border Inspection Posts

Businesses exporting animal and fish products must make sure their trade route passes through a Border Inspection Post, approved for fish products, to enter the EU. We are aware that French authorities are constructing inspection facilities to serve Calais and Coquelle. We have no official confirmation that it will be ready for Day 1. The latest list of EU Border Inspection Posts can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Exporters are encouraged to contact their import agent in the EU to ensure that they notify the BIP through the EU's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) of the arrival of their consignment. An EU BIP will require notification in advance.

Scenarios for EU exports

We understand that the no deal export scenario is challenging and complex. To help businesses prepare, we have created three scenarios to illustrate the health certification requirements for exports to the EU in varying circumstances.

SCENARIO 1: Direct landings in the EU

If a UK registered fishing vessel lands fish directly in the EU. An Export Health Certificate will not be required in this instance. UK registered vessels will need to land fish in an EU Designated Port. Here is the [link](#) for the list of EU Designated Ports. There may be additional documentation required ([link](#)).

SCENARIO 2: Collection of commodities from multiple sources

If you are collecting commodities from multiple sources within the UK, you can consolidate these commodities into a single consignment as long as this is done at an approved food establishment (as the certificate requires one place of origin with an approval number). A single EHC can be issued at this establishment for this one consignment subject to the commodities within the consignment all being eligible for the relevant certificate, i.e. they are all fishery products. The consignment must have the same required animal and public health status, travelling to the same destination, which can be a distribution centre within the EU. Thereafter, the consignment may be redistributed without the EHC. Supporting evidence/attestations for the origins and health status of the commodities would need to be available to the Certifying Officer for certification, prior to departure. Please see the model EHCs on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for more information on the requirements and health status.

SCENARIO 3: Collection of consignment by EU lorry

In some cases, UK consignments are sold to EU exporters within the UK and these consignments are transported on EU vehicles to the EU. In this instance, the EU import requirements do not change. Given that the consignment comprises of commodities of UK origin, it will be subject to the same EU import requirements – that is, an EHC will be required, it will need to enter the EU through a Border Inspection Post and the consignment will need to be delivered to a single destination within the EU.

Frequently asked questions for fishery products and products of animal origin exports to the EU (including live shellfish for human consumption)

The purpose of this document is to provide more detail on Defra's plans for the exports of fishery products and products of animal origin (e.g live bivalve molluscs) to the EU in the event of a No Deal. In the first instance, please refer to the Government's Technical Notices as published on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

1. What does an Export Health Certificate cover?

An Export Health Certificate covers one consignment sent to a specific consignee in a single destination.

2. What is the definition of a consignment?

A consignment is defined as a product (or group of products if these can be certified by the same model health certificate) with the same health status sent to a specific consignee in a single destination. There is no limit on the size of a consignment.

3. Can a single Export Health Certificate be used for multiple destinations in the EU?

An Export Health Certificate does not support a multi-destination consignment. A consignment is defined as a commodity or a group of commodities with the same health status travelling to the same destination (this could be a market or a distribution centre). Commodities dispatched to different destinations will be considered as individual consignments and will require separate Export Health Certificates.

4. Which local organisation will provide the Export Health Certificate?

The Animal and Plant Health Agency's Centre for International Trade will be responsible for providing the Export Health Certificates. The model EHCs can be

downloaded from the gov.uk. An Official Veterinarian (OV) or, only in the case of fish certificates and certain composite products, an Environmental Health Officer is responsible for certifying the Export Health Certificate.

5. What notice period needs to be given to the providing authority to obtain an Export Health Certificate?

The exporter should check in advance with their relevant authority to clarify the timescales for conducting inspections and certifying Export Health Certificates. This can vary based on the availability of the Certifying Officer and the nature of the consignment.

6. What capacity is being put in place to support additional demand for Export Health Certificates?

We are improving the online application process for Export Health Certificates and have recruited additional staff (62 FTE) at the Centre for International Trade to process additional volumes of certificates.

7. What is the cost of an Export Health Certificate?

It is free to obtain an Export Health Certificate from the Animal and Plant Health Agency. However, there is likely to be a cost for the Official Veterinarian/Environmental Health Officer to certify the Export Health Certificate. Certificates signed by an OV is through a commercial service and therefore we cannot comment on cost. Services provided by EHOs varies depending on the Local Authority but are determined on a cost recovery basis. Some Local Authorities subsidise EHC certification.

8. Are there any exceptions of fish types for Export Health Certificates?

The only exception for the requirement for an Export Health Certificate is for direct landings from a UK flagged fishing vessel in the EU. Exports of all other fish and fishery products require an EHC.

9. Are only Official Veterinarians or Environmental Health Officers allowed to certify the Export Health Certificate?

All Export Health Certificates for fish and fishery products can be validated by an Official Veterinarian with the OCQ(V) Products authorisation or an official inspector. The official inspector must have the appropriate Food Law Code of Practice competency and be authorised to act under the relevant Food Act legislation by a Local Authority. Please note, the Food Law Code of Practice standard is the higher level food hygiene qualification as stated within that code of practice.

10. Where are the relevant Border Inspection Posts located within the EU?

This is the [link](#) for border inspection posts within the EU for fisheries controls. Please note, it is advised on the EU website that there are other lists of designated ports for other fisheries, such as those for cod and hake, which are

not presently published on the Commission website. These may be obtained directly from the national authority concerned.

11. Are you concerned some people will be put out of businesses as a result of the extra burdens involved in exporting to the EU after a no deal Brexit?

Significant work is already underway to ensure that UK exporters can maintain access to EU markets after March 2019. In addition, we are committed to delivering as frictionless trade at the border as possible for the end the March and have firm back-up to ensure exports flow with minimal disruption.

12. What can businesses do to limit the impact of these requirements?

Businesses should discuss their requirements with their Official Veterinarians or Environmental Health Officers in advance to explore how the necessary checks and inspections can be accommodated within their current processes. In particular, they should discuss the most efficient way to bundle their commodities to reduce the number of EHCs required.

13. Are there enough EHOs/vets to do all these extra inspections? Are you sure there aren't going to be shortages of vets and delays as a result?

We have analysed the capacity of the EHO and veterinary industry to process EHCs. Nearly 700 official vets recently re-validated their qualifications to sign export health certificates for food products. There are another 5,500 Official Vets with the general exports qualification. They would need to complete six hours of training to have authority to sign EHCs for food products. We are offering free training for a further 450 official vets, candidates have started enrolling on the course.

We have introduced a new role of Certification Support Officer (CSO) to handle a number of preparatory and administrative aspects of EHCs, freeing up OV time and capacity to provide the final assurance required. We have [launched](#) a training programme online and this takes six hours to complete. This training programme is currently free of cost for CSOs and for EHOs that wish to refresh their certification knowledge.

14. Is there enough capacity at ports with BIPs on the other side of the English Channel to receive all our exports that previously went to Calais?

We are not in control of the plans that the EU are making. We are focused on everything we can do to ensure continuity on the UK side of the border. We are aware that French authorities are constructing inspection facilities to serve Calais and Coquelle. We have no official confirmation that it will be ready for Day 1.

Additional information

Below is a collation of relevant publications posted on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

- Defra's latest press release encourages businesses to familiarise themselves with the new process for EU exports by reading guidance - [Link](#)
- Guidance and EHCs for exporting to the EU are now available for download ahead of use on exit day - [Link](#)
- Exporting and importing fish if there's no Brexit deal including the requirement for catch certificates - [Link](#)
- Fishing and marketing of seafood if there's no Brexit deal - [Link](#)