



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 23/23

Post-certifying procedures for Official Veterinarians and Food Competent Certifying Officers completing Export Health Certificates

Date issued: 25 September 2023

Purpose

To provide clarity to Official Veterinarians (OVs) and Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) in regards to the post-certifying procedures for:

- returning certified copies of Export Health Certificates (EHCs) to the Centre for International Trade Carlisle (CITC), and
- closing certificates in EHC Online.

Background

Following the introduction of the EHC Online (EHCO) system, the requirement for OVs and FCCOs to return certified copies of EHCs to APHA changed. As EHCO requires certifiers to record their details and date of signature to close a certificate, this replaces the need for certified copies to be returned for the majority of certificates. The only exceptions to this are any certificates for livestock and camelids, and any certificate not issued in EHCO.

Some Notes for Guidance (NFGs) for individual EHCs may currently advise differently, but these documents are under review and will be updated as necessary as soon as possible.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

Action

For certificates issued using the EHC Online system where the OV or FCCO is a digital certifier, and will update the status of the certificate in the EHC Online system, certifiers must:

- close the certificate in EHC Online by entering their decision and date of signature as soon as possible, no later than 7 days post-certification;
- retain a certified copy for two years;
- return a certified copy to the Centre for International Trade Carlisle (CITC) within seven days, preferably by email, **for the following commodities only:**
 - cattle
 - pigs
 - sheep
 - goats
 - camelids

For certificates that are **not** issued using the EHC Online system, certifiers must return a certified copy to CITC within seven days of certification, preferably by email, for all commodities.

The closure of the certificate in EHC Online is essential to provide traceability of consignments, particularly during disease outbreaks, and **must** be done for every case on EHCO.

Failure to adhere to any of these requirements is a non-compliance with the OV instructions and this is checked as part of APHA's Quality Assurance processes.

Further Information

- APHA Vet Gateway - Post-Certifying Procedures:
http://apha.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/Export_Instructions/Post_Certifying_Procedures/index.htm
- Extensive Guidance - Certifiers using the EHC Online Service:
<http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/exports/Guidance-ehc-cert.pdf>
- APHA's Centre for International Trade – Carlisle:
 - Email: exports@apha.gov.uk
 - Telephone: 03000 300 201

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.