



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 45/21

# Improved Digital Security Measures for Export Health Certificates Printed on Crown Vellum Watermarked Paper

Date issued: 14 October 2021

## Purpose

1. To inform Certifying Officers (Official Veterinarians (OVs) and Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCO)) located in England, Scotland and Wales of the implementation of the new digital security measures introduced for Export Health Certificates (EHC) to replace existing Crown Vellum Watermarked security paper following a successful period of Private Beta.

## Background

2. [APHA Briefing Note 15/21](#) provided details of a planned Private Beta to test new digital security measures with certain Third Country Importing Competent Authorities with a view to replacing Crown Vellum Watermarked security paper which provides anti-fraud assurances of the authenticity of UK certification.
3. A successful period of Private Beta to test the new digital security measures has now been completed, with Defra and APHA having received positive feedback from the Competent Authorities in Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in addition to positive feedback from Certifying Officers in Great Britain.
4. Use of the digital security measures will now move towards being implemented as the business-as-usual process for issuing EHCs. Implementation will be in a phased approach.
5. This feature will continue to be applied to EHCs issued through the EHC Online service, for Third Country Competent Authorities that have been approached to adopt this.

6. The list of Third Countries this applies to can be found in Appendix 1, which will be updated as implementation roll out moves forward.
7. As part of the implementation plans, APHA will make additional EHCs available in the EHC Online service for each Third Country as they agree to use of the new digital security measures.
8. All other EHCs will continue to be:
  - Issued using white paper as a temporary measure during coronavirus restrictions. More information can be found in [APHA Briefing Note 16/20](#)
  - Issued using Crown Vellum Watermarked security paper
  - Issued on white paper where Crown Vellum Watermarked Paper is not required e.g., EHCs for the European Union (EU) and Northern Ireland that can be printed on plain white paper as a business as usual procedure.
9. [APHA Briefing Note 16/20](#) provided details of temporary measures introduced to print EHCs on plain white paper during the Coronavirus pandemic. When a Third Country agrees to implement the use of the new digital security measures, EHCs will no longer be printed on plain white paper and the new digital security features will supersede these arrangements.
10. Guidance on printing procedures for the new digital security measures are available in the [EHC Online Guidance for Certifiers](#) under the heading 'Types of certificates on your dashboard'.
11. APHA will respond to any correspondence from the Importing Competent Authority, if any queries are received as to the authenticity of a white paper EHC. APHA may contact Certifying Officers to complete authenticity checks should the need arise.

## Obtaining Disease Clearance for Certain EHCs from the APHA Vet Gateway

12. [APHA Briefing Note 38/20](#) provided details to Certifying Officers that the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle (CITC) would not provide disease clearances for all EHCs for the EU and Northern Ireland issued through the EHC Online service where the Certifying Officer could obtain the information from the APHA Vet Gateway.
13. Certifying Officers should use the ET152 and ET171 disease occurrence lists available on the [APHA Vet Gateway Certification Procedures](#) page to obtain their own straight forward disease clearances.
14. The Notes for Guidance for each EHC will advise the Certifying Officer whether they should obtain their own disease clearance or whether CITC will continue to issue a

618NDC document providing clearance where the disease status can only be ascertained from an APHA database.

15. Certifying Officers should obtain their disease clearance in advance of certifying each export consignment, as close to the time of certification as possible.
16. Post certification when Certifying Officers are completing their decision in the EHC Online service to confirm they have approved the EHC, an additional data entry field will need to be completed to enter the date the disease clearance check was undertaken. The additional data entry field will only be activated for EHCs that require the Certifying Officer to obtain disease clearance from the APHA Vet Gateway. These EHCs can only be approved and closed on EHC Online when the date the disease clearance was completed has been entered.

## Further Information

- Certification guidance can be found in the Exports guidance on [APHA Vet Gateway](#)
- Any queries relating to new Anti-Fraud Security measures should be sent to: [exports@apha.gov.uk](mailto:exports@apha.gov.uk). Include the words 'Crown Dithered Watermarked EHC' in the subject line of any email queries.

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## Appendix 1

The list of Third Countries that have agreed to implement the new EHC anti-fraud security measures as a business-as usual procedure are:

- Australia week commencing 18 October 2021
- Hong Kong week commencing 18 October 2021
- Japan week commencing 18 October 2021
- United Arab Emirates (UAE) week commencing 18 October 2021.