

Procedural Guidance for the Completion of PDF Export Health Certificates

Background

1. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's (AHVLA) Centre for International Trade, Carlisle is continually striving to improve customer service and delivery standards. During 2012 and 2013 the centre has changed the way customers apply for Export Health Certificates (EHC) by using interactive Portable Document Format (PDF) as an application form.
2. This PDF process has been used to deliver certification for some certificates covering the People's Republic of China, Russian Federation and the USA. Feedback from industry using this new process has been positive as turnaround times have been improved and exporters have been able to complete the data within the certificate (avoiding the requirement for AHVLA to transpose the data).
3. Following this positive feedback AHVLA have decided to expand the use of the PDF application process during 2014 across all industry sectors and EHCs.

Pre-Requisites

4. In order to make the transition in the application procedure as smooth as possible you will need a program that allows you to read and edit a PDF EHC. It is recommended that you use the latest version of Adobe Reader software that is compatible with your computer. Downloading Adobe Reader is free and only takes a few minutes. [Click here to download the latest version of Adobe Reader \(Opens new window\)](#).
5. Browsers such as Google Chrome and Firefox and the operating systems Windows 8 and Apple Mac OS also have their own internal PDF viewers which will allow you to view the application but not complete it. If you are using an Apple Mac then this will use its own PDF viewer by default, you should instead choose to open with Adobe Reader. You must use Adobe Reader to complete AHVLA interactive forms.
6. Smartphones or tablets currently do not support interactive forms, please use a computer to complete the form.

Obtaining the Current EHC

7. Each PDF will be an interactive version of the final EHC produced by Centre for International Trade – Carlisle. You will have received the blank EHC that your company frequently uses. A full list of the available PDF EHCs can be viewed on the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency web page <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/files/ehc-pdf-list.pdf>. Once you have received the blank PDF EHCs please save them to your computer or shared drive, in a place convenient for the users, as these forms will be the basis of every PDF application in future. As new certificates become available via PDF this website will be updated as required. Current PDF EHCs can be requested by contacting the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle.
8. New versions of an existing EHC may occasionally be released (this can happen for a number of reasons including changes to import requirements) and it is important that the current version of the PDF certificate is used. Applications that do not use the most current EHC version will not be processed and you will be asked to resubmit using the correct version of the PDF certificate. Before applying you should check that you have the current version of the EHC as listed on the web page <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/files/ehc-pdf-list.pdf>. If you do not have the current version you will need to contact the relevant team at Centre for International Trade – Carlisle to request the updated version.

Completing the PDF

9. The content of the PDF will be locked, apart from the fields pertaining to the export. It is recommended that you use the tab key to cycle through the fields you will need to populate. You will need to input the necessary details into the relevant fields from the information that you have available. Please note; some fields may be left blank for completion by your Official Veterinarian (OV). Essentially, the PDF that is created will look identical to the final EHC.
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10. The PDF Certificate Application is flexible and allows both the exporter and the Official Veterinarian to complete the draft certificate before the application is sent to the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle. Some countries require fully typed certificates and using the PDF Certificate Application you can complete your (exporter) part of the certificate, forward the application to your OV for them to complete the remainder of the PDF before it is submitted to the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle for processing. Once processed the final certificate will be returned to your OV for signature and to apply their official stamp (as this cannot be completed electronically).

11. Please note consignments may not be exported without the final (signed and stamped) version of the certificate being completed.

12. After you are satisfied that the PDF Certificate Application is correct, you will need to complete the relevant Export Application (EXA) form and email the PDF EHC and the EXA to the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle. The email should contain all of the necessary documents to support your application, but please only provide one application per email; each application should be submitted on separate emails. The email address to which your application document must be submitted is contained within the relevant EXA form.

13. Applications that have already been submitted to the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle for certificates that at the time of application had not been converted to the PDF application process will still be processed as normal and they will not need to be resubmitted. Similarly, in order to accommodate the changeover, there will be a transitional period where both styles of application will be accepted.

Benefits

14. As you will be aware, the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle requests export applications to be submitted between seven (products of animal origin) and ten (live animals) working days for the majority of its commodity types prior to the date of export. The primary benefit of switching to the PDF Certificate Application procedure is a reduction in turnaround time. We anticipate that our maximum normal turnaround time from receipt of application to your final EHC being produced will be three working days. We will be continuing to review the service we provide as the new process is established.

15. The new procedure allows both you (as the exporter) and your OV to complete the data directly into what will be the final certificate. This allows a flexible approach to the completion of the certificate that also caters for the completion of fully typed certificates.

The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs working across Great Britain on behalf of Defra, the Scottish Government and Welsh Government