

## Easement for the use of scanned EHCs for imports of EU/EFTA POAO is ending on 31 July

The temporary easement period for submitting **scanned copies** of export health certificates, including scanned versions of original paper certificates and scanned versions of verifiable PDFs, for imports of EU/EFTA Products of Animal Origin (POAO) will be ending on 31 July as set out in The Official Controls (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations [UK SI 2024 No. 541 Part 2, Regulation 5](#) and previously communicated.

### Background

As of 31st January 2024, verifiable PDFs can be used for POAO imports from EU and EFTA countries where the PDF health certificate can be electronically verified.

These certificates must be created directly in either TRACES or an equivalent EU / EFTA Member State's National SPS Export System. The PDF certificate downloaded from TRACES or other approved EU/EFTA country systems must be uploaded to IPAFFS. A list of nations we are accepting Verifiable PDF certificates from is available at [Countries Great Britain will accept validated PDF GB health certificates from - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

If the exporter creates a GB health certificate as a verifiable PDF using TRACES or another EU/EFTA Member State system, they will not need to send the original (paper) health certificate with the consignment or present it at a BCP for checking.

They must send the official, verifiable PDF certificate to the importer once it has been issued by the competent authority. The importer is responsible for creating the IPAFFS notification and uploading the verifiable PDF to IPAFFS.

### Take action

For consignments arriving into Great Britain (GB) from 00:01 on 1 August: If you or your agent uploads and attaches a scanned copy of a paper health certificate to the Common Health Entry Document (CHED) on IPAFFS and submits it, you will be required to present the original paper certificate to the Port Health Authority (PHA) or local authority (LA) at the Border Control Post (BCP) in advance of the consignment's arrival into GB, or upon the consignment's arrival in GB if advised to do so by the PHA/LA.

Please note: if the original paper certificate is not available for checks on entry into GB, the consignment may be held until the original paper certificate is provided to the PHA/LA at the BCP. To avoid unnecessary administrative burden and allow for a smoother flow through the BCP, **you are strongly encouraged to use verifiable PDF health certificates.**

If a paper certificate is used it must bear the signature and stamp of the certifying officer. Verifiable PDF certificates must bear a valid digital signature. You must also check attestations

are completed in accordance with the model certificate 'notes for completion' and all non-applicable attestations are correctly deleted or omitted from the certificate.

Deletions carried out by hand must be initialed and stamped. If completed electronically as a verifiable PDF, the electronic signature and stamp per page is sufficient. The verifiable PDF should not be altered in any way from that produced in TRACES or the alternative recognised EU/ EFTA system

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What was the easement?

[Temporary legislative changes](#) allowed for remote documentary checks to be conducted on scanned copies of EHCs for the import of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) into Great Britain without the requirement to present original certificates on or prior to arrival. This easement is set to expire on July 31, 2024. There are no legal provisions to extend this easement beyond this date.

### Q. What do I need to do as an importer?

Ask your supplier/producer to provide a verifiable PDF Export Health Certificate for their products. TRACES or the National SPS system used to create the certificate will have guidance on how to do this. There is a [list of countries](#) from which GB will accept verifiable PDF EHCs.

If the consigned country is not listed or if your supplier/producer can only provide paper wet signed EHCs you will need to upload a scanned copy of the wet signed paper EHC to IPAFFS and the original paper wet signed EHC should:

- accompany the consignment and be presented to the PHA/LA at the BCP on arrival if requested by the PHA, or
- be sent in advance of the consignment's arrival to the PHA/LA at the BCP of arrival.

### Q. Will this apply to EHCs submitted with CHEDs before 1 August?

Yes, if the consignment is due to arrive on 1 August. The requirement for the EHC to be provided to PHA/LA on or prior to consignments' arrival is relevant for consignments that arrive in GB from 00:01am on 1 August.

**Q. How will I know if the EHC that the exporter/supplier has provided is a verifiable PDF Export Health Certificate?**

A verifiable PDF Export Health Certificate is a certificate that:  
has been issued electronically from the consigned country's system  
has a QR code and/or hyperlink that allows GB inspectors to validate the status of the certificate  
and that has been electronically signed by the official vet or competent authority with an e-signature.

A verifiable PDF will have the e-signature that can be investigated when opening the document in Adobe Acrobat Reader and will show as a 'Digitally signed PDF' on TRACES.

**Q. Is there a list of countries which can provide verifiable PDF Export Health Certificates?**

Yes there is a list on the GOV UK website:

[Countries Great Britain will accept verifiable PDF GB health certificates from - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/countries-great-britain-will-accept-verifiable-pdf-gb-health-certificates-from-2024)

**Q. What happens if my consignment arrives on 1 August and it doesn't have a paper certificate with it because I submitted the CHED and scanned EHC on 30 July?**

If an importer or their agent suspects that their consignment will arrive in England on or after 00:01 on 1 August 2024, they should endeavour to ensure the original EHC accompanies their consignment or is provided to the BCP in advance of arrival. In exceptional circumstances, if the trader has been unable to meet this requirement they should contact the Port Health Authority/Local Authority at the consignment's port of entry to seek further advice.

**Q. What happens if the exporter/supplier can only provide a scanned copy of the paper EHC?**

If the exporter/supplier can only provide a scanned copy of the paper EHC, the original paper wet signed EHC should:

- accompany the consignment and be presented to the PHA at the BCP on arrival, or
- be sent in advance of the consignment's arrival to the PHA at the BCP of arrival.