



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Horse Guidance for Keepers 2020



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Horse Guidance for Keepers

This booklet sets out the rules that apply to owners of equine animals in Wales. Similar guidance has been issued in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Please note that differences may exist across the UK.

For more information

Website: gov.wales/animal-movements-registration

E-mail: equineidceffylau@gov.wales

Address: Animal Policy Delivery, Welsh Government Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Introduction

This guide explains how equines must be identified to comply with the Equine Identification (Wales) Regulations 2019. Similar guidance has been issued in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Please note that differences may exist across the UK.

What you need to know

The Equine Identification Regulations require all horses in Wales to be identified with a microchip by 12 February 2021 and hold a valid passport. These requirements come into force in England from 1 October 2020 and from 28 March 2021 in Scotland.

If your horse is already microchipped you will need to visit the Chip Checker website www.equineregister.co.uk/home and insert the microchip number to ensure that your details are correct and up to date, you can do this by clicking [here](#) Chip Checker.

What do keepers need to do?

Owners or keepers of equines have a legal obligation to have their equine microchipped and registered with the Central Equine Database (CED), the owner or keeper is responsible for updating these details.

If the animal is sold or transferred, the new keeper must ensure their details are recorded on the database within 30 days of the transfer taking place. The PIO will update the CED once a passport has been returned/requested.

Passports

Any horse, pony, donkey and related equine animal, including zebras and other zoo species must have a passport issued through a Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO). You must apply for the passport after the animal is microchipped and before the foal is 6 months old or by the 1st of December in the year of their birth whichever comes later (microchipping is explained further on page 4). The passport must be returned by 31st December.

The passport is a small booklet that will:

- identify your horse by its species and height and any definitive markings (i.e. whorl marks or freeze marks)
- hold the animal's unique equine life number (UELN), (15 digits)
- hold the details of the owner or their agent
- record vaccinations (all vaccinations must be recorded)
- record any laboratory tests
- record medical treatments
- show any basic health requirements
- will state if your animal can be used for human consumption when it dies.

You can only apply for a passport through an approved PIO and only the owner of the horse can apply for the passport. Applications can take up to 6 weeks and will incur a charge. Charges incurred will depend on the PIO and the type of animal.

Passports can have 9 sections which are labelled as roman numerals (I to IX) and every passport must have sections I to IV and section IX completed, although some passports will have all sections completed. EU Regulations state that passports issued by PIOs must be in English/French, although in Wales, passports can also include the Welsh language.

If a passport doesn't have a section 9 then it means it would have been issued before 10th June 2004 and without this section in your passport it is not fully valid. You should contact the relevant PIO to request that this section is added. When a PIO adds this section to an existing passport they are legally required to sign it to declare that the horse is not intended for human consumption.

The purpose of a passport is to protect the human food chain and to ensure animals treated with certain drugs, such as Phenybutazone (Bute), are NOT slaughtered for human consumption. Bute is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug for the short term treatment of pain and fever in animals and is dangerous to humans.

It is important to note that there is no expiry date on a horse passport, they are valid for life.

Microchipping

It is the keepers' responsibility to ensure their horse has a microchip. If an animal does not have a microchip you will need to arrange for an official veterinarian (vet) to insert one and this can be done as part of a routine visit.

Please note that it is an offence for anyone other than an official vet to insert the microchip.

The cost of microchipping is around £25-£35. Your vet will supply the microchip and once inserted update the passport with the microchip number and site of implantation. You will need to return the passport along with a certificate signed by your vet confirming your horse has been microchipped to the issuing PIO, who will update the details on the CED and return your passport to you.



PIO stands for Passport Issuing Organisation, these are organisations that have been mandated/ authorised by Welsh Government, Defra (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) or one of the other devolved administrations to issue passports on their behalf.

There are 2 types of passports issued by a PIO:

ID Only Passports – The basic legal identity papers that are required for any horse or horse like animal.

Studbook/Breed Society Passports – These hold the same basic legal entity information which is held in the ID only passports but they also contain information on the lineage or the family tree (in the passport this is shown as Sire/Dam and Grand Sire/Grand Dam – which means the parents and grandparents). These types of passports are only for horses who are pure breeds. Breed Societies will be able to advise you if your horse is eligible to join. You can find a list of these organisations by clicking on the useful information section at the end of this guidance.

Central Equine Database (CED)

The CED was established to enable a more robust system for the identification and movement of horses in response to the horsemeat scandal in 2013. It is a large database with over 1.2 million records from 81 PIOs. The PIO currently update the CED with the information they hold.

Derogation for wild/semi wild equines

Wild or semi wild horses and ponies can remain in a given area without either a passport or microchip. If they are part of a pre-defined population of wild or semi wild ponies (for example – Carneddau ponies), this is called a derogation. You can apply for a derogation if you have a semi-wild horse/ pony grazing on commons. However, if the horse is treated with a veterinary medicinal product then it would require a microchip to be implanted and a passport issued within 30 days of the treatment being carried out.

Using your horse passport

You must keep a valid horse passport with your animal at all times. The only exception to this is if your horse is moved for emergency veterinarian treatment.

You will need to provide your horse's passport for the following:

- when a vet examines or treats your animal as the medication your animal will get will depend on how it is categorised on its passport
- if an animal health inspector, trading standards inspector or any other enforcement officer asks to see it
- when you sell or give the horse to someone else.

You could get an unlimited fine if you cannot show a valid horse passport for a horse in your care.

If your horse is going out on loan, it is a legal requirement that the original passport accompanies the horse - photocopies are not acceptable. If you are putting your horse out on loan but feel uncomfortable with parting with the passport you can:

1. Contact the relevant PIO and advise them that your horse is going out on loan, they will add a note to the horse's record and will contact you directly if they receive any request to change the horse's ownership details.
2. Ensure the horse is microchipped (a legal requirement in Wales by **12th February 2021**) so the identity of the horse can be proven at all times.

Replacing a lost passport

If you have lost a passport you will need to contact the PIO that issued you with the original passport to request a duplicate. If you do not know which PIO it is you can apply for a replacement from another PIO. If you have a pedigree you will need to apply to a PIO that manages studbooks.

If your horse had a passport from another EU country and is a pedigree you can request a duplicate passport from an EU PIO. Your horse will be signed out of the food chain if it has been given a replacement or duplicate passport.

If you find your original passport you will need to return it to the PIO that first issued it. If they no longer exist or they are not in the UK you can return it to any appropriate UK PIO.

What to do when you buy a horse

When you buy a horse the seller must give you the horse's passport. You will need to contact the PIO within 30 days of this taking place to update the passport ownership details. If the seller does not give you the horse's passport you should contact your local trading standards office for advice.

What to do if you sell a horse

You must have the legal right to sell the horse or have the authority from the legal owner to sell it. You must ensure that the horse's passport is up to date and accurate before the sale takes place and give the buyer the passport at the time of sale. If you are selling your horse through a third party, for example an auctioneer or market, then you will need to give them the passport as they become the keeper of the animal.

'Sell' also includes the transfer of ownership.

What to do if you are importing a horse

If you are importing a horse from within the EU, you must register the animal with a UK Passport Issuing Organisation within 30 days. If the horse is a pedigree, you will need to register through a PIO that manages studbooks. To import a horse from outside of the EU then you must:

- contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) before the animal arrives
- contact a UK PIO to register, upgrade, replace the horse's documents, or apply for a new passport within 30 days of its arrival in the UK.

What to do if you are exporting a horse

If you are exporting a horse outside of the UK you will need to contact:

- our official vet to arrange an appointment to get blood tests taken ahead of the export date
- an agent or transporter to notify them when you are planning on travelling. You may also need more time to plan travel through an EU border inspection post (BIP).

In addition to the above, you will also need to:

- Get your horse tested for certain diseases.
- Ensure you meet the isolation and residency requirements of the country you are exporting to.
- Apply for an export health certificate (EHC).
- Check you have the right equine identification.
- Check if you need an export welfare declaration.

A full list of requirements and further information can be found by visiting www.gov.uk/guidance/export-horses-and-ponies-special-rules

What you need to do if your horse dies

In the event of your horse dying, you must return the passport to the original PIO within 30 days and provide a written detail around the circumstances and the cause of death. If your horse is euthanized at an abattoir then the passport must accompany the animal. In these instances, it becomes the responsibility of the abattoir to return the passport to the PIO, along with the relevant notification.

Most PIOs will return the original passport to you should you wish to keep it for sentimental reasons. Please be aware that in this event each page of the passport will be stamped as 'invalid' to ensure compliance with equine identification legislation.

Compliance and enforcement

The Equine Identification (Wales) Regulations 2019 introduced civil sanctions such as penalty notices for non-compliance of the regulations.

These offences include:

- failing to produce a passport when instructed by a vet or inspector
- possessing a passport but no horse
- possessing a horse with no passport or if the passport is not in your name without an agreement (preferably a written contract) between the owner and the 'Keeper' (person responsible)
- selling a horse and not handing over the passport
- transporting a horse without a passport
- owning a horse without a microchip (unless born before 30th June 2009 and it is within the transition period).

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will be responsible for enforcing the checks that are carried out at slaughterhouses while Local Authorities (e.g. Trading Standards) are responsible for enforcing the law elsewhere. There are penalties that can be applied by the courts for non-compliance, prosecution will lead to a fine up to, but not exceeding the statutory maximum of £5,000.



Useful Information

Horse passport issuing organisations that manage studbooks.

gov.wales/horse-passports-issuing-organisations-manage-studbooks

Organisations that do not manage a studbook but are authorised to issue horse passports.

gov.wales/horse-passports-issuing-organisations-do-not-manage-studbooks

The British Horse Society

www.bhs.org.uk

National Equine Welfare Council

www.newc.co.uk/?LMCL=I5cnVO

British Veterinary Society

www.bva.co.uk

British Equine Veterinary Association

www.beva.org.uk/Login?returnurl=%2fContact-Us

The Pony Club

pcuk.org

RSPCA

rspca.org.uk

Glossary of Terms

Animal, Plant & Health Agency (APHA)

The Agency responsible for identifying and controlling endemic and exotic diseases and pests in animals, plants and bees. It is also responsible for the surveillance of new and emerging pests and diseases.

Border Inspection Post (BIP)

Where your horse will be checked on export to the EU, a list of BIP for EU countries can be found here: ec.europa.eu/food/animals/vet-border-control/bip-contacts_en

Central Equine Database (CED)

The CED is a central database that holds over 1.2 million equine records from the 81 UK PIOs

Export Health Certificate (EHC)

A health certificate which has to be completed by a specified vet before exporting and must accompany the horse for the whole of its journey.

Food Standards Agency (FSA)

The Food Standards Agency is a non-ministerial government department of the Government of the United Kingdom. It is responsible for protecting public health in relation to food in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Freeze mark

An identification mark made using a cold branding process.

Keeper

The person who is responsible for the day to day responsibility and keep of the horse not necessarily the owner

Local Authority (LA)

LAs are responsible for enforcing the Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014

Passport Issuing Organisation (PIOs)

An Organisation approved by DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to issue passports for horses.

Unique Equine Life Number (UELN)

The 15 digit number that is assigned to the animal and stated on the passport which stays with the animal for a lifetime.

Vet

Official Veterinarian with membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Wild/Semi-Wild Equines

Horses that live in the wild or on commons with owners.

Whorl marks

A whorl or swirl is a patch of hair growing in the opposite direction of the surrounding hair, usually in a pinwheel fashion.