businesscompanion
trading standards law explained

Transporting animals by road

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In this guide, the words 'must' or 'must not' are used where there is a legal requirement to do (or not do) something. The word 'should' is used where there is established legal guidance or best practice that is likely to help you avoid breaking the law.

Although the United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) in 2021, certain pieces of legislation (known as 'assimilated law') continue to apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation, revoked or permitted to expire. This means that our guidance still contains references to legislation that originated from the EU.

To fully understand this guidance, it is important to note the difference between the United Kingdom and Great Britain:

- UK: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- GB: England, Scotland and Wales

This guidance is for Scotland

Anyone transporting animals on journeys of more than 65 km (about 40 miles), as part of an economic

activity, must hold a valid transporter authorisation to do so and carry it with them on the journey.

Farmers, transporters and attendants using road vehicles for transporting farm animals (which includes poultry and horses), in connection with an economic activity, must have received appropriate training and hold a certificate of competence (CoC).

An animal transport certificate (ATC) must be completed for every journey unless an exemption is met.

For the purposes of this guidance, 'horse' includes pony, donkey, ass, mule and hinny.

Identification of cattle and horses

Cattle

Cattle must be accompanied by a valid cattle passport / certificate of registration (as appropriate) at all times during transportation.

For more information, please see 'Cattle identification'.

Horses

Horses must be accompanied by their horse passport at all times during transportation.

There are a few exemptions to this requirement. Passports are not required to accompany the horse during transport if it is:

- Transported to and from registered summer grazing grounds, provided that the passport can be presented at the holding of departure
- Unweaned and is accompanying its dam or foster mare
- Participating in a training or test of an equestrian competition or event, which requires it to temporarily leave the training, competition or event venue
- Transported in an emergency situation relating to the animal itself or to the holding on which it is kept
- Accompanied by a temporary document issued by a passport-issuing body (IB) (also known as a passport-issuing organisation (PIO))
- Accompanied by a smart card issued by an IB

Temporary documents may only be used for up to 45 days, and horses cannot be exported without additional documentation.

The person with primary responsibility for the horse must have the passport made available to them if they are not the owner.

It is an offence to transport a horse without its passport.

For more information, please see 'Horse passports'.

Transporter authorisations

Anyone transporting animals on journeys of more than 65 km, as part of an economic activity, must hold a valid transporter authorisation to do so (journeys of 65 km or less are exempt).

There are two types of authorisation:

- **Type 1.** A short journey authorisation for journeys longer than 65 km, up to and including eight hours' duration
- **Type 2.** A long journey authorisation for journeys longer than 65 km that last more than eight hours

Anyone transporting animals must carry their transporter authorisation with them, or a copy of it. Animal Health Inspectors or Trading Standards officers may ask to see authorisations.

Anyone transporting animals with a type 1 transporter authorisation must:

- Be in possession of a CoC (for drivers or attendants)
- Complete an ATC

Anyone transporting animals with a type 2 transporter authorisation must:

- Be in possession of a CoC (for drivers or attendants)
- Complete an ATC (if the journey is within the UK)
- Ensure a journey log is completed for journeys going outside the UK (this does not include registered horses)
- Ensure that the vehicle being used has been inspected and approved
- Ensure that contingency plans are in place in the event of an emergency
- Have a navigation system in use

Authorisation certificates will be issued in GB by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

The authorisation will last for five years unless revoked or suspended. It may have conditions imposed upon it at any time within this period if there are infringements of any requirement of assimilated Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 *on the protection of animals during transport and related operations* or the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Transporters need to re-apply every five years, as there are no automatic renewals.

Anyone requiring an authorisation will need to submit an application. Anyone completing the application form should read the notes on the form, which explains what information is required in each section.

More information on welfare during transportation is available on the Scottish Government website.

How to apply

Application forms* for both type 1 and type 2 journey authorisations are available on the GOV.UK website or in writing to APHA's Welfare in Transport Team.

Welfare in Transport Team, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Centre for International Trade, Eden Bridge House, Lowther Street, Carlisle, CA3 8DX. Tel: 0300 020 0301 (option 4, then option 3, then option 5). Email: wit@apha.gov.uk.

[*The GOV.UK web page states that it applies to England only, but this particular section is applicable GB-wide.]

Certificate of competence / training of drivers and attendants

Farmers, transporters or attendants using road vehicles for transporting farm animals, poultry or horses, in connection with an economic activity, must have received appropriate training. They must also hold a CoC issued by an independent body nominated by the Scottish Government Rural Directorate. The Scottish Government is able to provide the necessary competency training and certification through SSTS.

Skills (Scotland) Testing Service Ltd (SSTS), Overgogar House, Gogarbank, Edinburgh, EH12 9DD. Tel: 0131 339 8739. Email: ssts@lothianmachineryring.co.uk.

Details of the independent bodies* designated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to undertake assessments for competence and award CoCs are available on the GOV.UK website.

[*The GOV.UK web page states that it applies to England only, but this particular section is applicable GB-wide.]

Animal transport certificates

ATCs are required for journeys of any species of animals over any distance or duration

An ATC is required to record the following:

- Origin and ownership of animals
- Place of departure and destination
- Date and time of departure and expected duration of journey

However, please note that farmers transporting their own animals, by their own means of transport, on journeys of up to 50 km (about 31 miles) from their holding, are exempt from this requirement.

A template form is attached.

An animal movement document for sheep, goats, deer and pigs may be used as an ATC for those animals providing all relevant information is completed.

ATCs must be kept as a record for two years. Records obtained using the navigation system must be kept for three years (this requirement does not apply to registered equines).

Journey logs

The ATC requirement does not include journeys involving farm livestock or unregistered domestic equidae (horses) on journeys outside the UK that last more than eight hours; these require a journey log instead, part of which needs to be submitted and approved before the journey can begin.

The purpose of a journey log is to ensure such journeys are properly planned, with the required rest stops along the way, and without exceeding maximum journey times. The first section of the journey log must be submitted to the Welfare in Transport Team (see 'How to apply' above for contact details) and a copy of the completed log must be submitted to the same office within a month of the journey's completion.

Transporting livestock to (or through) the EU

UK-issued transporter authorisations, CoCs and vehicle approvals are not valid for transporting animals from the UK to Member States of the EU. The EU no longer recognises UK-issued versions of these documents.

You need EU-issued documents to transport live animals:

- Direct from the UK to EU Member States
- Through the EU to a non-EU country

You should apply to an EU Member State where you have representation to get a:

- Transporter authorisation
- Certificate of competence
- Vehicle approval certificate

You can use GB-issued transporter authorisations, CoCs and vehicle approval certificates in Northern Ireland (NI).

You can use NI-issued transporter authorisations, CoCs and vehicle approval certificates in GB.

To transport live animals from or through GB to the EU, you will need to apply for two journey logs:

- One issued and approved by whichever EU Member State is the first point of entry into the EU
- One issued and approved by APHA

For further information on documents to transport live animals, contact APHA's Welfare in Transport Team (see 'How to apply' above for contact details).

Registered horses

All registered horses must be registered with a recognised breed society or company such as Weatherbys.

Registered horses that are not going to market or slaughter are exempt from the requirement for journey logs, watering and feeding intervals, journey times and rest periods, and ATCs.

Extreme weather

Extra measures are recommended when transporting animals in extreme hot or cold weather. For more information, please see the guidance on transporting livestock on the Farm Advisory Service website.

Trading Standards

For more information on the work of Trading Standards services and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law, please see 'Trading Standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'.

In this update

No major changes.

Last reviewed / updated: June 2026

Key legislation

- Assimilated Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 *on the protection of animals during transport and related operations*
- Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Regulations 2006

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links go to the legislation.gov.uk website. The site usually updates the legislation to include any amendments made to it. However, this is not always the case. Information on all changes made to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

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