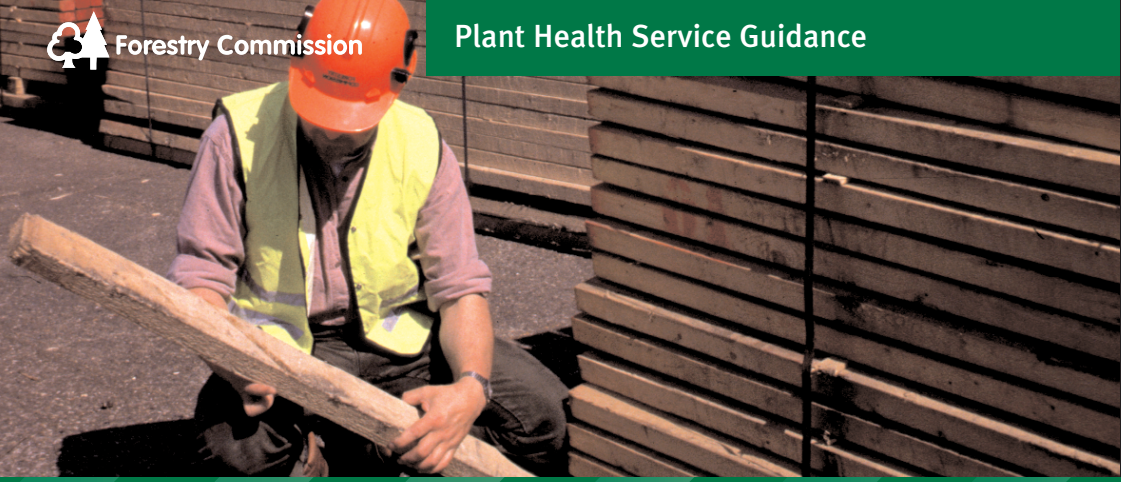
Forestry Commission

Plant Health Service Guidance



Export Certification

A guide to exporters on applying for phytosanitary certification services for wood and wood products destined for non-EU countries

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1. What is plant health export certification?

Pests and diseases can be carried on plants and trees, seeds, wood and wood products including wooden packaging material. They may also be carried on vehicles and machinery where they have not been properly cleaned and are carrying soil or plant debris. If you intend to export such material out of Great Britain to countries outside The EU[1] you must comply with the importing country's plant health regulations. The controls may require physical action by the exporter, such as removing plant debris from used forestry or agricultural machinery, or official inspection and certification. A phytosanitary (plant health) certificate can only be issued by a National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) and is an official statement from that Service to the equivalent body in the country of import certifying that the material:

- has been inspected according to appropriate procedures;
- is considered to be free from quarantine pests and practically free from other injurious pests;
- is considered to conform with the current phytosanitary regulations of the importing country.

In Great Britain phytosanitary certificates are issued by:

- the Forestry Commission – for forest tree seeds, wood and wood products including wooden packaging material and used forestry machinery;
- the agriculture departments – for plants and soil and used agricultural machinery. This is the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in England and Wales, and the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD) in Scotland.

The information contained in this booklet details the application for phytosanitary certification procedures operated by the Forestry Commission.

2. Who needs export certification?

If you are exporting wood and wood products, including wooden packaging material, you need to check with the importing country's NPPO to see whether

1. Member States of the EU are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. For the purposes of plant health controls, Switzerland is regarded in the same way as a Member State.

you need a phytosanitary certificate. Details of most NPPO's can be found at www.ippc.int.

Some countries also require an import licence or permit, which their NPPO will usually issue. Again, it is your responsibility to make sure you have one where this is required. You will need to produce the import permit to us in order that we can include details, where required, on the phytosanitary certificate.

3. How do I apply for a certificate?

All applications for phytosanitary certificates issued by the Forestry Commission are processed by our Edinburgh office.

To make an electronic application via the internet you will first need to register with us and accept our terms and conditions to use this service. Once registered you will be allocated with a unique customer reference number to enable you to access the system and submit applications online. The system has proved to be very successful and applicants are encouraged to register with this service. Details of registration can be obtained by contacting us at the address at the end of this booklet.

If you do not wish to register to submit applications via the internet, paper copy applications must be made on our form PH25, which must have all sections completed. You may apply by fax, electronically, by post or in person depending on how you intend to pay for the application (see Section 8). For fax or postal applications you may either request a form from our office by writing to us or telephoning our helpline, or you can print a blank form from our website. Details of how to get in touch with us are given at the end of this booklet.

4. What information do I need to provide?

The application form is straightforward. You will need to give us a unique purchase order number which we will use to cross refer to the phytosanitary certificate(s) and our invoice. You should also make it clear to whom the certificate is to be sent, preferably a named contact within a company.

You will need to declare the country of destination (as well as any non-EU country of transit), the means of transport and port of entry, and full information about

the consignment – the species of wood (except for wood packaging material), any treatment applied (e.g. kiln-drying, heat treatment or fumigation) and the description and quantity (number of packs of sawn wood, volume of logs, number of pallets or crates and any identification marks).

If you have obtained an import permit or licence, we will need this too. This must be posted or delivered with your application and it will be returned to you with the phytosanitary certificate.

We do not need any commercial information such as contract details or letter of credit information as this is not relevant to the quarantine status of the goods and is not required by the NPPO to whom the certificate is addressed. We reserve the right not to include information which is not relevant.

5. Wood packaging material

For wood packaging material, many countries have introduced import requirements based on International Standard for a Phytosanitary Measure (ISPM) No 15 *Guidelines for regulating wood packaging material in international trade*. You should not need a phytosanitary certificate where the wood packaging material has been manufactured or repaired by a company authorised to do so and to treat and mark their product under a national programme. In the UK, this is the UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme and you can obtain details of suppliers of ISPM 15 compliant products from the Timber Packaging and Pallet Manufacturers' Confederation whose contact details are given at the end of this booklet. Other countries may, however, require a phytosanitary certificate and again you should check with the relevant NPPO before sending your goods.

6. Re-forwarding phytosanitary certificates

If the goods originated outside the European Union or Switzerland and were imported with a phytosanitary certificate – and the consignment has not been stored, split up, combined with other consignments or repackaged – you will need a re-forwarding phytosanitary certificate. Before we can issue this we will need the original phytosanitary certificate. Where this was surrendered to us at the time of import, we will need as much information as possible (date and port of landing, name of vessel, etc.) to help us to trace it. If, however, you are able to quote the serial number of the Certificate of Clearance we issued at the time of

import (form PHF28), this will be sufficient. We keep all phytosanitary certificates with our copy of the Certificate of Clearance for at least one year.

We will also need to know where the goods can be inspected.

7. When should I apply?

As soon as possible. Normally, we need a minimum notice of five working days, prior to the date when you want the certificate, which must be before the goods are exported. We prioritise applications by date of export. For goods being sent by air, we need at least 3 day's notice. This is necessary so that we can arrange an inspection if one is needed. Phytosanitary certificates are normally only valid where they have been issued not more than 14 days prior to export (this rule may vary from country to country) and you should bear this in mind when deciding when to apply. Remember that you will need the original certificate from us. We will send this to you by first class post unless you make alternative arrangements with us, e.g. arrange collection by courier, or in person from our office in Edinburgh.

Where there are exceptional circumstances we will do our best to meet shorter deadlines, but we cannot guarantee it, especially at times of peak demand. We will always give priority to applications which have been submitted with the proper notice.

Important: phytosanitary certificates cannot, under any circumstances, be issued after the goods have left the country. If you send goods without the required certificate, and they are detained on arrival, there is nothing that we can do to help you. It will be up to the NPPO in that country to decide what action to take.

8. How much does a certificate cost?

We charge £15 for considering an application and issuing a certificate, where appropriate.

Where an inspection is necessary, a separate charge will be made, depending on how long the inspection takes. The minimum fee for an inspection is £27 and covers up to 1 hour of the inspector's time, including their travel and office time. Thereafter, we charge £7.50 for each 15 minutes or part thereof that the inspector needs to be on the premises. VAT is not applicable.

Inspections are not normally required where there is adequate evidence to demonstrate that no quarantine pests are present. For example, if we are asked to certify a consignment of oak wood as being free of Oak Wilt disease, and we know that it originated in this country where the disease is absent, an inspection will not normally be necessary. Similarly, where wood packaging material has been treated and marked in accordance with ISPM 15, we will not normally carry out an inspection. We may, however, ask for evidence to support information on quantities, e.g. copies of delivery notes. All commercial information will be kept confidential and will not be made available to anyone else without your permission.

The fee for a re-forwarding phytosanitary certificate is the same as for a phytosanitary certificate. Normally, if we carried out a full inspection at the time of import, a second inspection prior to export will not be required and we will only charge for considering the application and issuing the certificate.

9. When do I pay?

Unless you have arrangements with us to operate a credit account, you must pay for the application before we will consider it. This means that applications accompanied by a cheque can only be made by post or delivered to us in person at the Plant Health Service office. Cheques must be made payable to 'Forestry Commission'. Where an inspection is carried out, and you do not have a credit account with us, we will invoice you separately. We will not normally delay issue of a certificate until this payment is received, but we reserve the right to do so where we decide this is appropriate.

If you wish to arrange a credit account you should complete the Credit Application form which accompanies this booklet and send it to the address given at the top of the form. The Forestry Commission's Credit Management Branch reserves the right to accept or refuse credit applications and to set the level of credit offered dependant upon status. We monitor all credit accounts on an ongoing basis and failure to adhere to the credit terms offered is likely to result in suspension or withdrawal of any credit. Until a credit account has been agreed and set up we may require advance payment for each application. Credit arrangements must be set up in advance if you want to submit applications electronically. As a general rule, if you estimate that you will require 7 or more phytosanitary certificates per month then a credit account will be the most efficient, economic and effective way of trading with us.

If you choose to open a credit account you will be invoiced on a monthly basis and details of the phytosanitary certificates issued in the invoice period will be provided with the invoice. Our invoice payment terms are 'end of the month following the month of invoice'. Payments for invoiced amounts can be made by electronic payment as follows:

Payment by Swift/BACS: Sort Code 83-91-25. Co-operative Bank, 29 Gordon Street, Glasgow, Account Number: 61533134 quoting Customer Number/Invoice Number(s).

Please note that electronic payments will not be processed unless your customer number is provided as a reference.

Alternatively, you may pay by cheque made payable to the Forestry Commission, and sent to us at PO Box 17777, Edinburgh, EH12 7ZE. Please write your Customer Number and Invoice Number on the back.

10. Who should pay?

We will only accept payment from the person or company submitting the phytosanitary certificate application (or their representative) and named in Section 1 of the application form.

11. What happens if my application is refused?

We will only refuse to issue a certificate where the goods do not meet the require-ments set out by the importing country or where they do not meet the description declared in the application. If we have considered your application or have carried out an inspection, the full fee will still be payable. Any re-inspection will involve the same amount of work and the full fee will be payable again. We will also refuse to issue a certificate where a cheque is not honoured or a credit account has been suspended and the application is not accompanied by another form of payment.

If we refuse an application because no certificate is required we will not make a charge.

12. Offences

The applicant named on the phytosanitary application certificate form will be committing an offence and could be liable to prosecution if, for the purpose of obtaining a certificate, they knowingly or recklessly make a false statement, or intentionally fail to disclose any information that we need to know. If a person is found guilty of an offence they may be fined up to £5000.

13. What about certificates for forest tree plants and soil?

Under special arrangements made with Defra and SEERAD, they will consider applications for export services for forest tree plants and soil. Details of these services, the charges applicable and application forms are available from:

Defra
Plant Health Division
Foss House
Kings Pool
1–2 Peasholme Green
York YO1 2PZ
Tel: 01904 455174

SEERAD
Plant Health and Potatoes
Pentland House
47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TY
Tel: 0131 244 6303

14. Further information

If you have any questions on export certification services, or on any aspect of Plant Health relating to forest trees, wood, wood products, soil or used forestry machinery you should contact either the Plant Health Service at our Edinburgh office or your local Plant Health Regional Manager whose details appear below. For enquiries about the UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme, contact TIMCON at the address below:

Plant Health Service, Forestry Commission
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT.
Helpline Tel: 0131 314 6414 | Fax: 0131 314 6148
E-mail:plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Ian Murgatroyd, Plant Health Regional Manager (North)
Tel: 01698 222475 | Fax: 01387 251491 | Mobile: 07767 251379
E-mail:ian.murgatroyd@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Stephen Mears, Plant Health Regional Manager (South)
Tel/Fax: 01507 328275 | Mobile: 07831 204324
E-mail:steve.mears@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

The Secretary, The UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme
TIMCON, 840 Melton Road, Thurmaston, Leicester LE4 8BN.
Tel: 0116 264 0579 | Fax: 0116 264 0141
E-mail: timcon@associationhq.org.uk

Useful websites

- www.forestry.gov.uk/planthealth
- www.timcon.org
- www.ippc.int

Other Plant Health leaflets

- Plant health import and export controls – wood and bark
- Import inspection fees for wood, wood products and bark
- Health and safety at work – A guide for inspectors carrying out plant health service work
- Plant health and the single market
- Plant health and the single market – guidance on EC plant health controls for registered forestry traders
- *Dendroctonus micans* – a guide for forest managers on control techniques
- Plant health inspections – minimum facilities at ports
- Plant health controls – the use of dunnage in British ports
- The UK wood packaging material marking programme

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