

Horse Passports (England) Regulations 2004

Who needs a passport?

The owner of any horse that was born on or before 30th November 2003, who does not already have one should have applied for a passport for it, before 1st July 2004. The owner of a horse that was born after 30th November 2003 shall obtain a passport for it on or before 31st December of the year of its birth, or by six months after its birth, whichever is the later. For the purpose of these regulations, the term 'horse' includes any domestic horse, donkey, mule, hinny, or jennet. A horse cannot be sold without a passport after 28th February 2005. Veterinary certificates are not passports.

For horses with passports that were issued prior to the above Regulations, the passport should have been returned to the passport issuing-organisation, before 1st July 2004, to have the necessary Section IX pages inserted.

Why does my horse need a passport?

Horse passports are required by European Decision 2000/68/EC, and are necessary in order to prevent horses entering the human food chain if they have been treated with medicines that must not be administered to food producing animals. Although we do not consume horsemeat in any great quantity in the UK, a large number of horses are slaughtered in Britain each year for export for human consumption. The introduction of passports will also help reduce the risk of a ban being introduced on up to 75% of veterinary medicines (including Bute) currently used to treat horses.

The information provided in the passports is also intended to be used to set up a database of horses throughout England. This information will be utilised to try and trace missing or stolen horses.

What's in the passport and how do I get one?

A horse passport is a document, written in both English and French, which uniquely identifies a horse throughout its life, and has been issued by a recognised Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO). It includes pages that show a silhouette of the horse (which must be completed by a veterinary surgeon or a competent person authorised by a PIO), pages that show the veterinary treatment history of the horse, pages that include the movement history of the horse, and a declaration as to whether or not the horse is ultimately intended for human consumption.

For a list of passport issuing authorities, refer to your local Trading Standards Service.

Intended for human consumption?

Section IX is for the owner to declare whether or not the horse is ultimately intended for human consumption, and the declaration must be signed before:

- any medication containing a substance specified in Annex IV of Council Regulation 2377/90 is administered (in this case the declaration must be signed as "not intended for human consumption");
- the horse is consigned for slaughter for human consumption (declaration must be signed as "intended for human consumption");

- the horse is sent outside the UK (declaration can be signed either way).

The owner can, at any time prior to one of the above events, choose to sign the declaration. It must be remembered that once the declaration has been signed as 'not intended for human consumption', this can never be changed in order to protect the human food chain. Signing the 'not intended' declaration removes any option of slaughtering the animal for food at a later point in its life, and offering horse owners this new flexibility may help prevent potential welfare problems associated with animals nearing the end of their lives which cannot be sent to an abattoir.

If the declaration that the horse is ultimately intended for human consumption is signed, the date that certain veterinary medicines are administered to the horse must be recorded on the relevant pages. Before administering any medication which contains a substance listed in Annex IV of Council Regulation 2377/90 a vet or other person administering the medicine will need to see the passport to ensure that the declaration has been signed as 'not intended for human consumption'. This is because, by law, medicines that are not approved for use in animals that may enter the food chain must not be given to horses declared as intended for human consumption. An 'intended for human consumption' declaration can be reversed.

Semi-feral horses

Semi-feral horses listed on Central Registers held by the Dartmoor Commoners Council, the Exmoor Pony Society, and the New Forest Verderers are exempt from the requirement for Horse Passports until such times as they leave those respective areas. However, this exemption applies to those animals so registered. All other horses in those areas are required to have Horse Passports.

Imported horses

The owner of any horse entering England without a Horse Passport issued by a PIO must apply for a Horse Passport within 30 days of entering the country and, until the Passport is issued, no change of ownership may take place. Any passport so issued must state that the horse is not ultimately intended for human consumption. If the horse is being sold within 30 days, a passport must be obtained before the animal is sold.

When must the passport accompany a horse?

From 28th February 2005 horses moving under the following circumstances must be accompanied by their passport:

- Into or out of Great Britain.
- For the purpose of competition or breeding.
- To other premises where a veterinary medicinal product is to be administered (the passport must also be available to any veterinary surgeon or other person administering veterinary products on the premises where the horse is kept).
- To the premises of a new keeper.
- To a slaughterhouse for slaughter.
- For the purpose of sale.

What if I buy or sell a horse?

When a horse is sold, the seller must give the passport to the buyer (or in the case of auction sales, to the auctioneers, who must then give the passport to the buyer). The new owner or his representative must, within 30 days, send the following information to the passport issuing organisation:

- a. The name and address of the new owner.
- b. The name and identification number or alphanumeric code of the horse as entered in Section II of the passport, and shall complete Section I of the passport in accordance with the rules of the passport-issuing organisation.

What do I do if my horse dies?

If a horse dies or is slaughtered the owner must return the passport to the passport issuing authority within 30 days of the animal's death.

What should I do if the passport is lost or damaged?

Where a passport has been lost or damaged, the owner of the horse must, within 30 days of the loss or damage being discovered, apply for a replacement passport for that horse to the passport issuing organisation, if known. Where the original passport issuing organisation is not known, then the owner should apply to any passport issuing organisation.

Who enforces this legislation?

Authorised officers of the Minister or the Local Authority have power to demand to inspect horse passports at any reasonable time. Failure to produce a horse passport upon demand, or the movement of a horse after 28th February 2005 without its passport in the circumstances listed on the previous page, is an offence liable, upon summary conviction, to a **fine not exceeding £5,000, or three months imprisonment, or both.**

This is merely a broad précis of the regulations. Copies of the regulations themselves, a list of Recognised organisations, and frequently asked questions, may be found on the [DEFRA website](#).

For further information, please contact **Environmental Protection, Animal Health Section, Swindon Borough Council, Premier House, Station Road, SN1 1TZ**

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