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trading standards law explained

Pigs: identification and movement

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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.

This guidance is for Scotland

Any person keeping pigs, including as pets, must comply with current movement reporting, recording and identification requirements.

New keepers

Whether you want to keep a pet pig or a commercial herd of pigs, you will first need to obtain a county parish holding (CPH) number, which identifies the land where the pigs will be kept. To apply for a CPH number, you need to contact your local Scottish Government Agriculture and Rural Economy office.

An occupier of a holding who begins to keep pigs on that holding, and any person who takes over the occupation of a holding where pigs are kept, must notify the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) of their name and address, and the address of the holding. This must be done within one month. APHA should be contacted on 0300 060 0704 or apha.scotland@apha.gov.uk. They will provide you with your herd mark at this stage, which is alphanumeric and is a quick and effective method for identifying premises from which pigs have moved.

You must also notify APHA, within one month, if you stop keeping pigs or if there are any changes to the details initially provided.

Registration with APHA is a legal requirement for disease-control purposes and is not related to registration with any breed / pedigree societies.

Reporting pig movements

Pig movements have to be reported to ScotEID (movement reporting database). This can be done:

- Online on the ScotEID website. You can then set up movements and print off the requisite number of haulier summary / movement documents
- By phone on 01466 794323. In this case, you may request that a movement document is sent out (assuming adequate pre-notification is given)
- In writing to ScotEID Information Centre, 83 Gordon Street, Huntly, AB54 8FG. In this case, the keeper must complete their own movement document

Should you have further questions or need help, please email: help@scoteid.com.

You are required to pre-notify the movement of your pigs or at least notify it on the day the journey commences. Once the journey has been completed, the destination abattoir / farm / croft / market will confirm the move and receipt of the pigs.

Where the movement is pre-notified online or by phone to ScotEID, there is no need for a pig movement document, unless the pigs are either:

- Less than 12 months old and marked with a temporary mark
  or
- Moving to England, Wales or Northern Ireland

Where the movement is pre-notified online or by phone to ScotEID, you will have the option of obtaining a movement document. Keepers may also choose to have food chain information (FCI) added to the movement document if the pigs are going to slaughter.

The movement document contains all the relevant information required for an animal transport certificate (ATC) under the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

The keeper is responsible for producing their own movement document if the notification is given in writing.

For movements of pigs from a market, the market operator will report all the off movements online on your behalf.

There is guidance for pig keepers available on the Scottish Government website, which explains the requirements in further detail.

Transport: documentation and welfare

By pre-notifying the movement online, a haulier summary can be printed and carried with you, or by the haulier transporting your pigs during the journey, as required by law. If you pre-notify the move, you will be sent a haulier summary in the post. The movement cannot take place until this document is received, so consider this when planning your moves. Please see the guidance from the Scottish Government.

Please also see 'Transporting animals by road' for further documentation requirements.

For information on the welfare of pigs when they are being transported, see 'Welfare of animals during transport'.

Movement record

The keeper of a pig must make and maintain a record, known as a holding register, that documents the following information each time a pig is moved on to or off a holding:

- Date of movement
- Identification mark (including individual number, if applicable), slapmark or temporary mark (if applicable)
- Number of pigs moved
- The holding the pigs have been moved from
- The holding to which the pigs are moved

Details of movements must be recorded within 48 hours of them taking place and the record must be retained for three years.

A yearly count of pigs must take place. The maximum number normally on the holding must be recorded, together with the actual amount.

The keeper can choose in which format to keep a holding register, as long as it contains the required information and a copy can be provided when requested. Options include:

- A paper record
- A spreadsheet
- Using the holding register function in farm-management software
- The ScotEID database

A template movement record is attached.

More information on keeping a holding register for pigs can be found on the Scottish Government website.

Identification of pigs

No person may move a pig off a holding unless it has either:

- An ear tag, with the letters 'UK' followed by the herd mark of the holding from which it is being moved
  or
- A tattoo, showing the herd mark (with or without the letters 'UK'). A tattoo must be applied either by tattoo forceps on an ear or by a slap marker on each shoulder

Pigs less than one year old may instead have a temporary mark, which is recorded on the accompanying movement document and identifies the holding of departure. Temporary marks must last until the pigs reach their destination. Temporary marks are not permitted for movements to a market, slaughterhouse, a show or for use in export.

Management information may be added to the ear tag or tattoo, provided it is distinguishable from the official mark.

Ear tags must be:

- Easy to read during the pig's lifetime
- Made of metal or plastic or a combination of both
- Tamper resistant
- Incapable of re-use
- Heat resistant
- Designed to remain attached to the pig without harming it

Movements to exhibitions, shows and for breeding

A pig being moved to an exhibition or show, or for breeding purposes with the intention of returning the pig to the holding from which it was moved, must be identified with either:

- An ear tag consisting of the letters 'UK' followed by the allocated herd mark and a unique individual identification number
  or
- A tattoo consisting of the allocated herd mark followed by a unique individual identification number

Movements to and from show grounds must be notified to ScotEID within 48 hours, as usual. If a keeper sells a pig at a show, they must notify ScotEID within three days of the sale taking place.

Full identification for the pig moved must be recorded as part of the animal movement record.

Movements to market

A pig may be moved from a market if it is marked with the herd mark of the holding from which it arrived. If it does not have this mark, it may only be returned home.

Import and export

There are extra requirements when pigs are coming into or leaving the country. See 'Importing animals' and 'Exporting animals' for more information.

Feeding pigs

Swill or catering waste (waste from catering and domestic waste) must not be fed to any pig.

Catering waste is defined in assimilated Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 as "all waste food, including used cooking oil originating in restaurants, catering facilities and kitchens, including central kitchens and household kitchens". Pigs, therefore, cannot be fed any kind of kitchen or restaurant waste, including meat, vegetable peelings, old sandwiches or animal by-products.

More information on controls related to animal feed can be found on the GOV.UK website.

'Standstill' rules

Under the Disease Control (Interim Measures) (Scotland) Order 2002, a person wishing to move a pig should be in possession of, and must comply with, the conditions of the 'general licence' for the movement of pigs. A copy of the general licence can be obtained from the Scottish Government website.

No pigs may be moved off a premises within 20 complete days of any pigs being moved on to those premises, or any other premises in the same sole-occupancy group. This means that pigs are free to move from the premises on the 21st day after they arrive.

No pigs may be moved off a premises within 13 days of any sheep, goats or cattle moving on to that premises or any other premises in the same sole-occupancy group.

Exemptions from the 'standstill' period

Movements permitted during the 'standstill' period include:

- Direct to an abattoir, or to slaughter via a dedicated slaughter market or slaughter collection centre
- For veterinary treatment
- To an artificial insemination centre
- Export (or to an approved export collection centre or assembly centre prior to departure)
- Movements within a sole-occupancy group
- To shows from an approved isolation facility. The pig must be placed in the isolation facility for 20 days prior to the movement, unless it is placed in there between shows. Following the show, the pig must be put back in the approved isolation facility
- Movements within an approved pyramid
- Movements of an animal that is on a vehicle which enters a premises to drop off other animals, provided it does not leave the means of transport whilst on that premises

Pig movements that do not trigger a standstill period include:

- Pigs moved within an approved pyramid (these do not trigger a 20-day standstill at the destination premises)
- Pigs returned from an artificial insemination centre
- Movements within a sole-occupancy group
- Movement of an animal on to a premises in a vehicle to collect other animals, provided that the animal is not unloaded
- Pigs moving to a show are exempt from the standstill on the premises of origin, provided that they are individually identified and have been kept in a Scottish Government-approved isolation facility

for 20 complete days before departure. They will not trigger a standstill on return, provided that they are kept in approved isolation facilities for 20 days
- Movements for the purpose of breeding that comply with conditions set out below

Pigs (mainly specialist or pedigree breeding stock) that are not within a pyramid may move to a farm for breeding and will not trigger a standstill, either there or when they return home, provided that:

- They are individually identified
- The person to whom the pigs are sent signs a declaration stating that the pigs are for breeding and makes the declaration to that effect
- The pigs are isolated on the breeding premises in Scottish Government-approved isolation facilities. The facilities may contain resident stock, but not animals brought from outside the breeding premises
- Either they are isolated for 20 days before leaving in Scottish Government-approved isolation facilities, or they have observed a 20-day standstill on the premises of origin

Pet pigs

All pigs are farmed animals in the eyes of the law, so even if they are being kept as pets, the requirements are the same as if they were part of a farmed herd. There are also extra requirements for pet pig owners, such as a walking licence if you want to walk the animal off your premises. For more information see 'Keeping pet pigs'.

Further information

The Scottish Government has produced *Guidance for the Welfare of Pigs*.

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: November 2026

Key legislation

- Pigs (Records, Identification and Movement) Order 1995
- Disease Control (Interim Measures) (Scotland) Order 2002
- Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Regulations 2006
- Pigs (Records, Identification and Movement) (Scotland) Order 2011
- Assimilated Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 *implementing Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 and Directive 97/78/EC*

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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