Sheep: identification, records & movement

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This guidance is for Scotland

Sheep that were born or identified on or after 31 December 2009, and are not intended for slaughter under 12 months of age, must be electronically identified and individually recorded in your flock register.

When moving these animals they must be recorded individually on your movement document unless you are moving them within a business or you move them through a critical control point (CCP). These sheep will generally be your breeding stock but may also be sheep you keep for whatever reason beyond 12 months of age (including pets).

You do not need to electronically identify sheep that were already officially identified before 31 December 2009 (historic flock); neither do you need to record these animals individually in your holding register. However, on 1 January 2015, the requirement to record individual animal numbers on movement documents extended to the historic flock.
There are different rules for sheep destined for slaughter within 12 months of birth.

**Before moving sheep to your holding**

If you want to keep sheep you will first require a county parish holding (CPH) number, which identifies the land where they will be kept.

To apply for a CPH number you need to contact your local Scottish Government Agriculture and Rural Economy office.

**Notification of holdings**

An occupier of a holding who begins to keep sheep on that holding, and any person who takes over the occupation of a holding where sheep 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. They will provide you with your flock number at this stage.

You must also notify APHA, within one month, if you stop keeping sheep.

**When should I identify my sheep?**

Lambs born on your holding must be identified within the following timescales:

- within six months of birth if the animals are housed overnight
- within nine months of birth if the animals are not housed overnight (kept in ‘extensive conditions’)

Lambs must be identified before they leave their holding of birth - including moves to slaughter, temporary grazing unless the five-mile concession* applies, common grazing, market, etc - whether or not the six / nine months have passed.

[*The five-mile concession means moves within five miles of the main holding to seasonal grazings, where livestock do not mix with those of another keeper, and the CPH number of the seasonal land and dates of occupation are recorded in the holding register.]

**What can I identify my sheep with?**

Sheep can be identified with any of the following identification devices:

- ear tags
- tattoos
- pastern tags
- boluses

What is used depends on whether the animal is a full EID-identified animal (generally one that will not be slaughtered before it is 12 months old) or a slaughter animal (one that is intended for slaughter within 12 months of birth).

However, there are different rules that are dependent on when your sheep were born or identified.
Sheep born before 31 December 2009

Before 1 January 2001, sheep did not need to be identified with a permanent mark. Between 1 January 2001 and 9 July 2005, sheep were identified with an ear tag showing a UK flock mark but not an individual animal number.

Between 9 July 2005 and 31 December 2009 all sheep were individually identified but did not need to be electronically identified.

If any of these older sheep have not been identified and are to be moved, you must identify them with two identification devices that have the same individual animal number (one of which must be electronic and therefore the animal becomes a full EID-identified animal).

You do not need to replace the identification devices that are already on the sheep. If you choose to replace the identification device, you will need to apply two identification devices, one of which must be electronic.

Current industry advice is that full EID should be used as individual animal numbers must be recorded and reported. There are various options for the historic flock given on the ScotEID website.

Sheep born or identified since 31 December 2009

Full EID-identified animals should have two identification devices, one of which must be electronic.

The identification code on both must contain the letters 'UK' followed by a '0', the six-digit 'flock mark' and a five-digit 'individual animal number'. The electronic number on the chip will be replaced with '826' (the ISO country code for the UK).

- an EID tag can be any colour apart from red or black but yellow is recommended (compulsory in England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- a non-electronic identification device can be any colour apart from black (unless with bolus) or red

Slaughter animals may have a single electronic tag with the flock mark only; this has 'UK' followed by the flock mark printed on the outside of the tag and the individual animal number contained in the electronic chip.

Keepers have the option to fully EID slaughter animals but will then have to follow the recording and reporting requirements of full EID-identified sheep.

Reserved colours for tags (as stated in the Regulations):

- black: used only for ear tags or pastern tags where the sheep has an EID bolus
- red: used only for replacement tags (including replacement electronic tags)

Replacing identification

If your sheep loses its identification device, or it becomes impossible to read, you must replace the device within the following timescales (whichever comes first):

- no later than 28 days after the tag was removed or discovered to be lost or illegible (either visually or electronically)
- before the sheep is moved from your holding
Whenever you apply replacements you must make a record of this in the replacement section of the holding register.

The replacement rules are the same for full EID and those in the historic flock. If the animal is not on the holding of birth any replacement tags should be red. The options for replacement of lost tags are as follows:

- replacements using the original number (if known)
- replacements using a new number. Any remaining tag should be removed and two new matching identifiers applied. If the animal was born or identified on or after 31 December 2009 one of the identifiers must be electronic

**Sheep with an EID bolus**

Any replacement ear tag or pastern tag must have the same animal identification number and must be black. If the bolus fails or cannot be read the animal should be re-identified using an EID tag or EID pastern; you should not insert a new bolus.

**Sheep with a tattoo**

If the sheep has a tattoo and loses its other identifier, the replacement electronic identifier must have the same number as the tattoo. If the tattoo becomes illegible it should be replaced with a conventional ear tag.

**Note:** tattoos are not suitable for use for export.

**Where do I record my animal movements & who do I report them to?**

When an animal moves, its movement must be recorded in the holding register within 48 hours. A movement document must also be completed and the receiving keeper (unless receiving an animal from a market) must notify the movement to the Scottish Animal Movement Unit (SAMU), Government Buildings, 161 Brooms Road, Dumfries, DG1 3ES, Tel: 0845 6017597, Fax: 01387 274457, Email: samu@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

The report to SAMU must be made within three days of the movement. The only exceptions are:

- when an animal that remains under your keepership moves under the five-mile concession
- when an animal that remains under your keepership moves within a crofting-township concession
- where an animal is moved to a veterinary practice

**Recording movements in the holding register**

Versions of the holding register in Word and PDF are available on the Scottish Government website.

You must record the individual identification numbers for full EID-identified animals when the animal is first identified, moves to another holding (unless the five-mile or crofting-township concession applies) or dies.

Slaughter animals are always recorded as a batch or mixed batch (that is, you only need to record the flock numbers of the animals being moved).
For animals born or identified before 31 December 2009 you do not have to record individual identification numbers in the holding register; however, individual numbers are required for notifying movements.

The examples below show the different ways of recording sheep movements.

### Individually

This is where you record the individual identification number of each animal. It applies to full EID-identified animals. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of animals moved</th>
<th>Flock mark / individual ID number</th>
<th>CPH / location animals arrived from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/07/2015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>UK0123456 00001</td>
<td>01/001/1234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>UK0123456 00002 to 00006</td>
<td>01/001/1234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Batch recording

This is where you only record the total number of animals moved. It is used for slaughter animals, animals identified before 31 December 2009, moves within a business and for full EID-identified animals where they move through a critical control point (CCP) that is providing you with the individual numbers. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of animals moved</th>
<th>Flock mark</th>
<th>CPH / location animals arrived from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/10/2015</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>UK0123456</td>
<td>01/001/1234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mixed batch recording

This is where slaughter animals moving in batches have different flock marks. You must record the number of animals that have the same flock mark. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of animals moved</th>
<th>Flock mark</th>
<th>CPH / location animals arrived from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06/10/2015</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>UK0123456</td>
<td>01/001/1234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>UK0654321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: the leading zeroes in the flock marks in the above tables are only necessary for full EID-identified animals.

Recording movements in the movement document

The movement document, which is in triplicate form, needs to be completed each time animals move to a different holding, unless the five-mile or crofting-township concession applies. Books of movement documents can be obtained from your local Scottish Government Agriculture and Rural Economy office.

Moves can be recorded and reported in the movement document in two ways: individual recording and batch recording.

Full EID-identified animals born or identified since 31 December 2009 should be recorded individually on your movement document unless you are moving animals within a business or through a CCP (see below).

Slaughter animals should be recorded on a batch basis.

Since 1 January 2015 you need to record individual identification numbers for sheep that were tagged before 31 December 2009 on the movement document. The exceptions to this are moves within a business or to slaughter (direct or through a market), which continue to be batch reported.

How do I record the individual numbers?

For individual recording, it is up to you to decide whether you read and record an animal's individual identification number yourself as it moves off your holding or use a CCP to electronically read and record the numbers on your behalf. By using a CCP you avoid having to individually record animals as they move off the holding.

What is critical control point recording?

This is where animals with electronic identification devices have their individual identification numbers read and recorded on behalf of a keeper by a CCP such as a market or abattoir.

Further information

More detailed guidance on identification and traceability, including examples and scenarios, can be found on the Scottish Government website.

Penalties

Failure to comply with trading standards law can lead to enforcement action and to sanctions, which may include a fine and/or imprisonment. For more information please see 'Trading standards: powers, enforcement & penalties'. 
Key legislation

Animal Health Act 1981
Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (Scotland) Order 2009

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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 may only show the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on amendments to UK legislation can be found on each link’s 'More Resources' tab; amendments to EU legislation are usually incorporated into the text.

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