



SPSS Information Sheet 1

The Legal Responsibilities of Owners in Relation to Equine Passports

Overview

All horses (including ponies and donkeys) must have a valid horse passport. To apply for a passport you must be the owner of the horse. You can be fined an unlimited amount if you don't have a valid horse passport. You can also be fined if you have not updated the passport (eg after a change of ownership)

A horse must not have more than one passport.

The horse's rider or keeper must have the passport with them at all times when they're with the horse, unless it's in a stable, grazing in a field, or being moved by foot. Owners can take their horses for short rides without one.

You (or the horse's main keeper) may have to show the passport to a Trading Standards inspector or an animal health officer. Upon a reasonable request from a veterinary surgeon treating your horse, the responsible person must provide the equine's ID to the veterinary surgeon without delay.

Under UK law, a passport must be applied for within 6 months of a foal's birth or before 30 November in the year of birth (whichever is the later) and, in any event, before leaving permanently the holding of birth except where such movement takes place as foal at foot of the dam on which the foal depends or the foal is being transported directly to slaughter.

Slaughter for human consumption and medication record

By default all horses are intended for slaughter for human consumption except where irreversibly declared as not so intended in the relevant part of the passport. For passports issued before 2016 this is Part II of Section IX; for passports issued from Jan 2016 this is Part II of Section II. If your horse has not been "signed out" of the human food chain, your vet may not be able to prescribe some medications and any medication or injections your horse is given must be entered in Section II Part III by your vet. You must notify the relevant PIO within 14 days of your horse being "signed out" of the human food chain.

Selling or buying a horse

You must give the passport to the new owner on the day that you sell (or transfer ownership) of your horse - if you don't, you could be prosecuted.

You must notify the relevant PIO that you're the new owner within 30 days if you buy (or otherwise take ownership of) a horse and return the passport to the that PIO. For passports issued outside the UK, this can be a UK Studbook that is relevant for the breed.

Contact your local Trading Standards office if someone tries to sell you a horse, pony or donkey without a passport.

Death, Theft or Loss (of Horse)

Your horse's passport is valid for its life. When the horse dies you must return the passport (within 30 days) to the Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO) that issued it to have it invalidated. You can request that they return it. You must also return the passport to the issuing PIO within 30 days of any other loss (including theft) of the animal.

Transponders (aka Microchips)

With effect from 1st October 2020 ALL equines must have an operational transponder. If a transponder fails then a replacement must be inserted by a veterinary surgeon. For SPSS passports issued prior to 1st January 2016, the microchip sticker should be added to an appropriate place on the ID diagram (page 2) and the vet should annotate the page with name, signature and practice stamp. Then the SPSS "Notification Of Implant Of A Microchip/Transponder" form must be completed and returned to the SPSS. If the passport was issued on/after 1st January 2016, there will have been a microchip implanted prior to passport issue and any additional microchip should be recorded in Section I Part C as it is an amendment/ modification to the equine's identification. A copy of this page must be forwarded to the SPSS so that the details of the additional transponder can be properly recorded on the SPSS and Defra databases. The SPSS can also record the addition of a microchip for Scottish Sport Horse (SSH) issued passports if they relate to ponies on or under 148cm and for non-UK EU passports (eg a German or Dutch ones) for ponies (or small horses up to 158cm) that

are eligible for SPSS over stamping apart from any pure-bred ponies that have a UK-based studbook (eg Welsh Sec A, B, C, D, Connemara or Caspian). Examples of pony breeds that we will overstamp for the purpose of recording a microchip and/or change of ownership etc include Deutsches Reitponies (DRP), NWPCS Sec K, NRPS, Danish Sports Ponies, part-bred Connemaras and similar. The SPSS then notifies the passport issuer of the changes. Note that this over stamping does not put a graded pony into the appropriate SPSS Studbook – please contact us if that is required as well as the change of ownership.

Replace a lost passport

Contact the Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO) that issued the original passport to request a duplicate. If you do not know which PIO this is, you can apply for a replacement from another PIO. Apply to a PIO that manages studbooks if your equine has a pedigree. If your horse had a passport from another EU country and has a pedigree, you can also request a duplicate from an EU PIO. Your horse will not be used as food when it dies if it's given a duplicate or replacement passport. **You're breaking the law if you apply for a replacement or duplicate passport when the original is not lost.** If you find your original passport then send the passport back to the PIO that issued it. If the PIO no longer exists or is not in the UK, then send it to any appropriate UK PIO.

Importing or exporting a horse, pony or donkey

Any horse, pony or donkey you import from a European Union (EU) country must have a valid passport issued by an authorised PIO in the EU. If the PIO is unauthorised or there's no passport, you must get a passport from an authorised PIO in the UK within 30 days of importation. **If you're importing from within the EU, you must register the animal with a UK Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO) within 30 days.** If you have a pedigree, you need to register through a PIO that manages studbooks. To import from outside the EU you must contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) before it arrives and within 30 days of it arriving in the UK, contact a UK PIO to register, upgrade or replace the horse's documents, or apply for a new passport. If you are exporting an equine you must keep the passport with the horse and follow the rules for exporting horses (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/export-horses-and-ponies-special-rules>).

Get help

Contact the PIO that issued the horse passport if you have any questions. If you have concerns about the conduct of PIOs then contact the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Defra Helpline - defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk

You can also write to them – Defra, Nobel House , 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR

Sources: GOV.UK website (dated 28 June 2019), Statutory Instrument 2018 No. 761 (The Equine Identification (England) Regulations 2018) & EU Regulation 2015/262