

Detailed guide: Animal gatherings: Licences

Updated: Linked to fees document

When you need an animal gatherings licence

If you want to hold an animal gathering, the premises must have an Animal Gatherings Order (AGO) licence from Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

An animal gathering is when certain species of animals (see below) are brought together from different places:

- to be sold
- to be sent elsewhere (for example, for slaughter)
- for show or exhibition
- to be inspected for breed characteristics (for example, to assess pedigree status)

The animal species include:

- cattle (excluding bison and yak)
- sheep
- pigs
- deer
- goats

Gatherings of poultry and other captive birds are not licensed in the same way but must be registered. See the [bird gathering general licence](#).

You must have an animal gathering licence if your gathering involves poultry/captive birds and any of the animals listed above.

It's an offence to hold an animal gathering without a licence.

When you don't need a licence

You don't need a licence to hold an animal gathering if:

- all the animals brought to the premises come from one holding
- animals are dispersed from one holding

Get an animal gatherings licence

Complete the [application for a licence to hold an animal gathering form \(AG001\)](#) and a plan of the proposed site.

You can get help with the AG001 form from [APHA](#).

Send the completed forms to APHA.

- For customers in England, send to One Health CSC, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP or email CSCOneHealthAG0@apha.gsi.gov.uk.
- For customers in Wales, send to the [Caernarfon Field Service Office](#) or email to APHA.CymruWales@apha.gsi.gov.uk.

Once you have submitted the form, APHA will arrange a visit by a veterinary inspector to discuss your application and inspect the premises.

Your licence will be posted to you if the veterinary inspector is satisfied that the licence conditions will be met.

Your licence lasts for 1 year. It's your responsibility to reapply if you need to renew the license.

Fees

For further information on fees, see the [Animal Gathering Order section in the fees document](#).

Give notice

At least 14 days before you hold each animal gathering under your licence, you must tell APHA and your [local council](#):

- the times when the licensed premises will be open to receive animals
- the purpose of the animal gathering

You don't need to do this if the dates were included your application form.

Animal gatherings licence conditions

You must make sure that you comply with the conditions in your licence. These conditions are listed on the application form and include the following:

- you take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of disease during animal gatherings (biosecurity measures) – see [biosecurity advice for animal gatherings](#) (PDF, 788KB, 6 pages)
- you appoint a biosecurity officer to make sure licence conditions are upheld (this can be the licence holder)
- there is a fence around the licensed area to prevent animals escaping
- animals only enter or leave the animal area in a vehicle (they must only be loaded onto and off vehicles in the animal area)
- no animals arrive after a period of 48 hours from the start time the licensed premises advertised they will be open for receiving animals. You can ask APHA to extend this period in some circumstances
- you keep records to allow tracing of animals

- you comply with [animal welfare rules](#) and do not allow sick or injured animals to be presented for sale
- you have documented operational procedures including contingency plans for adverse events such as power or lighting failure, inability to effectively cleanse and disinfect, transport failure, animal welfare incidents
- you have a contingency plan for what you would do if notifiable disease were suspected during a gathering. As a minimum, this must be based on the [AG004 plan](#) available.

How often animal gatherings can take place and for how long

You must make sure that it's at least 27 days since the last animal left the premises and all equipment has been cleaned and disinfected.

The 27 day rule doesn't apply if the area is entirely paved with a material that can be, and is, effectively cleaned and disinfected inbetween animal gatherings. Accepted materials include:

- cement
- concrete
- asphalt
- other impermeable materials

Records you must keep

You must record:

- names and addresses of all staff working in the animal area
- whether staff have contact with livestock anywhere else
- the origin of the animals involved in each gathering
- the destination of the animals or, if not available, details about the buyer
- details about any vehicles used to transport the animals so that they can be traced if necessary

Records must be up to date and must be kept for 6 months.

You must report the movements of animals so these can be recorded on the national animal movement databases:

- [cattle](#)
- [sheep and goats](#)
- [pigs](#)
- [deer](#)

Facilities needed at premises

If the licensed animal area is paved, you must make sure that the floor and all fixtures and fittings in animal areas:

- are in a good state of repair
- can be cleaned and disinfected after each gathering

There must be a separate area for cleaning and disinfecting vehicles used to transport animals. This area must be suitable for cleaning and disinfecting after each gathering.

If you need to move animals between areas, the areas must be one of the following:

- adjoining
- connected by designated walkways

Animal gatherings for slaughter

If you're holding a gathering for slaughter involving animals that haven't served standstill on a farm it must be held on a paved animal area. Gatherings for slaughter can't be held as part of any other type of animal gathering.

Disposal of animal products

All [animal by-products](#) must be disposed of, including:

- feeding stuffs
- bedding
- excreta
- any other contaminants derived from animals

They must be disposed of in one of the following ways:

- destroyed
- disposed of so that animals don't have access to them
- treated to remove the risk of disease transmission

The disposal method must be documented.

When the animal gathering is over

When each animal gathering held under your licence is over you must make sure that equipment and paved areas are cleaned and disinfected after all the animals have left the site and before the next animal gathering.

Penalties

If you hold an animal gathering without a licence or fail to comply with the licence conditions you may be prosecuted.

You may also have your licence suspended or withdrawn and may be subject to additional monitoring by APHA or the local council.