

Detailed guide: Moving prohibited plants, plant pests, pathogens and soil

Updated: Updated licence application fees

You must get a licence from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to import, move or keep prohibited:

- plants, including parts of plants and seeds
- invertebrate plant pests (arthropods, molluscs and nematodes)
- plant pathogens (fungi, bacteria, viruses, virus-like agents and phytoplasmas)
- soil and other organic material
- potatoes

Your licence will include the specific conditions under which you must import, move or keep the material.

You must follow these along with the conditions set out in this guidance.

If you're in Scotland, [contact Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture](#).

If you're in Northern Ireland, [contact the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development](#).

Who can get a licence

You can only get a licence if you're using the prohibited items for:

- scientific research or trials
- testing new varieties of plants (varietal selection)

Licences for invertebrate plant pests and plant pathogens

You must have a licence to import, move or keep invertebrate plant pests or plant pathogens which meet any one of the following conditions:

- they're listed in the annexes of [EC directive 2000/29/EC](#)
- they're under statutory control in England, Scotland and Wales or subject to an eradication campaign – [contact APHA](#) to check this
- Defra considers that they're not present in England, Scotland and Wales and are likely to be harmful to plants
- Defra considers them to be non-indigenous races, strains, populations or clones of indigenous species which could exhibit an increased risk to plant health (eg increased pathogenicity or resistance to commonly used

control strategies)

[Contact APHA](#) to check if an invertebrate plant pest or pathogen is prohibited.

Licences for prohibited plants, parts of plants and seeds

You must have a licence to import, move or keep any plants, parts of plants or seeds listed in [Annex III of EU Directive 2000/29/EC](#).

Using a licence instead of a plant passport or phytosanitary certificate

You may be able to use a licence to bring in plants, parts of plants and seeds which would normally need a phytosanitary certificate or plant passport.

You can only do this if you can't get the phytosanitary certificate or plant passport for scientifically justified reasons, eg the plants were collected from the wild – [contact the APHA](#) if you want to do this.

Licences for prohibited soil and other organic material

You must have a licence to import, move, or keep soil from some countries. This also applies to any organic material which is capable of sustaining plant life and which contains solid organic matter, eg humus, peat other than pure and unused peat, moss and bark.

These countries include:

- any country that's not part of continental Europe, except Egypt, Libya, Israel, Morocco or Tunisia
- Belarus
- Moldova
- Russia
- Turkey
- Ukraine

You don't need a licence for:

- marine sediments
- pure and unused peat
- pure sand, clay, talc, rocks, volcanic pumice and chalk
- water that isn't contaminated by soil or organic matter

You must have a licence for artificial growing medium that contains any organic matter, unless it's made up entirely of unused peat.

Apply for a licence

You should apply for a licence at least one month before you need it, using [Defra's eDomero](#) online application system.

If you haven't used eDomero before, you need to [register as a new user](#)

Application fees

New licences for prohibited plants, plant pests and pathogens cost £902. This fee covers a licence for 5 types of material – you must pay a further £52.45 for each extra type of material.

New licences for prohibited soil or other organic material cost £664.50. This fee covers a licence for 5 types of material – you must pay a further £52.45 for each extra type of material.

APHA will send you an invoice after you apply for a licence using the eDomero system.

What to include in your application

Your application must explain:

- site security
- record-keeping and labelling
- the lay-out of your facilities
- the procedures you'll follow during experiments

Site security

You must confirm:

- all areas containing quarantine material are kept locked
- the names of anyone who has access to quarantine areas or a set of keys
- how you label quarantine areas
- that all authorised personnel will read and sign a standard operating procedure before starting work with licensed material

Record-keeping and labelling

You must describe:

- how you'll keep dated records when new material arrives and how you'll move or dispose of existing licensed material
- how you'll label or distinguish licensed material at all stages of your experiments

Your facilities

You must:

- describe the type of containment facility you'll use, eg glasshouses, polytunnels, laboratories
- describe the location of containment facilities on your premises – give room numbers or a geographic location relative to a named or numbered area and make a plan of your facility if possible
- give details of how often authorised staff enter the containment facilities
- describe how much material you'll keep in containment facilities at a given time
- describe how you'll keep licensed material within 3 layers of secure containment to stop plant pests escaping
- state the other material that will arrive with the licensed material (eg soil) and how you'll handle it or dispose of it
- state whether you'll keep licensed and non-licensed material in the same containment facilities
- describe the type of work you'll carry out in each area of your site
- describe the containers you'll grow plants in, if the licensed material includes plants for planting
- describe the traps you'll use to detect the escape of licensed organisms
- provide a detailed contingency plan you'll use if organisms escape or if you suspect they've escaped

Your experimental procedures

You must also state:

- how you'll carry out your experiments – give a step by step description of every experiment you intend to do
- whether workers will wear dedicated protective clothing that's only used when working on licensed material and how you'll clean it after use
- the precautions you'll take when transporting material between containment facilities during experiments
- the disinfectants you'll use to clean containment facilities, their concentration and how you'll use them
- how you'll destroy the licensed material after you've finished working with it, and before you dispose of it
- a list of the scientific and technical qualifications of all personnel who'll do work under the licence you're applying for

Moving consignments within England and Wales

Sending material to other sites

You can send licensed prohibited material to other people or organisations in England and Wales, provided the destination site or person has a licence to receive them.

Complete [form PHI10](#) and [send it to the APHA](#) – if they approve your plan, they'll send you a written agreement.

This written agreement is valid for 12 months, provided the recipient's

licence isn't amended or cancelled in this time.

If the recipient changes the terms of their licence you'll have to [contact APHA](#) for a new approval.

Receiving material from other sites

You must have a licence to receive prohibited material from other people or organisations in England and Wales.

You must also make sure your supplier has a licence and a written agreement from the APHA.

Receiving material from outbreak sites

You can only receive material from an outbreak site that's under an APHA notice if the notice allows this.

[Contact the APHA](#) if you're unsure which are under notice.

You must have a licence to hold and work with any material you receive.

Bringing material in from other countries

Letter of authority

If you get a licence to bring prohibited material in from overseas, it'll have a 'letter of authority' attached – you must keep this letter

From countries within the EU

Follow these steps to bring material into England and Wales from other EU countries, including Scotland and Northern Ireland:

1. Send your supplier a copy of your letter of authority.
2. Ask your supplier to get your letter of authority endorsed by the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPP0) in their member state.
3. Ask them to attach copies of the endorsed letter to the outside of the packages containing the licensed material and to include a copy inside each package.

Importing from non-EU countries

Follow these steps to import prohibited material into England and Wales from non-EU countries under a licence:

1. Send a copy of your letter of authority to the supplier.
2. Ask your supplier to attach the letter to the outside of the package and include a copy inside each package.

For imports from outside the EU, you don't need to have your letter of authority endorsed by the NPP0 in the supplier's country.

If you're importing material in luggage, you must present it at the red customs channel, along with the appropriate letter of authority, when you arrive in England or Wales.

Sending material to other countries

To EU countries

Follow these steps to send prohibited material to other EU countries, or Scotland and Northern Ireland:

1. Ask the recipient for a copy of their letter of authority.
2. Send the copy of their letter of authority to the APHA to be endorsed.
3. Attach the endorsed letter of authority to the outside of all packages before you send them. You should also include copies of the letter of authority inside the packaging.

If the recipient tells you that you don't need a letter of authority, ask them to show you official confirmation of this from their NPP0.

You shouldn't send your material until you've got this confirmation.

Exporting to non-EU countries

To export material to non-EU countries, you must comply with the import regulations in the destination country.

The APHA may be able to give you advice about import regulations in the destination country.

How to pack materials

You must make sure any prohibited material you're moving under a licence is stored in 3 layers of packaging.

At least 1 of the layers must be escape and shatter-proof.

Transport, handling and storage

You must make sure you have licensed material transported to your authorised containment facility directly from the place of landing or the licensed establishment in England and Wales.

You must only open, handle and keep licensed material in the approved quarantine containment facility listed on your licence.

Inspections

You must make all licensed material available for inspection by your local APHA inspector.

You must allow the inspector to check how you're keeping the material – they may take samples of material or any associated organisms, eg invertebrates.

You must [contact APHA](#) on the first working day after the consignment arrives to inform them of any plants you've received under licence.

Keep the plants in isolation until the APHA has inspected them.

Inspection fees

Your application fee covers the cost of your first inspection.

Some licences must then be inspected every year, especially new licences. In other cases inspectors will reinspect every 2 or 3 years.

The first inspector who visits your site will tell you how often you need to be reinspected.

If you fail an inspection you must pay for any further inspections, at a cost of £42.75 per hour or part of an hour.

Change an existing licence

You can [apply to change your licence](#) using eDomero – eg to add new facilities or material.

APHA may re-inspect your facilities as part of this application process.

Licence amendment fees

Licence amendments that require a Defra scientific or technical assessment cost £265.21.

Amendments that don't need an assessment cost £31.86.

APHA will send you an invoice after you apply to change a licence through the eDomero system.

Destroying plants, parts of plants and seeds

You must usually destroy plant material after you've completed the research your facility was licensed to do.

In some circumstances, you may be allowed to test the plant material and get it released from the terms of its licence.

[Contact the APHA](#) if you want to get plant material released from its licence instead of destroying it.

You'll have to get the plant material tested and pay any costs associated with this.