



HM Government
UK TRANSITION



A GUIDE TO CHANGES AT THE BORDER

IMPORTING AND EXPORTING GOODS

Border and Protocol Delivery Group
November 2020



How to use this document

This document is divided into three sections:

- an explanation of how the UK border will work at the end of the year, including key features for hauliers and traders, and timelines
- a checklist with actions traders must take by the 31st of December (page 9)
- a list of resources, further information and contacts (page 10)

The information on this document is extracted from the **Border Operating Model**.

Overview

The UK is leaving the EU's Single Market and Customs Union. Whether or not there is a negotiated outcome, all businesses will need to take a number of actions in order to import and/or export goods; these include:

- Ensuring they can meet Member State requirements,
- Complying with customs requirements by either completing full customs declaration or delaying declarations where applicable,
- Completing any additional requirements such as SPS obligations, e.g. pre-notification and Export Health Certificates.

All businesses moving goods across the GB-EU border will need to take account of these and adapt accordingly – the actions needed to prepare are discussed on page 8 of this document. Alternatively, businesses can use the transition checker available at [gov.uk/transition](https://www.gov.uk/transition).





The Core Model

Some changes will affect **all goods movements**, which this document refers to as the **Core Model** for importing and exporting goods. These elements, primarily customs and VAT changes, will be introduced in stages between 1 Jan and 1 Jul 2021.

The principles of the Core Model will apply to all goods that are imported and exported between GB and the EU. However, there may be some differences in processes depending on which border location the goods enter or leave GB. The main difference in process will be the requirement for pre-lodgement of customs declarations at some ports and not others. This is a commercial decision that border locations will take. Further detailed information will be available on gov.uk.

The core processes are:

- **Customs Declarations (Exports & Imports)** Importers and exporters will have to complete UK and EU customs declarations after the end of the transition period. Some locations will require pre-lodgement of customs declarations prior to the movement of goods, which will particularly affect 'roll on-roll off' (RoRo) movements. Customs declarations will be required on goods on the controlled goods list from January. This will be the case in all scenarios regardless of whether we sign an FTA or not.
- **Customs Duties (Imports)** Importers will need to ensure that any customs duties applicable to their goods under the new UK Global Tariff are paid. In order to do this, importers will need to determine the classification, origin and customs value of their goods. There are options available to defer any payment that is due.
- **VAT (Imports)** VAT will be levied on imports of goods from the EU, following the same rates and structures as are applied to RoW imports. VAT registered importers will be able to use postponed VAT accounting. They will not be compelled to do so unless they import non-controlled goods and either delay their supplementary customs declarations; or use the Simplified Customs Declarations process, and make an Entry in Declarants Records. Non-VAT registered importers have the same options available to report and pay import VAT as they do for customs duties. VAT treatment of goods imported in consignments not exceeding £135 in value will be treated differently to those goods in consignments exceeding £135.
- **Safety & Security Declarations (Exports & Imports)** In order to maintain safety and security standards, the UK Government will collect more information on goods moving into GB from the EU. This ensures we know who's coming in and how often, what they are bringing in, and why. By default, this will include safety and security declarations, however, safety and security declarations will only be required on imports after July 2021.

Further details are available in the **Border Operating Model**.





Additional Requirements

Other changes will affect only specific goods movements (e.g. foodstuffs), which this document refers to as the **additional requirements** for importing and exporting goods. These include the need for special certifications, entering the country via specific locations, and undergoing additional checks at or near the border or at the destination. Some of these requirements will occur before the core import and export processes, and some will occur after. These elements will also be introduced in stages, depending on the type of goods being moved:

- **Goods covered by International Conventions / Commitments** e.g. Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); fluorinated greenhouse gas and Ozone-Depleting Substances; Rough Diamonds (Kimberley Process); ATA Carnets
- **Goods subject to Sanitary and Phytosanitary controls** e.g. animal products (products of animal origin and animal by-products); fishery products and live bivalve molluscs; High-Risk Food and Feed Not of Animal Origin (HRFNAO); live animals and germinal products; live aquatic animals for aquaculture and ornamental purposes; equines; plants and plant products
- **Goods with Additional Customs Requirements** e.g. Excise goods
- **Other Goods including Strategic Exports** e.g. Bottled Water; Drug Precursor Chemicals; Explosives Precursors; Firearms; Market Surveillance; Veterinary Medicines containing controlled drugs; Waste; Medicines containing controlled drugs; Medical Radioisotopes; Clinical Trial Supplies; controlled drugs; Substances of Human Origin; Strategic Export Controls.

Import Controls

Import controls can take the form of an outright prohibition or of a licensing control. Import licensing controls can be in place against specific goods such as firearms or against imports on certain products from specific countries such as North Korea. Further information on import controls currently in force can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-controls>. Any list of goods found on this website is distinct from the list of 21 categories and goods identified as exempt from the staged approach to import controls – as listed in annex C of the **Borders Operating Model**. For these, and from 1 January, traders must submit a full customs declaration (or use Simplified Customs Declaration procedures if they are authorised to do so); they must use the customs process currently applicable at the location that they are using to move their goods, and ensure that any specific licensing requirements are fulfilled.





Our Approach to the Border: Timeline

The UK Government will implement full border controls on imports coming into GB from the EU. Recognising the impact of coronavirus on businesses' ability to prepare, the UK Government has taken the decision to introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021.

This flexible and pragmatic approach will give industry extra time to make necessary arrangements. The stages are:

From January 2021: Traders importing non-controlled goods, covering everything from clothes to electronics, will need to prepare for basic customs requirements, such as keeping sufficient records of imported goods. Traders will also need to consider how they account for and pay VAT on imported goods. Traders will then have up to six months to complete customs declarations. While tariffs will be payable where due on relevant goods, payments can be delayed until the customs declaration has been made. UK Safety and Security (S&S) declarations will **not** be required on imports for the first six months.

Full customs declarations will be needed from this date for controlled goods and excise goods like alcohol and tobacco products. There will also be physical checks at the point of destination or other approved premises on all high-risk live animals and high-priority plants and plant products, and a requirement to obtain the relevant documentation and pre-notify for certain movements, but they will not be required to enter GB via a point of entry with an appropriate Border Control Post (BCP).

Export declarations and UK exit S&S declarations will be required for all goods. Traders importing and exporting goods using the Common Transit Convention will need to follow all of the transit procedures – these will not be introduced in stages. The Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS) will be introduced from January only for transit movements.

For January 2021, you need to:

- **Understand the requirements of EU Member States.** The necessary processes must have been done and documentation completed to comply with these requirements.
 - **GB EORI** – Traders will need a GB EORI number to move goods to or from the UK. Check your EORI number. Apply for a new one if yours does not start with GB.
 - **EU EORI** – If undertaking any EU customs processes, traders will need an EU EORI.





- **If you are an importer, check which goods are on the controlled goods list-** If your goods are on the controlled goods list, you will need to complete full customs declarations from January.
- **If you are importing standard goods,** decide whether to delay the customs declaration for up to six months or complete full customs declarations on import
- **Get a customs intermediary:** Most traders are expected to use a customs intermediary. These are experts who can make declarations on your behalf.
- **Duty Deferment Account (DDA)** – A DDA allows holders to delay customs duty, excise duty and import duty, to be paid once a month rather than on individual consignments.
- **Check to see if a facilitation would benefit the business-** there are a number of facilitations, including the Common Transit Convention, to help import and export goods.
- **If you are importing live animals or high-priority plants and plant products,** traders need to be prepared for submitting additional documentation and checks taking place at point of destination.
- **If you are an exporter,** be prepared to submit customs export declarations from January.
- **If you are a haulier,** be ready to use the “Check a HGV is ready” service.

You do not need to:

- **Submit** Safety and Security declarations.
- **Submit** full customs declarations if you are importing a standard good and you decide to delay your declaration for up to six months.

2. From April 2021: All products of animal origin (POAO) – for example meat, honey, milk or egg products – and all regulated plants and plant products will also require pre-notification and the relevant health documentation. Any physical checks on plants or plant products will continue to be conducted at the point of destination until July 2021. Physical checks on POAO will not be introduced until July 2021.

For April 2021, you must:

- If traders are importing Products of Animal Origin (POAO) or a regulated plant and plant product, traders must be prepared to submit pre-notification and the relevant health documentation.





You do not need to:

- If you are not importing Products of Animal Origin or a regulated plant, you do not need to make any changes from January 2021 requirements.

3. From July 2021: Traders moving any goods will have to make full customs declarations at the point of importation and pay relevant tariffs, delaying declarations will not be possible. Full S&S declarations will be required, while for commodities subject to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) controls, these must arrive at an established point of entry with an appropriate BCP and there will be an increase in physical checks and the taking of samples. SPS checks for animals, plants and their products will take place at GB BCPs. The GVMS will be in place for all imports, exports and transit movements at border locations which have chosen to introduce it.

From July 2021, you must:

- **Meet full customs requirements including submitting declarations,** regardless of whether it is a controlled or a standard good, as well as paying VAT and excise duty where necessary
- **Submit Safety and Security declarations**
- Be prepared for **customs compliance checks** either at port or an inland site
- Be prepared for **goods to enter GB via a Border Control Post** either at port or an inland site accompanied by SPS documentary requirements.

You must not:

- Fail to complete customs, VAT and excise requirements
- Fail to submit goods to any necessary physical and documentary checks at GB Border Control Posts.





Border infrastructure for new controls

To support the implementation of border controls, new border infrastructure will be required. This section sets out the infrastructure needed and the support Government is providing to ports, airports and rail terminals to ensure the infrastructure is in place by January and July 2021.

Infrastructure requirements from January 2021

For January 2021, infrastructure will be needed to meet the following requirements.

1. Common Transit Convention (CTC) processes – Offices of Departure and Destination to start and end CTC movements, including the issue of Transit Accompanying Documents (TADs), and facilities for Office of Transit compliance checks.
2. ATA Carnet processes – offices to wet stamp ATA Carnets for temporary imports and exports.
3. CITES processes – to wet stamp CITES permits accompanying relevant goods.
4. Traffic management processes – lorry holding capacity for use in the event of disruption.

Where ports do not have the space, alternative inland locations will provide Common Transit Convention facilities (and ATA Carnet and CITES permit wet-stamping) from 1 January 2021:

1. Ebbsfleet International Station
2. North Weald Airfield
3. Sevington, Ashford
4. Warrington

In addition to the sites above, HMG is exploring other inland facilities primarily for CTC purposes in locations across the strategic road network across the UK. This includes potential sites in the Thames Gateway and Birmingham areas.

Other Traffic Management Infrastructure for Kent

The Department for Transport is working closely with Kent Resilience Forum to ensure sufficient infrastructure is provided to hold HGVs even in the event of the Reasonable Worst Case scenario, without requiring road closures.

In addition to the intended Sevington (Ashford) site, Highways England are installing a new Quick Moveable Barrier system to enable the swift deployment of a contraflow arrangement between junctions 8 and 9 of the M20. This will enable around 2000 HGVs to queue on the coast-bound carriageway while other traffic continues to flow in both directions on the London-bound side.





Infrastructure requirements from July 2021

From July 2021, infrastructure will be needed to meet the further requirements of full border controls on EU goods, including customs compliance checks and SPS checks which will need to be carried out at Border Control Posts. Much of this infrastructure will be located at ports and border locations but where this is demonstrated not to be possible, HMG will provide inland facilities.

HMG intends that these inland sites should perform a full range of border functions, as follows:

- Customs compliance activity - customs checks and processes that require the physical presence of the goods.
- CTC processes and checks - the functions required under the Common Transit Convention, including starting and/or ending Transit movements and/or moving into a new customs territory.
- Market Surveillance checks - physical examination and enforcement activity undertaken on consumer products.
- SPS checks and processes - documentary, and/or identity and/or physical checks which are undertaken on animals, products of animal origin, plants, plant products and some foods; and
- CITES - the functions required under the CITES convention including physical wet stamping of the CITES permit.

HMG are working with Welsh and Scottish government to confirm the infrastructure requirements for Wales and Scotland. This includes sites which will be required to be in place to support both Holyhead and specific ports in South West Wales.

Haulier readiness – Information and Advice Sites

Recognising the importance of ensuring that hauliers and haulage managers are aware of the changes to border and traffic management arrangements. HMG have opened Information and Advice Sites. These will remain operational until March 2021, initially providing information on new processes and from the New Year also delivering advisory 'border readiness' checks and other support, to help hauliers who are unclear about the steps to take before they proceed to ports.

Advice sites are located at Motorway Service Stations and Truck Stops across the UK. HMG will be working with industry and Local Resilience Fora and other local partners to identify their preferred sites as part of their Traffic Management planning.

HMG has developed the service in collaboration with industry, enhancing the offering previously planned ahead of No Deal, with a greater focus on hands-on support for hauliers to either get ready or get the help they need on next steps.





Additionally, in recognition of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure that COVID security is maintained throughout the programme, HMG are developing a dedicated digital haulier portal. This portal will ensure that hauliers will continue to have access to all information and resources, and 1-1 support in their own language.

Actions for traders that can be taken now

All traders will need to have considered these actions before they move goods. These will automatically come into play from January 2021. The UK's negotiations with the EU will have no impact on the urgent need to take these actions.

- **You must apply for a GB EORI number.** This is required for all businesses (traders and hauliers) moving goods into or out of GB
- **Apply for an EU EORI number.** Traders need an EU EORI number if their business will be making customs declarations or getting a customs decision in the EU.
- **Get a customs intermediary.** Intermediaries can help traders find the information needed to complete formalities and submit the **required declarations**
- Apply for a **Duty Deferment Account (DDA)**. Traders who import goods regularly may benefit from having a DDA.
- **Speak to the EU business you're trading with** to make sure they are taking all the correct actions to meet EU requirements. If they have not completed EU paperwork the goods will be stopped at the border.
- **Prepare to pay or account for VAT on Imported Goods.** VAT registered traders will be able to account for import VAT by using postponed VAT accounting from 1 January 2021. Non-VAT registered traders (and any VAT registered traders not using postponed VAT accounting) will need to report and pay import VAT through the customs processes.
- **Consider commercial arrangements.** Individual commercial contracts and arrangements may alter the default legal responsibilities and requirements. Contractual obligations for international commercial transactions are outlined in the Incoterms rules, which are administered by the International Chamber of Commerce.
- **Additional actions for customs, excise and VAT process:**
 - Find the **right commodity code** for your goods
 - Businesses importing goods into GB should ensure they are familiar with using the '**Trade with the UK**' tool which provides detailed information on tariffs, taxes and rules. The tariffs shown are those currently being applied until 1 January 2021. Use the **UK Global Tariff tool** to check the tariffs that will apply to goods imported from 1 January 2021.





- Exporters of goods from GB should ensure they are familiar with using the '**Check How to Export Goods**' tool which provides detailed and up to date information on duties and customs procedures for over 160 countries.
- Traders should engage with supply chains to discuss how to work together going forward.
- Excise traders wishing to use **excise duty suspension** must also apply as a registered consignor or seek the services of someone who is already approved. Only **registered consignors** are permitted to move excise goods in excise duty suspension and use the UK Excise Movement and Control System (EMCS) at import.
- Businesses exporting excise goods must also use the UK EMCS, unless you are approved for simplified movements. Excise duty liability will be discharged when confirmation is received that the goods have exited GB (this is via the customs export declaration).
- The UK's EMCS will not be linked to the EU's EMCS - they are different systems from 1 January 2021.

Actions for hauliers

With changes in the way borders operate from 1 January 2021, hauliers will need to consider a number of actions which must be taken before travelling. These will not be impacted by the UK's negotiations with the EU.

- **Using the new Check an HGV is ready to cross the border service** on Gov.UK to prove that an HGV has the right EU import and commodities documents for the goods it's carrying before crossing the GB / EU border. The service will be fully operational by December 2020 and will be mandatory for hauliers travelling via the Port of Dover or Eurotunnel.
- **Apply for an ECMT permit**, which may be necessary from 1 January 2021. Applications will be open until 20 November 2020 and more information is available on gov.uk/guidance/ecmt-international-road-haulage-permits
- **Carry the right operator licence**. From 1 January 2021, the operator licensing requirements for journeys to, through or from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway will change. The new UK Licence for the Community will be issued automatically and must be carried when driving abroad.
- **Register vehicle trailers** before you drive to or through most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Commercial trailers weighing over 750kg and non-commercial trailers weighing over 3,500kg will need to be registered. More info on gov.uk/register-trailer-to-take-abroad
- **Apply for a keeper's certificate for an abnormal load** trailer to use it abroad. Note that some countries measure abnormal loads differently from the UK.





Check with each country they're travelling through to find out if the load you're transporting counts as abnormal there.

- **Carry the correct registration documents** when driving abroad for less than 12 months. This can be either the vehicle log book (V5C) or a **VE103** to show they're allowed to use a hired or leased vehicle abroad.
- **Carry the correct green cards before travelling.** Drivers will need to carry multiple green cards in the EU after 31 December 2020, so they should contact the vehicle insurance provider at least 6 weeks before they need green cards.





Further information

A toolkit for MPs has been developed and sent to you alongside this document. The following resources online include detailed information on all the topics covered in this document:

- A **support webpage** that includes videos and step by step guides on moving goods between the UK and the EU.
- The detailed **Border Operating Model** outlining how the UK will introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021 to ensure businesses benefit from extra time to adjust to the new procedure;
- A **tracker tool** has been made available on GOV.UK for businesses to understand the specific actions required for them.

Speak to an adviser about more specific queries

If you have any questions relating to how customs, excise, VAT and other tax related issues will operate, you can contact HMRC via their **online customer forum**.

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Business support lines:

- Scotland - 0300 303 0660
- England - 0800 998 1098
- Wales - 0300 060 3000
- Northern Ireland - 0800 181 4422

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

- The Animal and Plant Health Agency for DEFRA - 0300 020 0301

Department for International Trade

- Enquiries line - 020 7215 5000

HM Revenue & Customs

- Import/export general enquiries - 0300 200 3700
- **Speak to an adviser online about general import and export queries**
- **Send a question about imports, exports and customs reliefs**

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

- Vehicle operator licensing enquiries - 0300 123 9000

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency

- Vehicle licensing and registration contact centre - 0300 790 6802

