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## Keeping farmed animals – guidance

# Report and record cattle movements

From: [British Cattle Movement Service](#)  
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Part of: [Guidance on keeping cattle, bison and buffalo in Great Britain, Cattle movements, Keeping farmed animals, + others](#)  
Applies to: [England, Scotland and Wales \(see detailed guidance for Northern Ireland !\[\]\(17413706fd4997a1a4bdf85c6864eee1\_img.jpg\)\)](#)

You must record all movements of cattle, bison or buffalo on and off your holding and report them to the British Cattle Movement Service.

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Cattle keepers can move animals as long as:

- each animal has both of its official tags and a valid cattle passport
- they comply with the general licence conditions:
  - in England, the [General Licence for the Movement of Cattle](#)
  - in Scotland, the [General Licence for the Movement of Cattle, Sheep, Goats and other Ruminating Animals \(except Camelids\) and Swine within Scotland](#)
  - [in Wales, the General licence for the movement of cattle](#)
- no standstills or other movement restrictions are in force

Whenever you move cattle, you must:

- update your [holding register](#) within 36 hours
- tell the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) about the movement within 3 days – if you use the post, rather than [reporting online or by phone](#), bear in mind that this is the deadline for BCMS receiving the information, not for sending it
- record the movement on each animal's passport:
  - before the animal leaves the holding (for off movements)
  - within 36 hours of the animal's arrival on the holding (for on movements)

Animals without a passport and cattle born or reared in the UK before August 1996 are subject to restrictions and you will need to [get a special licence](#) to move them.

## What counts as a movement

Whenever cattle move off one holding and on to a different one:

- their keeper at the departure holding must report and record an 'off movement'
- their keeper at the destination holding must report and record an 'on movement'

## Who reports movements

You or your [registered agent](#) can report movements.


As a keeper, you are still legally responsible for movements being notified on time, even if you use an agent.

In Scotland, markets and abattoirs will report the movement on and off farm on behalf

of keepers. Markets and abattoirs in England and Wales may also report your movements for you electronically. You must check with them whether they are reporting the movement to or from your holding for you. If they are not doing this, you must report the movement.

## How to report movements to BCMS

You can report movements using any of the three [online or telephone methods](#):

- [Cattle Tracing System \(CTS\) Online](#) 
- the CTS self-service telephone line (except for animals with older-style alpha numeric tags)
- compatible farm software

For animals with a chequebook-style passport or an old-style blue and green passport with a certificate of registration, you can notify movements to BCMS by post, using tear-out movement cards. The movement cards are pre-printed with the address and 2nd class postage is paid. Keepers can also obtain free 1st class pre-paid envelopes from BCMS for sending multiple movement cards.

## Bulk movements

CTS Online's upload facility lets you report bulk movements. To find out how to create files to upload movements to CTS Online, download the a guide to [uploading a file of movements or deaths to CTS Online](#) (PDF, 736KB, 12 pages) .

## Movements that take place on the same day

When cattle move off and back on to a single holding on the same day (eg to travel to a show and back), this is known as a same-day movement. When animals move through a holding (eg on to a market or a [showground](#) then off again) on the same day, this is known as a through movement or a market movement.

Most reporting methods, including movement cards, allow you to report this type of movement in a single notification. There is a help guide for [reporting on and off movements at the same time on CTS Online](#) (PDF, 627KB, 6 pages) .

The CTS telephone service only allows you to report these events as two separate movements and you must leave at least 24 hours between reporting them.

## How to use movement cards

If you report by post, BCMS still needs to receive notification within 3 days of all movements on or off your holding.

To use the movement cards, you will need the [bar-code labels](#)  that are sent to

keepers when they register with BCMS..

Only use black ink on movement cards.

When you move an animal on or off the holding:

- stick a bar-code label on the card
- tick the movement box to show whether the movement is 'on' or 'off' the holding or, if you are a market operator, that the animal has moved through the market
- enter the movement date
- sign the card
- tear it out of the passport
- post the card immediately to:

BCMS  
PO Box 301  
Sheffield  
S95 1AB

## Receipts

If you notify BCMS of movements online, you'll get an automatic receipt. If you use the phone, you will get a receipt number. If you don't receive a receipt or receipt number, your transaction has not reached CTS and you'll need to enter your information again.

If you report by post, you won't get a receipt.

## Correct a mistake

If you have incorrectly reported a movement or sent the wrong passport with an animal, you must [contact BCMS](#) as soon as you realise the error so that they can advise you on what action to take and amend their records.

If you have made a mistake when reporting via CTS Online, you can use the 'Contact BCMS' facility to send amended information.

## Records you must keep

As well as reporting on and off movements to BCMS, you need to [keep your holding register up to date](#) so that it is available for inspection.

The records you must update for every movement of every animal are

- the movement summary of the cattle passport (which goes with the animal as it moves)
- your holding register

If you run out of room on a single-page cattle passport or a chequebook style passport, you can [order continuation sheets](#) or [download a continuation sheet](#) (PDF, 889KB, 1 page) to print out.

## Records for calf movements through markets

A calf under 12 weeks old must not go to market more than twice in any 28 day period. When a calf under 12 weeks old is brought to a market, the market operator should check with the seller whether the animal has been to a market during the previous 28 days. If it has, the operator must record:

- the address of that market (even if it's the same one)
- the date(s) on which the calf was there

## If you fail to report movements

Unreported cattle movements may come to light through gaps on CTS, at a [cattle identification inspection](#) or when an animal's movement history is checked (eg when you request a replacement for a lost or stolen passport).

It is an offence to fail to report cattle movements within the stipulated 3-day period. You could face penalties and a cross-compliance reduction to any subsidy claims you have.

## Contact

### British Cattle Movement Service

Curwen Road  
Derwent Howe  
Workington  
Cumbria  
CA14 2DD

Email

[bcms-enquiries@bcms.rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bcms-enquiries@bcms.rpa.gsi.gov.uk)

BCMS helpline  
0345 050 1234

Welsh language helpline  
0345 050 3456

Normal BCMS helpline opening hours: Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm, closed weekends and bank holidays. All calls charged at local rate.

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