

Cattle Traceability and Record Keeping: A Guide for Scottish Keepers

In Scotland, cattle traceability is strictly regulated to maintain biosecurity, food safety, and disease control. The official system used to record these events is ScotEID, working on behalf of the Scottish Government and the Scottish industry. This system underpins our statutory obligations to comply with international trade rules, which are regularly audited and ultimately protects our industry's ability to continue exporting cattle to the European Union and the rest of the world.

The top five rules for keepers:

1. Register as a keeper and deregister immediately when you no longer keep cattle
2. Officially identify every animal.
3. Notify ScotEID of all cattle movements.
4. Notify ScotEID of all deaths
5. Keep your on-farm records up to date.

By following these rules, you protect your herd's biosecurity and help sustain the premium reputation of the Scottish herd.

1. Registering as a keeper

Before you can move or breed cattle you must complete three essential registrations in this specific order:

1. **Register your land with RPID:** Contact the Rural Payments and Inspection Division to register your holding. They will issue you a **County Parish Holding (CPH) number**, which is required to record any livestock movements.
2. **Register your species with APHA:** Register each livestock species you keep with the Animal and Plant Health Agency. They will issue a herd/flock mark to identify all animals born on your holding.
3. **Register with ScotEID:** Use the details provided by both RPID and APHA to set up your account on the ScotEID database.

RPID, APHA and ScotEID should also be informed when de-registering as a keeper.

2. Officially identifying newborn calves

Every calf born in Scotland must be tagged, registered on the ScotEID database, and issued a cattle passport.

Tagging Deadlines

- **Dairy Cattle:** The first (primary) tag must be fitted within **36 hours** of birth. The second (secondary) tag must be fitted within **20 days** of birth.
- **Beef Cattle:** Both tags must be fitted within **20 days** of birth.
- *Note: In all cases, tags must be fitted before the animal leaves the holding of birth.*

Registration and Passports

- **Deadline:** You must register the birth on ScotEID within **27 days** of the animal's birth.
- **Required info:** Calf's ear tag number, date of birth, sex, breed, and the dam's (mother's) ear tag number.
- **Outcome:** Once successfully registered, a cattle passport will be issued.

3. Notifying cattle movements

Any time cattle move on to or off a holding, the movement must be recorded.

⚠ To minimize the risk of disease spread, the 13-day standstill rules must be followed. You can contact your local RPID office for specific guidance on standstills and separation agreements. Links to the standstill guidance and RPID offices are at the bottom of this update.

External movements (sales, shows, markets, or hires)

When an animal changes keepers or moves to a public event, the movement must be recorded directly on the paper passport, and the passport must accompany the animal.

- **Reporting deadline:** Report to ScotEID within **3 days** of the movement.
- **The off movement:** The departing keeper must report that the animal has left.
- **The on movement:** The receiving keeper must report that the animal has arrived.
- **Markets and abattoirs:** Approved Scottish markets and abattoirs will report both movements on your behalf, but ensuring compliance remains the keeper's ultimate legal responsibility.
- **Private Sales:** If a market facilitates a private sale on your behalf (where the livestock do not go through the ring), you must check whether they will report the movements, as ensuring compliance remains your responsibility.

- **Markets and abattoirs in England and Wales:** If you move animals to a market or an abattoir over the border, they may not complete the movement reporting on your behalf; you should always check directly with them to confirm.
- **Required info:** Individual ear tag numbers, departure CPH, arrival CPH, and the date of movement.

Internal movements (ScotMoves)

If the animal is moving within a business, then the movement can be recorded as a within business movement. The business must be registered with ScotEID.

- **No distance restrictions:** There are no distance limits between holdings within Scotland, allowing for regional movement between lowlands and highlands.
- **Separate CPH numbers:** Seasonal land parcels must have their own CPH numbers and be linked as "additional holdings" under your ScotEID account.
- **Reporting deadline:** Movements between your main holding and an additional holding must be logged within **48 hours**.
- **Who reports:** Because keepership does not change, the keeper submits a single notification rather than separate "on" and "off" reports.
- **Passports:** Passports do *not* need to be updated or accompany the animal for ScotMoves internal transfers.
- **Exemptions:** Cattle movements between within-business holdings do not need to be recorded on ScotMoves if the land is contiguous (sharing a boundary with open gate access) or within daily walking distance and used on a regular basis, subject to approval by ScotEID.
- *Note: ScotMoves additional holdings and exemptions must be renewed annually with ScotEID.*

4. Recording cattle deaths

When an animal dies on the farm, its death must be officially recorded. Your fallen stock collector will **not** report this for you.

- **Reporting deadline:** Report the death to ScotEID within **7 days**.
- **Passport return:** Write the date of death on the cattle passport, apply your main CPH barcode label, and return it to ScotEID within **7 days**.
- **Required info:** Individual ear tag number, date of death, and the CPH number where the animal died.

5. Maintaining your on-farm holding register

In addition to reporting to ScotEID, you are legally required to keep an up to date on-farm holding register (on paper or via software).

Any event reported to ScotEID must also be entered into your holding register within **48 hours** for movements, and within **7 days** for births and deaths. You can download an official template via the [ScotEID Holding Register Page](#).

Common pitfalls and solutions

- **Lost or damaged tags:** You must order a replacement tag immediately and apply it within 28 days of discovering the loss. The animal cannot be moved (except to slaughter with special permission) until re-tagged.
- **Delayed passports:** If a passport has not arrived within 14 days of registration, contact ScotEID. Do not move the animal off the holding without a valid physical passport.
- **Misreading ear tags:** Always double-check tag numbers before reporting movements; transposing numbers is a leading cause of database errors.
- **Forgetting to notify deaths:** Remember that fallen stock collectors will not record deaths for you.
- **Late holding register updates:** Ensure your on-farm records are updated within 48 hours for movements and 7 days for births/deaths; inspections frequently uncover gaps here.

Quick compliance check sheet

Event type	Action required	Official deadline
Dairy birth	Fit 1st tag (36 hours) and 2nd tag (20 days). Register on ScotEID.	27 days from birth
Beef birth	Fit both tags within 20 days. Register on ScotEID.	27 days from birth
External move	Report "on" or "off" movement to ScotEID. Update passport.	3 days from movement
Internal move	Log transfer to an additional holding via ScotMoves.	48 hours from movement
Cattle death	Report to ScotEID and mail physical passport back.	7 days from death
Holding register	Update your on-farm records for movements.	48 hours from movement
Holding register	Update your on-farm records for births/deaths.	7 days from event

For the full requirements on cattle identification and standstill rules, please visit the Scottish Government web pages via the links below:

[Cattle - Livestock identification and traceability: guidance - gov.scot
www.gov.scot/publications/animal-health-movement-restrictions/pages/general-health-controls/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/animal-health-movement-restrictions/pages/general-health-controls/)

Key Contacts

- **RPID (Rural Payments and Inspection Division):**
 - Contact your local area office for CPH registration and standstill guidance:
<https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/contact-us/>

- **APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency):**
 - Email: APHA.Scotland@apha.gov.uk
 - Telephone: 03000 600 704

- **ScotEID:**
 - Email: help@scoteid.com
 - Tel: 01466 794323
 - Website: www.scoteid.com