



## **DAERA Stakeholder / Industry Communications: Update on Certification Procedures for Australia and Hong Kong**

**Bulletin 01/21**

**Issued: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021**

**Audience: Third country Exporters in Northern Ireland and Industry bodies**

**Subject: Improved Digital Security Measures for Export Health Certificates Printed on Crown Vellum (Gold) Watermarked Paper Launch**

### **Purpose**

1. To inform Exporters located in Northern Ireland of new digital security measures being introduced for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) to replace existing Crown Vellum (Gold) watermarked security paper.

### **Background**

2. EHCs from the United Kingdom to third countries are normally issued using Crown Vellum (Gold) watermarked security paper to provide anti-fraud assurance to Importing Competent Authorities of the authenticity of UK certification.
3. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, DEFRA agreed, with a number of third country Competent Authorities, the production of EHCs on plain white paper as a temporary measure to assist in issuing EHCs.
4. DEFRA and DAERA have also been working on a solution to remove Crown Vellum watermarked security paper across all countries and replace with plain white paper with improved digital security measures. The new security features include a **12 digit unique code** applied to page 1 of the EHC and a **'dithered watermark'** applied to all pages, visible when the EHC is printed on white paper.
5. These features will apply to EHCs issued through DECOL, for the following third country Competent Authorities that have been approached to adopt this so far:
  - **Hong Kong**
  - **Australia**

Initial use of the new technical solution will take place during a trial during which time DAERA will be requesting feedback on the new procedures from Importing Competent Authorities and Certifying Officers. Any additional

feedback from Exporters is welcome. This trial period will begin during **week commencing Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May**.

6. **All other** EHCs will continue to be:
  - Issued using white paper as a temporary measure during coronavirus restrictions (where agreements are in place).
  - Issued using Crown Vellum (Gold) watermarked security paper
  - Issued on white paper where Crown Vellum watermarked Paper is not required e.g. EHCs for the European Union (EU)
7. There is no change to how exporters apply for EHCs. Exporters can continue to apply for an EHC by completing an application on DECOL.
8. When the EHC is issued to the exporter, the new security features will be present. A 12-digit code will be visible on the first page of the certificate.
9. The certificate serial number and a crown dithered watermark will be added to all pages of the export health certificate. The crown dithered watermark consists of a crown in the centre of the page and the certificate serial number displayed as a diagonal watermark.
10. Appendix 1 provides an example of an EHC including the dithered watermark.
11. The Importing Competent Authority can enter the 12-digit code (from the certified EHC), into a new verification service on GOV.UK, to confirm the validity of the certificate (valid or invalid) as part of the security features.
12. DAERA will respond to any correspondence from the Importing Competent Authority if any queries are received as to the authenticity of a white paper EHC.
13. It is recommended that you advise your Importers in Australia and Hong Kong to expect this 'new look' for all EHCs issued during week commencing 24 May 2021 until further notice.



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## Contact

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## Appendix 1

An example of an EHC including the new dithered watermark (for illustration purposes only):

