



SPSS Information Sheet 1

The Legal Responsibilities of Owners in Relation to Equine Passports

Overview

All horses (including ponies and donkeys) must have a valid horse passport. To apply for a passport you must be the owner of the horse. You can be fined an unlimited amount if you don't have a valid horse passport.

A horse must not have more than one passport.

The horse's rider or keeper must have the passport with them at all times when they're with the horse, unless it's in a stable, grazing in a field, or being moved by foot. Owners can take their horses for short rides without one.

You (or the horse's main keeper) may have to show the passport to a Trading Standards inspector or an animal health officer.

A foal must have a passport within 6 months of birth or before 31 December in the year of birth (whichever is the later) and, in any event, before leaving permanently the holding of birth except where such movement takes place as foal at foot of the dam on which the foal depends or the foal is being transported directly to slaughter.

Slaughter for human consumption and medication record

By default all horses are intended for slaughter for human consumption except where irreversibly declared as not so intended in the relevant part of the passport. For passports issued before 2016 this is Part II of Section IX; for passports issued from Jan 2016 this is Part II of Section II. If your horse has not been "signed out" of the human food chain, your vet may not be able to prescribe some medications and any medication or injections your horse is given must be entered in Section II Part III by your vet. You must notify the relevant PIO within 14 days of your horse being "signed out" of the human food chain.

Selling or buying a horse

You must give the passport to the new owner if you sell (or transfer ownership) of your horse - if you don't, you could be prosecuted.

You must notify the relevant PIO that you're the new owner within 30 days if you buy (or otherwise take ownership of) a horse.

Contact your local Trading Standards office if someone tries to sell you a horse, pony or donkey without a passport.

Death, Theft or Loss

Your horse's passport is valid for its life. When the horse dies you must return the passport (within 30 days) to the Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO) that issued it to have it invalidated. You can request that they return it. You must also return the passport to the issuing PIO within 30 days of any other loss (including theft) of the animal.

Importing or exporting a horse, pony or donkey

Any horse, pony or donkey you import from a European Union (EU) country must have a valid passport issued by an authorised PIO in the EU. If the PIO is unauthorised or there's no passport, you must get a passport from an authorised PIO in the UK within 30 days of importation. Contact the Defra Horse Passports office if you're importing or exporting a horse, pony or donkey from outside the EU.

Contact details

For more information about horse passports, contact the Defra Helpline on 03459 33 55 77 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or by email to defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk. You can also write to them at:

Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR

Sources: GOV.UK website (dated 27 November 2015), The Horse Passports Regulations 2009 & EU Regulation 2015/262