



Passports and Microchipping

Under current legislation, all horses must be microchipped and have a passport; this applies to foals within six months of birth or before 30 November of the year in which they were born, whichever date occurs later.

In 2009, the Horse Passport Regulations (2009) legislation came in stating all owners are responsible for registering their equines or updating details with the Passport Issuing Organisation. It was introduced to be able to correctly identify horses and protect the human food chain.

The horse passport is a document that describes the animal, for example by breed, colour, height and markings. It lists all of the vaccinations that the animal has received by date, and it names the registered owner.

Owners may be asked to produce the passport for the following:

- The passport must always accompany the horse.
- When the horse is moved in or out of the United Kingdom.
- When the horse is at a competition.
- When the horse moves to new premises.

- When the horse is presented at a slaughter house.
- At the time a horse is sold.
- When the horse is being used for breeding.
- When a vet attends the horse to administer vaccinations or requires medication.
- When the horse is transported.

If owners do not have the passport available, they will be given three hours to produce it.

The only exception when a passport is not required is when a horse is being transported for emergency veterinary treatment.

Central Equine Database

This is a database that holds all of the information on an owner's horse, including the owner's name as the keeper, the horse's passport and which Passport Issuing Organisation it is registered with, and their microchip number. Owners are responsible for keeping this information up-to-date at ced.equineregister.co.uk/login

The Central Equine Database logs all domesticated horses, ponies and donkeys, allowing the police and local authorities to reunite lost or stolen horses with their

owners more easily and trace the details of abandoned horses to help improve equine welfare in the UK.

Horse owners can create a Digital Stable online or by using the app: equineregister.co.uk

Anyone can check microchip numbers using the National Chip Checker: equineregister.co.uk/chipchecker

There are 81 UK Passport Issuing Organisations and Equine Registers. The British Horse Society (BHS) is one of these: bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/horse-passports/

Failing to identify horses in accordance with the legislation could result in a fine of up to £5,000.

When a horse is sold, purchased or rehomed

New owners should receive the passport with their new horse, which then has to be updated with the new owner's details via the Passport Issuing Organisation within 30 days.

If the owner has purchased a specific breed, they must check if they provide a passport service for that breed.

As there are 81 Passport Issuing Organisations, the DEFRA website can be used to check which is best suited for the new owner and horse breed.

Costs of applying for passports and changes:

bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/horse-passports/horse-passport-prices/

The BHS has useful information regarding frequently asked questions:

bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/horse-passports/horse-passport-faqs/

Selling a horse

Before a horse is sold, they need to have a passport as it is an offence to buy, sell or rehome a horse without a passport.

If new owners purchase a horse and do not receive its passport, the horse may have previously been issued with one and the new owner must apply for a duplicate passport from the organisation that originally issued the passport.

If a horse dies

The owner is required to send the passport back to the Passport Issuing Organisation with which it was registered within 30 days of the death to update their records and invalidate the passport.

Microchipping

Since October 2020 it has been made mandatory for all owners to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys.

Microchipping allows local authorities and the police to track the owners of abandoned, lost or stolen horses, this means that owners and horses can be brought back together more easily.

A microchip is a tiny computer chip that is inserted just under the horse's skin that contains a unique number. Horses can be checked for a microchip by a hand held scanner which will display their microchip number if found.

The cost of a microchip is around £25-30 and needs to be administered by a vet.

Microchipping can be combined with a routine vet visit such as annual vaccinations to minimise cost.

The BHS run Horse Healthcare Clinics that owners can attend to have their horse passport produced/updated and microchip completed all on the same day. Contact the BHS for more information: bhs.org.uk

If a horse already had a passport before microchipping became a legal requirement, owners will need to update the horse's passport and the Passport Issuing Organisation with the number and upload to the Central Equine Database.

If a horse is sold, the previous owner must pass on the microchip registration paperwork and passport to the new owner so they can contact the database and register as the new owner.

The benefits of being able to correctly identify a horse

A passport, microchip and up-to-date information on the Central Equine Database are key to benefiting owners and their horses:

- Owners can be quickly reunited if your horse is stolen or lost.
- It prevents horses from entering the food chain if stolen or lost.
- It helps prevent theft and illegal sales.
- It identifies horses in case of a disease outbreak.
- It provides a more accurate register of the horse population.

Support from Bransby Horses

If you would like any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us to support you through this process.

You can contact us by phone (01427 787369 – open Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm), email welfare@bransbyhorses.co.uk or online at BransbyHorses.co.uk/welfare

In an emergency situation out of normal office hours please contact the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

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