

CITES Digital Service Update

May 2023

What's changing?

APHA is replacing its current application process for CITES permits and licences with a digital service on GOV.UK. We have re-designed our guidance pages and made a phone line available to help you with completing CITES forms online. We will still accept postal applications from those users that do not have digital skills or access.

Why is it changing?

The current IT infrastructure is being refreshed as part of the UK Government's continuing digital transformation of services.

What does this mean to me?

As an applicant, you will be able to apply for CITES permits online and access your digital applications electronically.

Some of the benefits to you and key changes –

- You will be able to sign in securely to GOV.UK where you can access your past and current digital applications. This will be done using a government gateway account,
- You can apply digitally online and upload any supporting documentation – this will enable the APHA team to process your CITES application more quickly,
- You will pay for your application online when you submit it – depending on the complexity of your application this may happen immediately, or you will be sent a payment link following submission,
- You will receive correspondence via GOV.UK on any queries about your application,
- Applications will be stored in your account for you to look back on'
- From your account, you will be able to copy and edit any previous digital application to enable you to submit similar applications easily without having to start from scratch.

When will this happen?

APHA will begin using the internal service to process applications from May 2023 and we expect to launch the service on GOV.UK during summer 2023.

FAQs?

What will the benefits of the digital service be?

Currently the APHA team is using a 25-year-old legacy system to process your applications; this is an extremely manual and inefficient process that is causing great risk to the delivery of CITES permits and licences. By replacing the current system and moving to a digital service, we are anticipating improvements in the time it takes to process applications with the ambition to issue most permits within 10 working days.

Can I apply for all permits via the digital service?

Currently you will only be able to use the digital service to apply for import, export, re-export, and Article 10 applications. All other applications will need to be applied for by post or email using the current application form and payment made via 01633 631800 by credit or debit card or online via gov pay using the email address you have provided – a payment link will be sent to your email address upon receipt of the application.

What if my species is not on Species+, is a spp or a hybrid?

The CITES digital service uses a copy of the Species+ database (<https://speciesplus.net/>). Therefore, you will be able to apply for a permit for any species that is listed. However, APHA will also maintain a secondary database that will include all known spp and hybrid species.

If you need to apply for a new spp or hybrid species that is not known to us at the point of application, you will need to choose one part of the species that is listed on the database and then note in the application process that this is a hybrid/spp and the details of the species involved. You can also upload any supporting documentation to support this. APHA will then contact you to confirm this before the application is processed and will update the secondary database as appropriate.

How will I pay for my application?

All applications will be paid for via credit or debit card. If an application is made for a single species and permit the cost is calculated automatically via the service and you will be asked to pay immediately.

Where you are applying for more than one specimen or permit you will submit your application without payment. APHA will calculate the cost and you will receive a link to pay for your application within 2 working days.

Do I have to pay for each application separately?

You will have to pay for every submission that you make and not every application – If you use the digital service to make a submission of 100 specimens then you will receive one payment link.

How will I pay if I currently pay by BACS?

The series of GOV.UK web pages we are currently developing will replace the submission of CITES and Article 10 applications by email and post, except for those applicants who cannot use the digital service.

As with all GOV.UK digital services, payment will be made using GOV.UK Pay as part of the application (<https://www.payments.service.gov.uk/>). GOV.UK Pay allows debit and credit card payments to be taken and processed in a secure and consistent manner. Taking payment upfront will also bring us back into line with section 3(2)(c) of the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Fees) Regulations 2009 which states that the fee must be paid 'when the application is made' <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/496>.

The introduction of the new digital service will no longer support BACS payments and you will need to pay your CITES application fee by debit/credit card when you submit one or more applications.

Will I receive confirmation that my card payment has been successfully processed?

You will receive a confirmation of payment via email that includes the application number, amount paid and the time and date of the application you made.

Can I duplicate or copy permits when they are the same or similar?

Yes, if you have an application within your account that you wish to duplicate, you will be able to do so. You will also be able to make minor changes to that application – such as weight, quantity etc.

Will I be able to see applications I have made in the past?

Yes, you will have access to all digital applications you have made via the digital service

Will permits still be issued in the same way?

Yes, permits will still be issued in the same way, and you will receive paper copies of the permits via Royal Mail.

Can I pay for my permits to be sent by special delivery?

You will be able to pay for special delivery should you wish to do so and this will be via royal mail next day delivery only.

What if I cannot adopt the new service due to my lack of access to technology or needs?

We have put in place support services to help you transition into digital applications for CITES. You can contact APHA to help you complete an application online if you need assistance. You will also be able to ask a family member or friend to apply on your behalf or continue to submit applications via post. Please consider that all the functionalities described in the body of this communication (such as ability to copy an application or to track its progress) will not be available for postal submissions and the processing times might be longer than with digital submissions.

What do I do if I am experiencing difficulties?

If you are experiencing any difficulties or have any questions you will need to contact APHA on 01173723700 or email wildlife.licencing@apha.gov.uk

Where can I find out more?

Future updates will be uploaded on gov.uk via this link [Apply for CITES permits and certificates to move or trade endangered species - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)