

AVIAN INFLUENZA PREVENTION ZONE: Q&A

Last updated 8 December 2016

1. What should I do if I can't house my birds?

The order requires any person in charge of poultry and captive birds to take all appropriate and practicable steps to ensure that birds are housed or otherwise kept separate from wild birds.

It may not be appropriate or practicable for you to house your birds but you should take steps to ensure they are otherwise kept separate from wild birds (such as feeding and watering birds inside and making sure feed stores are protected against wild birds or vermin).

Bird keepers should speak with their private vets, or their local Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) office (see annex below), if they have any specific questions about complying with these requirements.

We have published a biosecurity leaflet for all bird keepers and detailed guidance advising poultry keepers how to minimise the risk of infection on their premises. The leaflet and other advice can be accessed online at www.gov.scot/avianinfluenza

2. What happens to free range poultry – do they lose their status?

No. The Scottish Government have declared an AI Prevention Zone across the whole of Scotland for 30 days, and this qualifies free-range producers to house their birds as a preventative measure against the current H5N8 virus circulating in wild birds, without impact on their products' free range status. This derogation from EU requirements is valid only during the 30 days of the Prevention Zone being in place (the derogation can be extended up to a maximum of 12 weeks under EU law).

3. If this costs me extra money will the SG reimburse my costs?

There is no requirement on the Scottish Government to compensate owners for these measures.

4. How long will the measures last?

The Prevention Order is in place for 30 days, ending on 6 January 2017.

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5. Could the zone be lifted early?

The zone would only be lifted before 30 days if the risk situation diminishes.

6. What birds does this apply to?

The zone applies to all poultry and captive birds, regardless of species. If it is not practical to keep a certain species indoors then other measures should be taken to keep them separate from wild birds.

7. Can I still fly birds of prey?

Yes, although you should minimise contact with wild birds, for example by using other prey where possible.

8. Should I cancel shows, events, school visits etc?

Not necessarily. Provided that your birds are kept separate from wild birds such events can still go ahead.

However, for your birds' safety you may want to think about rescheduling - avian influenza virus can be spread by visitors on their boots etc. If you have any specific concerns you should discuss these with your private vet or local APHA office.

9. Can I still import birds?

Yes. The only change is that birds should be kept housed once in Scotland.

10. Does this affect shooting?

Shoots have not been banned in the prevention zone.

Where game birds are already released, they are considered to be wild and there is no restriction. Birds in pens should be kept separate from wild birds as far as possible.

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11. What regulations are in place to protect the welfare of the birds when they are housed?

Animal welfare legislation continues to apply. Keepers who have welfare concerns should discuss these with their private vet, or local APHA office.

12. What other biosecurity measures apply within the prevention zone?

In addition to separating birds from wild birds, the declaration requires keepers to, where possible:

- Keep bird feed and water separate from wild birds
- Reduce movement of people, vehicles and equipment to areas where birds are kept
- Take steps to control vermin eg filling holes in walls
- For poultry farmers, cleanse and disinfect all housing and equipment at the end of a production cycle
- For poultry farmers, provide disinfectant at entry points

It may not be appropriate or practicable to take all of these steps in every circumstance – keepers should discuss their biosecurity arrangements with their private vet or local APHA office if they have any concerns.

13 Am I allowed to build a cover for my birds? Will I need planning permission?

In Scotland, you are permitted to build a temporary structure as long as it taken down within 28 days of it being erected. If your structure was designed to remain in place for longer than 28 days, then you could build under the Agricultural Permitted Development Rights as long as the structure is not within 400m of any residential house (which is not related to the agricultural premises) and complies with other requirements of class 18 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. For more information on agricultural permitted development rights see Planning Circular 2/2015: Consolidated Circular on Non-domestic Permitted Development Rights.

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14. What can I do to keep my birds happy while they are kept indoors?

There are a variety of environmental enrichment options for captive birds, including poultry. It is important that you consider introducing activities for your birds if they are used to having large spaces to roam, as their welfare is very important. You could hang objects like old CDs and cabbage or kale leaves from perches or the ceiling of the enclosure for them to peck, or provide foraging items inside like hay, dirt clumps, (non-toxic) weeds or old wood stumps. Changing these items when birds lose interest in them will help reduce stress levels and provide mental stimulation for them.

15. What is the penalty for not complying with the measures in the AI Prevention Zone declaration?

Non compliance may be regarded as an offence which could result in either imprisonment (for a term not exceeding six months) or a fine of up to £5,000, or both. However, the main objective of this order is to reduce the opportunity for contact between wild birds and captive birds/poultry. Keepers need to balance costs against effectiveness. It is therefore important that you investigate all options open to you and consider their practicality/feasibility of implementing these measures given your individual circumstances. Please refer to [published biosecurity guidance](#) for further help and advice or contact your local vet or local APHA office.

General Questions

16. What is Avian Influenza?

Avian influenza (bird flu) is a highly contagious disease of birds that can also affect humans and other mammals. Avian Influenza viruses can be classified according to their ability to cause severe disease (pathogenicity) as either highly pathogenic or low pathogenic.

17. What is the difference between high and low pathogenic avian influenza?

Highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses (HPAI) is the more serious type. HPAI can cause severe disease in susceptible birds and is often fatal in birds.

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Low pathogenic avian influenza viruses (LPAI) is usually less serious and generally causes limited disease or no disease at all in birds. The severity of LPAI depends on the (AHVLA) species of bird and whether it has any other illnesses at the same time. The severity of LPAI depends on the type of bird and whether it has any other illnesses.

18. How is avian influenza spread?

Avian influenza virus are passed between individual birds, including wild birds and poultry, by ingestion or inhalation. Transmission between managed poultry flocks is the result of breaches in biosecurity practices, principally by movement of infected poultry or exposure to contaminated faeces and respiratory secretions (which may have come from wild birds) on fomites such as equipment or clothing. Direct airborne dissemination between flocks may be important but usually only over limited distances. Poultry keepers can help prevent Avian Influenza spread by practicing good biosecurity measures on their premises.

19. What should bird keepers do if they suspect a Notifiable Exotic Disease?

There is a legal requirement to notify APHA if a notifiable exotic disease is suspected (see Annex). If you are concerned about signs of disease in your animals you should consult your vet promptly. Anyone keeping animals has a legal duty to report suspect notifiable disease.

20. How will Scottish Government respond to an outbreak of highly pathogenic Avian influenza (HPAI) in poultry?

If HPAI is found in domestic poultry, a 3 km Protection Zone (PZ) and a 10 km Surveillance Zone (SZ) would be declared. The birds on the infected premises (IP) would be culled. There would be movement restrictions and control on eggs, meat and anything likely to spread disease within the PZ and SZ. Surveillance of poultry and wild birds would be heightened in the SZ, and there is likely to be a national ban on captive bird gatherings.

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21. What is the impact on international trade if highly pathogenic H5N8 is found in poultry?

International requirements determine whether a country is regarded as disease free. Once disease is found in poultry there are implications for international trade. The quickest way to regain disease free status following an outbreak is 3 months after a stamping out policy has been completed on all infected premises, which includes the disinfection of all infected premises and surveillance met under obligations to European legislation.

**Animal Health and Welfare Division
Scottish Government
8 December 2016**

ANNEX: Local Animal and Plant Health Office (APHA) contacts:

Ayr:	01292 291 350	Russell House, King Street, Ayr, KA8 0BE
Galashiels	01896 758 806	Cotgreen Road, Tweedbank, Gala, TD1 3SG
Inverness	01463 728 800	Longman House, 28 Longman Road, IV1 1SF
Inverurie	01467 626 610	Thainstone Court, Inverurie, AB51 5YA
Perth	01738 602 211	Strathearn House, Lamberkine Drive, Perth, PH1 1RX