

## Compulsory Microchipping of Dogs Regulations in the UK

This document is intended primarily to provide veterinary practices with up-to-date information regarding the legislation relating to the compulsory microchipping of dogs in the UK. However, we are aware that veterinary practices may also be implanting microchips in relation to other legislation and in other species, and so we have tried to include appropriate references to these where appropriate.

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## 1. Legislation

### Compulsory microchipping

Legislation related to Animal Health and Welfare is devolved within the UK, therefore there are different regulations for different countries of the UK.

[The Microchipping of Dogs \(England\) Regulations 2015](#), made under section 12 of [The Animal Welfare Act 2006](#), came into effect on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015. However, although some of the provisions of the act came into effect in February 2015 the requirement for all dogs over the age of eight weeks in England to be fitted with a microchip comes into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

[The Microchipping of Dogs \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#) have now been accepted by the Welsh Assembly Government and came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2015. The requirements for compulsory microchipping will also come into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

[The Microchipping of Dogs \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#) came into effect in January 2016 and the requirements for compulsory microchipping will also come into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

[Dogs \(Amendment\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#) requires the microchipping of dogs before a dog licence can be issued. The Act also includes provisions relating to the control of dogs. Further information is available from <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/dog-licensing-and-microchipping>, which states that all dogs in Northern Ireland must be microchipped at eight weeks old and that dog owners are responsible for ensuring that the contact details held against their dog's microchip number are accurate. If the details are not accurate, the dog is not considered as microchipped and the dog licence will not be valid.

Details below refer to the regulations in England – differences in the regulations in the devolved administrations are shown in the following colours:

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales

## Other legislation that includes requirements for microchipping

### Racing greyhounds

[The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010](#) (condition 4) requires that a greyhound only be permitted to enter a race or trial if it is identified by a microchip that:

- (a) Has a unique number;
- (b) Complies with both ISO standard 11784 and ISO standard 11785 that define the bit content and communication protocol of microchips that adhere to International Standards Organisation standards for microchips
- (c) Is registered on a database in relation to which the operator reasonably believes the requirements set out in Part 2 of this Schedule are met.

### Pet Travel Regulations

The requirements for both the non-commercial and commercial movements of pet animals susceptible to rabies require that the animal (dog, cat or ferret) is identified by a microchip, **and that this should be inserted before rabies vaccination is carried out**. Tattoos are only an acceptable method of identification if they were applied before 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2011 (and are still legible). The most recent amendments to the Pet Travel Regulations, [The Non-commercial Movement of Pet Animals \(Amendment\) Order 2014](#) and [The Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals \(Amendment\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#), introduce the requirement for qualifications for the microchipping of pet animals (see section 3 below). It should be noted that with respect to pet travel this requirement applies to dogs, cats and ferrets. However, where the animal has been previously microchipped the veterinary surgeon does not have any responsibility to check on the qualifications of the implanter or to implant another microchip.

### Tail docking

In England and Wales, [Section 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006](#) makes it an offence to remove the whole or part of a dog's tail other than for the purpose of medical treatment, subject to the exemption for docking the tails of certain working dogs subject to veterinary certification. [The Docking of Working Dogs' Tails \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) and [The Docking of Working Dogs' Tails \(Wales\) Regulations 2007](#) specify the certification requirements for veterinary surgeons docking working dogs' tails. The dog must be no older than five days when docked and will also need to be microchipped before it is three months old. The regulations specifically state the microchip must be implanted by a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse acting under the supervision of a veterinary

surgeon and that the veterinary surgeon who carries out or supervises the microchipping must certify that fact in Part 5 of a certificate in the form prescribed in [Schedule 2](#) of the regulation.

Where a puppy is presented to a veterinary surgeon and is already microchipped with a working microchip, a strict legal interpretation of the regulations requires the veterinary surgeon to insert a second microchip in order to be able to sign the certificate in Schedule 2 and for the dog to be identified in accordance with the regulations. We have been informed that Defra recognises that it is not in the best welfare interests of the dog for a second working microchip to be inserted and will explore the scope for amending the regulations at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime we strongly urge any veterinary surgeon undertaking docking of working dogs' tails to stress that the breeder must have the puppy microchipped by a veterinary surgeon, or veterinary nurse acting under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon, in order to comply with the legislation. If a second microchip has to be inserted for any reason it is important to make this clear in any documentation.

In Northern Ireland under [The Welfare of Animals \(Docking of Working Dogs' Tails and Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2012](#), the dog must be microchipped by a competent person working in the same practice who must then complete paragraph 2 of a certificate in the form prescribed in the Schedule in respect of that dog.

In Scotland, tail docking may currently only be carried out for therapeutic purposes.

### **Dangerous Dogs Exemption Scheme**

There is also a requirement for microchipping under [The Dangerous Dogs Exemption Schemes \(England and Wales\) Order 2015](#) which states that a dog that is to be exempted from the prohibition in [section 1\(3\) of the \(Dangerous Dogs\) Act](#) must be implanted with a microchip, unless already microchipped to the satisfaction of the Agency, by a person who:

- (a) Is a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon;
- (b) Is a student of veterinary surgery or a student veterinary nurse and in either case is acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon; or
- (c) Is satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of implanting microchips.

## 2. Requirement for microchipping

The microchipping regulations include provision that all dogs are microchipped and their details recorded on a database. Once the regulations come into force, puppies will need to be microchipped by the age of eight weeks and before transfer to a new keeper unless one of two exemptions apply:

1. Where a veterinary surgeon has certified the dog as a working dog (England and Wales) and docked its tail as allowed under section 6 of [The Animal Welfare Act 2006](#). In such cases the time limit for the dog to be microchipped and details recorded with a database is 12 weeks. The reason given for this is that the new microchipping regulations are only a Statutory Instrument made under the Animal Welfare Act and therefore cannot amend the Animal Welfare Act itself. However, there is no reason why the dog cannot be microchipped before this time.
2. Where a veterinary surgeon certifies that a dog should not be microchipped because it would adversely affect its health (**in Wales, the exemption requires certification that microchipping would significantly compromise the dog's health**). In such cases it is recommended that the form of the certification issued by the veterinary surgeon is the form provided for in Annex A, and states when the exemption expires (it may be permanent if the health concerns warrant it). The dog must be microchipped on expiry of a time limited certificate unless a veterinary surgeon issues a further exemption certificate because the s/he still has concerns over the dog's health. Ensuring that the dog is implanted with a microchip following expiry of the exemption certificate is the responsibility of the owner/keeper and the veterinary surgeon does not have any specific responsibility to enforce this.

### Exemption from microchipping

The BSAVA considers that the situations in which exemption would be necessary are limited and would very rarely require permanent exemption. However, the following situations may require exemption:

- **Size of dog** – while the majority of dogs can be safely implanted with a microchip before eight weeks of age there may be cases in toy or miniature breeds of dog where, in the professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon, microchipping should be delayed for a matter of weeks to allow the puppy to grow.

- **Severe illness** – where a dog has a severe debilitating illness it may be appropriate for the veterinary surgeon to recommend that microchipping is delayed for a short period to enable recovery to take place.
- **Infection or injury or adverse reaction at the normal site of microchipping** – where a dog has an infection or injury at the normal site of microchipping it may be appropriate for the veterinary surgeon to recommend that microchipping is delayed for a short period to enable recovery to take place. If the injury is likely to permanently preclude microchipping at the normal site the veterinary surgeon should consider implanting the microchip at a different site. The implantation site should be as close to the normal implantation site as possible to maximise the chance that the microchip will be located by routine scanning processes. Where a microchip is deliberately implanted at a different site this should be recorded in the clinical records and on any records relating to the microchip e.g. database records or Pet Passport.
- **Abnormalities of blood clotting** – where a dog has any condition that interferes with blood clotting it may be appropriate to delay microchip implantation until the situation has been rectified or stabilised.
- **Behavioural concerns** – where implantation of a nervous dog is considered likely to reinforce negative/fearful responses and adversely affect ongoing management and handling of that pet in future consultations, it may be appropriate to delay microchip implantation temporarily until the dog's behaviour can be suitably addressed.

Although not required on the certificate, BSAVA would recommend that the veterinary surgeon includes the reason for the exemption by noting it on the certificate. It is also important to ensure that the owner of the dog, or person authorised to represent the owner, signs the certificate to confirm that they understand that the certificate is only valid for a certain period.

### 3. Microchip implantation

#### Legislation relating to implantation

From the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015 anyone wishing to implant microchips in dogs in England may only do so if:

1. They are a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon;

2. They are a student of veterinary surgery or a student veterinary nurse and in either case acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon;
3. They have been satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State for that purpose;
4. Before these Regulations come into force they received training on implantation which included practical experience of implanting a microchip.

Similar provisions are included in the regulations that apply in Wales and Scotland. **It should be noted that the Welsh Regulations indicate that the “grandfather” rights of provision 4 above will cease after 2 years (April 2018). We will update this document when further information becomes available.**

Once these regulations are in force, anyone implanting a microchip who is not covered by groups 1-4 above is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

Lantra has developed a Level 3 Award in Performing Microchip Implantation in Animals. Courses that meet the requirements of the regulations are currently being offered by:

- [The Microchip Trade Association](#)
- [Peddymark](#)
- [Vetskills](#)

The Lantra qualification covers:

- Knowledge and understanding of current legislation and safety requirements
- Knowledge and understanding of the use of microchips in animals
- How to safely handle and restrain animals
- How to select and prepare the animal for microchipping
- How to safely perform microchip implantation
- How to carry out post-implantation procedures.

There is currently no list of those qualified to implant microchips and it is not the responsibility of the veterinary surgeon to check on the qualification of the planter of any animal that has already been microchipped. However, it is now a legal requirement to report adverse events (reaction, migration, failure) to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate

<https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/microchipeventreporting/>. For further information see section 6 on adverse reactions below.

It should be noted that definition of adverse reactions in the regulations includes “*any suffering or pathology on the part of a dog which is caused, or appears to be caused, by a microchip implanted in the dog*” and therefore mis-implantation of a microchip causing suffering or pathology should also be reported.

### Form of microchip

All dogs and puppies **requiring implanting** after 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 will need to be implanted with an FDX-B microchip conforming to ISO standard 11784, operating at 134.2 KHz and programmed with a unique number starting with a manufacturer code\*.

All dogs and puppies over eight weeks of age by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 that **have already been microchipped**, but have a microchip other than the type specified above, will need to be re-implanted with a compliant microchip conforming to the above requirements. Non-conforming implants types include FDX-A microchips which all have 10 digit numbers, encrypted microchips, or any other not able to be read by an ISO-compliant transceiver reading at 134.2KHz.

For dogs that have been imported, implantation with an appropriate microchip (if not already in place) and registration must occur within 30 days of arrival unless the keeper has an exemption certificate for the dog. If the dog is intended to be transferred to another keeper the dog must be microchipped with a compliant microchip before it is transferred.

Imported dogs already carrying a microchip that conforms to ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 where the number starts with a country code\* comply with the UK regulations and do not have to be implanted with a second microchip. However, they do need to be registered on an appropriate database to comply with the regulations <http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards.htm>.

\* All manufacturer codes are three digits long and start with a 9 e.g.: **958**000010123456

Country codes are also three digits long but the first digit is never a 9.

The full list of manufacturer and country codes can be accessed at the links below:

<http://cms.abvma.ca/uploads/ManufacturersISOsandCountryCodes.pdf>

<http://www.service-icar.com/tables/Tabella1.php>



## Implantation procedure

In the UK implantation of a microchip by the subcutaneous route is not considered to be an act of veterinary surgery. However, under the following circumstances even subcutaneous implantation may be classed as an act of veterinary surgery and therefore will need to be carried out by, or under the direction of, a veterinary surgeon:

- Where repair or closure of the entry site is required;
- Where sedation and analgesia are required to facilitate safe implantation;
- If there is special risk to the health or welfare of the animal.

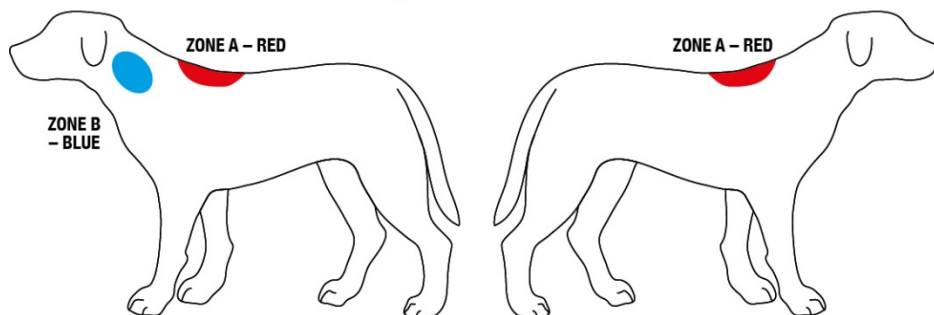
Further details can be found in the [RCVS Advice and Guidance](#).

Although the regulations do not specify the site of implantation it is recommended that microchips are implanted at the standard implantation site to minimise the risk of migration and to maximise the chance that the microchip is found on scanning.

There are two standardized injection sites for microchip implantation in dogs and cats which are described in ISO 15639-1.

In the UK and the Republic of Ireland the standard implantation site for dogs and cats is subcutaneous on the dorsal midline so that the transponder lies halfway between the anterior and posterior edge of the scapulae after implantation (the middle of Zone A – coloured in red below). For the purposes of scanning, it should be noted that the standard implantation site in continental Europe is subcutaneously on the left side of the body in the cranial third of the neck between the ear and shoulder (Zone B – coloured in blue below).

### Implantation site



The WSAVA provides a full list of standard implantation sites for a wide range of animals:

<http://www.wsava.org/guidelines/microchip-identification-guidelines>.

#### 4. Scanning for microchips

Before scanning an animal, check that the scanner is working and that you know the correct orientation for the make of scanner being used to maximise the likelihood of detection of the microchip. It may be appropriate to remove the dog's collar before scanning, both to avoid interference and because there have been reports of microchips being inserted into the collar rather than the dog for smuggling purposes.

The microchip scanner should be passed slowly over the surface of the animal, moving the scanner in an "S" shaped pattern over the dorsum of the animal. Scanning should begin and concentrate over the standard implantation site in the UK, which is midway between the shoulder blades (this should take 10–20 seconds). If no chip is detected, rotate the scanner by 90 degrees and rescan the animal.

If the microchip is not detected here, you should scan down the left side of the neck (the standard implantation side in Europe) then down the back, on the sides, over the shoulders and down to the elbows.

If a microchip is still not detected where there is evidence that a microchip has been implanted, the following should be considered:

- Scan other areas of the body to see if the microchip has migrated. Start at the pet's head, and slowly scan side-to-side all the way to the pet's tail, making several passes over each area. Then, slowly scan down the sides of the pet's leg, across its neck, along and under its chest and behind its front legs;
- Change the orientation of the scanner and rescan the animal;
- Rescan the animal with a different scanner.

**If it is found that a dog has not been microchipped after the introduction of compulsory microchipping the veterinary surgeon does not have any responsibility to report the owner but whenever possible should advise the owner of their legal responsibility to have the dog microchipped. We would recommend that this advice is recorded in the animal's clinical record.**

There is currently no requirement for a veterinary surgeon to scan a dog for a microchip except before rabies vaccination and the issuing of a Pet Passport, or completing other official documentation that requires identification of the animal. However, there are many circumstances in which it is advisable to do so:

- Prior to implanting a microchip, in order to ensure that no microchip is present;
- When a lost or stray animal is presented, in order to facilitate reunification with the owner;
- To ensure that a previously implanted microchip is still working and has not migrated significantly from its site of implantation. This is particularly important before an animal travels abroad;
- On first presentation at the practice, in order to ensure that the animal is correctly identified;
- Prior to carrying out official health screening/tests – to ensure that the animal is correctly identified. Many tests require the microchip number to be included on the form, and in the case of radiographs for BVA/KC schemes the microchip number must be radiographed on to the film at the time of exposure.

Very occasionally veterinary professionals may become aware that the animal presented is registered to another keeper. While it is not essential or even always possible to obtain consent from an owner before scanning, consideration should be given to how these issues will be dealt with. The RCVS provides guidance on how to deal with issues relating to microchipping, including potential ownership disputes in the guidance supporting the Codes of Professional Conduct for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses ([Microchips, microchipping and animals without microchips](#) (section 29)). They have also produced a [flow chart](#) outlining how to deal with issues relating to microchipping and client confidentiality in difficult situations, such as where the animal may have been stolen or in potential ownership disputes. This advice covers:

- Seeking prior agreement to disclose
- Seeking consent to disclose
- What to do when consent is not given.

The BSAVA recommends that in most circumstances the veterinary practice should only disclose information to the database provider so as to minimise the likelihood of being drawn into any ownership dispute. The RCVS states that if it is suspected that the animal is stolen, veterinary

surgeons or the owner may involve the police. In the case of a potential dispute we recommend that you:

1. **Read the RCVS guidance in detail**
2. **Consult your professional indemnity provider**
3. **Keep detailed notes.**

## 5. Registration of microchip

Once a microchip has been implanted the details must be recorded on a database in order to comply with the definition of “microchipping” included in the regulations. The following information is required in the English regulations, please be aware that there are slight differences in requirements in the Welsh and Scottish regulations, such as the email address (if any) of the keeper.

1. The **full name and address and telephone number of the keeper**; A keeper is defined at regulation 2(2):
  - a) For an assistance dog (as [defined in section 173\(1\) of the Equality Act 2010](#)) the body responsible for its training and allocation up until the dog stops working as an assistance dog; once it stops working as an assistance dog the keeper is the person it lives with;
  - b) For a new-born puppy, the owner of a bitch that gives birth to that puppy (this means that the breeder is the first keeper of any dog that has been bred by the owner of the bitch); or
  - c) For any other dogs, the person with whom the dog normally resides.

If the keeper is homeless, contact details for someone the keeper stays in touch with may be entered.

In this regulation “breeder” means any keeper of a bitch that whelps, whether or not they carry on a business as a breeder of dogs; if the keeper is the breeder and is licensed by the local authority under the Breeding of Dogs Act 1973(6) the following should also be recorded:

- (i) the breeder’s licence number; and
  - (ii) the name of the local authority by which they are licensed;
2. The **original name or identification number** given to the dog; and the name given to the dog by the current keeper, if that is different
3. The **sex** of the dog;
4. The **breed** of the dog, or a description if it is a cross-breed;
5. The **colour** of the dog;

6. The most accurate estimate of the dog's **date of birth** which the keeper is capable of giving – in the case of the breeder this should be the exact date of birth;
7. The **unique number of the microchip** implanted in the dog.

While the responsibility for ensuring details are recorded or updated on the database is the responsibility of the keeper, in reality many veterinary practices will take on the responsibility for registering details of the keeper for any microchips that they implant. While the veterinary practice should make normal enquiries and take care to ensure that the details are entered accurately, they are not expected to make documentary checks on the information provided by the keeper.

### Transfer of ownership

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016, no keeper may transfer a dog to a new keeper until it has been microchipped unless an exemption certificate that the dog should not be microchipped for reasons of the animal's health has been issued by a veterinary surgeon (see section 2).

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016, where a dog is transferred to a new keeper the new keeper must, unless the previous keeper has already done so, record their full name, address and contact telephone number (if any) and any change in the dog's name with the database on which the dog's details are recorded.

Veterinary surgeons are not expected to enforce these regulations but do have a role in ensuring that their clients are aware of their responsibilities under the law, and registration is an essential part of compliance with the regulations.

Where a new keeper presents with a dog that is already microchipped and still registered to the previous keeper they should be advised to contact the appropriate database.

## 6. Adverse reactions

An adverse reaction is defined in the regulations as a microchip that causes any unnecessary pain or suffering or any pathology that is or seems to be caused by the implantation of a microchip, or a microchip that has migrated from the implantation site or failed. Although the regulation only applies to dogs it would be good practice to report adverse reactions to microchips in other species as well.

The regulations in England, Scotland and Wales make it a legal requirement to report adverse reactions/events relating to microchips and microchip failure in dogs (in England this came into effect on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015). Where there is evidence of any adverse event in relation to a microchip this must be reported to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate using the [online report form](#). Although this requirement applies to everyone, it is likely that those in veterinary practices may be the first to become aware of these problems, because they regularly scan microchips. The RCVS has now included guidance that veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should report any adverse reaction to a microchip or the failure of a microchip to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate in the supporting guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct.

If you are in contact with the microchip provider, they may offer to report the adverse reaction to the VMD on your behalf; in order to facilitate this make sure you have all the details to hand to pass on to them. Where the report of an adverse event is not made directly by the veterinary practice we recommend that you record arrangements for reporting, for future reference.

It is important to report all adverse reactions/events in order to monitor any problems with microchips or implantation standards so that steps can be taken to resolve any problems. The BSAVA used to run a voluntary adverse reaction reporting scheme; however, with the introduction of compulsory microchipping this role has been taken over by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate which also runs the suspected adverse event reporting scheme for veterinary medicines.

- Further details of the scheme can be found on the [Gov.uk website](#) and in their leaflet on the [Microchip Adverse Event Reporting Scheme](#)
- Reports can be submitted online through an [online report form](#)
- Queries can be addressed to the Pharmacovigilance Unit on 01932 338427.

### **Types of adverse event**

Please note that while the legislation refers to “adverse reactions” the VMD reporting scheme refers to “adverse events” In this document we have treated these terms as synonymous.

### **Implantation Reactions**

These usually occur relatively soon after implantation and are commonly linked to the implantation procedure e.g. haematomas (bleeding under the skin) or infection (an abscess near the site or an infection spreading systemically, making the animal ill).

At the time of implanting the microchip, it is not unusual for there to be an initial pain response, and sometimes a little bleeding at the implantation site. This should stop within a minute or two and would not be considered as an adverse event.

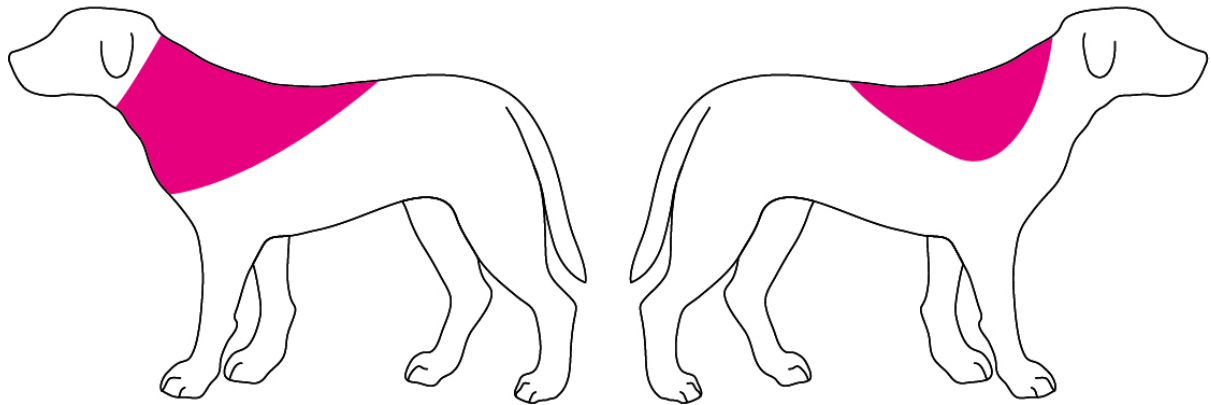
On rare occasions, an animal may react to an implanted microchip, as with any foreign material introduced into the body, with an inflammatory response. These along with any evidence of infection or other pathology should be reported as adverse events.

There are a very small number of reports of paralysis resulting from implantation into the spinal cord. Although these relate to problems with implantation technique rather than a problem with the microchip, these should also be reported. There have also been a very small number of cancers reported around the site of microchip implantation. Although these may or may not be related to the implantation of the microchip (c.f. feline injection site sarcomas) these should still be reported so that the VMD is able to collect accurate data on the incidence of these types of reaction.

### **Microchip Migration**

Migration from the site of implantation is now classed as an adverse event, and there is some logic in this in that it enables problems with certain brands or batches of microchips, or with the technique of certain implanters, to be detected. However, as there is no requirement to record the site of microchip implantation on the animal's record or microchip database, actual migration – as opposed to incorrect placement at initial implantation – is difficult to ascertain. For this reason we recommend that unless the veterinary surgeon has more detailed evidence on implantation site, for example from their own records or through entry in a Pet Passport, microchips located within the areas indicated in red on the diagram below (which covers the recommended UK and European sites for implantation and allows for minor errors of positioning at implantation) do not need to be reported as having migrated.

## Reporting – not required in shaded area



### Microchip Failure

Before assuming a microchip has stopped working it is good practice to ensure that the scanner is fully powered and working correctly and is compatible with the microchip in the animal (some microchips used in other countries will not work with all scanners available in the UK). The whole animal should be scanned and re-scanned in case the microchip has moved from the implantation site or has been implanted in a different part of the dog. If in doubt try using a different scanner. If the microchip still cannot be read an attempt should be made to palpate the microchip under the skin or, if the owner wishes to confirm the presence of an unresponsive microchip, diagnostic imaging such as radiography or ultrasound can be used. It is worth noting that the most common reason for failing to detect an implanted microchip is that it migrated out of the animal shortly after implantation.

The veterinary surgeon is only expected to report microchip failure where they have some evidence that a microchip had been present, for example through a registration document or patient record that provides details of a microchip number. As the microchip number is essential for reporting to the VMD the owner should be strongly encouraged to locate this information.

If an owner presents an animal without a working microchip and with no evidence of a microchip having been present, the veterinary surgeon can offer diagnostic imaging to ascertain if a microchip is present. Please note that members of the Microchip Trade Association are only likely to consider payment for imaging if a non-functioning chip is detected (see <http://microchiptradeassociation.org/page8/page5/>).



## Microchip failure – practical considerations

With the introduction of compulsory microchipping, an animal with a failed microchip will need to have a new microchip implanted unless it qualifies for exemption (as detailed in section 2). Where a second microchip is implanted it is recommended that the veterinary surgeon records details of the reason for re-implantation and where appropriate provides a written declaration to the owner with information about both the old and new microchip.

### Failed microchips and Pet Passports

Given the potential implications if a microchip fails on entry to the UK – such as the cost to the owner of resulting time in quarantine – veterinary surgeons should encourage their clients to have their pet's microchip checked before travel.

Defra provides the following advice on unreadable microchips:

- If the original microchip cannot be read, the pet must be re-implanted;
- If the pet has been previously prepared for travel, then it must be re-prepared in accordance with pet travel rules and a new Pet Passport issued;
- The issuing veterinary surgeon should note in the 'OTHERS' Section (XII) of the passport that there is another microchip present (and the number of that microchip) that cannot be scanned and read, in case the fault is intermittent and the chip is picked up at the port when the pet is checked for compliance for entry to the UK.

Pet Passports issued after 29<sup>th</sup> December 2014 include a laminated page covering the details of the pet's microchip. If the animal has one of these new-style passports and it is necessary to insert a second microchip then a new passport will need to be issued with both microchip numbers recorded in Section III (Marking of Animal).

### Intermittently working microchips and Pet Passports

If the microchip has not failed completely, Defra recommends that a new microchip is inserted in case the existing microchip fails at some point in the future. The following procedure must be carried out in order to maintain a pet's compliance:

- The original microchip, implanted prior to the initial rabies vaccination, must be scanned and a reading made. If a reading is not possible it will be necessary to complete the procedures for a failed microchip;
- Having gained a reading, a new microchip may then be inserted. In cases where a second microchip is inserted, in the OTHERS section of the passport (XII) the Official Veterinarian should write: "On (date), I scanned and read microchip number (original). Upon gaining a reading, I inserted microchip number (new) on the same day, in accordance with Defra requirements" (or similar wording).

This statement does not need to be exactly as shown, but the dates of microchip readings and the numbers of the microchips must be stated and this statement should be signed and stamped by the OV. Provided this procedure is carried out as stated above, the pet will remain fully compliant with UK entry requirements under EU pet movement rules.

If the pet already has a new-style (laminated) passport a new passport should be issued with both microchip numbers recorded in section III and covered by the lamination.

### **Removing microchips**

It is not necessary to remove a failed microchip, unless it is associated with some pathology. The RCVS provides the following guidance on the removal of microchips:

- 29.16 Because of the importance attached to the accurate identification of animals and the potential for fraud, a microchip must only be removed where this can be clinically justified. This justification should be documented and where required another microchip or alternative method of identification used;
- 29.17 Removal of a microchip in any other circumstances would be an unnecessary mutilation. While the insertion of a second microchip may be problematic, this in itself does not justify removal of a microchip and an audit trail must be maintained.

<http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/29-microchips-microchipping-and-animals-without-microchips/>

## **7. Summary of offences and penalties**

### **Database operators**

Failure to comply with a notice served on an operator under regulation 7 is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 4 on the standard scale (currently £2,500).

### **Keepers**

- Failure to microchip and record relevant details with a database in relation to a dog before transferring to a new keeper is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Failure to comply with a notice to properly microchip a dog (which includes updating database records) is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Where a notice to microchip and record relevant details with a database in relation to a dog is not complied with, obstructing an authorised person arranging for the dog to be properly microchipped is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Obstructing an authorised person taking possession of a dog to check if the dog is microchipped or to arrange for it to be microchipped is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

In Scotland it is also an offence for a keeper of a dog to notify to a database operator any of the details knowing them to be false in “a material particular”.

### **Microchip implanters**

- Implantation of a microchip by anyone who is not a veterinary surgeon, veterinary student, or veterinary nurse/student veterinary nurse acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon or who has not completed approved or satisfactory training is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Implanting microchips in contravention of a notice not to do so until further training is received or at all is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

### **Adverse reaction reporting**

Failure to report an adverse reaction or a microchip that has failed is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500). This requirement applies to anyone who becomes aware of an adverse reaction relating to microchips, not just veterinary surgeons.

However, in the case of adverse reactions relating to suffering or pathology, veterinary advice should be sought before reporting.

## Annex A - Exemption form

Animal Welfare Act 2006, section 12  
The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015,  
regulation 3(2)

### Certificate of Exemption

To be completed by the veterinary surgeon signing below-

1. I (  ), confirm that I have examined the dog and am satisfied that it should not be implanted with a microchip for health reasons for the following length of time: (e.g. permanent or specific time, if condition is considered temporary)

.....

The description of the dog is as follows (include breed/cross-breed of dog, size, colour of coat, any distinguishing features and anything else that helps identify the dog):.....

.....

.....

Signature of Veterinary Surgeon:.....

Name (in capitals):.....

Address of Veterinary Surgeon's Practice:.....

.....

.....

Statement to be completed by the owner of the dog or a person authorised by the owner to represent him-

2. I, (  ), confirm that:

I am [the owner of the dog/authorised to represent the owner of the dog\*], (*\*delete whichever is inapplicable*) and I understand that this certificate is only valid for the period stated above.

Signature of owner of the dog or of the person authorised to represent him:

.....

Name (in capitals):.....

Address:.....

.....

.....