



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Guidance Document for poultry holdings within a Protection Zone or Surveillance Zone

Following the confirmation of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza subtype H5N1 (bird flu) in poultry flocks in Ireland, Protection and Surveillance Zones are put in place as required under European legislation.

What is a Protection Zone and a Surveillance Zone?

A Protection Zone is a 3km (minimum) area around a confirmed case of avian influenza (bird flu). A Surveillance Zone is a 10 km (minimum) area around the confirmed case of avian influenza. Please note that natural boundaries such as rivers, or other boundaries such as roads or farm boundaries may be taken into account, so although a poultry flock may be slightly further than 3km or 10km away from the confirmed case of avian influenza they may still find themselves within a Protection Zone or Surveillance Zone.

Why are these Zones necessary?

The fact that avian influenza has been confirmed in poultry in Ireland, extra measures must be taken in order to prevent spread of disease. This is a requirement under both EU and national legislation. Extra monitoring of birds within these areas is also necessary to catch any signs of disease in birds at an early stage.

How do I know what areas are included in these Protection and Surveillance Zones?

A map and description of all the townlands located within the Protection (3km) zone and Surveillance (10km) zone are described on www.gov.ie/birdflu

Are my family or pets at risk?

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre has confirmed that no human infections with this strain of H5N1 have been reported in humans in Europe to date, and risk to humans is considered to be very low. However, due to the *potentially* zoonotic nature (the ability of animal diseases to pass into humans) of avian influenza viruses in general and because handling birds can spread other diseases to humans, it is always wise to take a precautionary approach and take hygienic precautions when handling poultry. **Do not handle sick or dead wild birds.** In addition, do not bring sick wild birds to premises that have other birds on site. Other mammals such as dogs, cats, horses, sheep are considered to be at very low risk of developing disease.

How long will these zones be in place?

Protection Zone: Measures apply for at least **21 days** after preliminary cleaning and disinfection of *infected holdings* (and all holdings that had clinical signs and tested negative). The area then becomes part of the Surveillance zone.

If another holding was to have a confirmed case of avian influenza within those 21 days, then the clock would start back at 0 for another 21 days.

Surveillance Zone: Measures apply for at least **30 days** after the preliminary cleaning and disinfection of *infected holdings*.

What does this mean for my poultry or birds?

All poultry owners within the Protection and Surveillance Zones must do certain things to facilitate the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's investigation into the disease outbreak, to monitor for the presence of the disease in their poultry and to prevent the spread of disease. The things you must do are as follows:

1. Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Investigation:

Officers from DAFM are required to carry out a full investigation into the outbreak and to put in place measures to control it. To help with this you must:

- Co-operate with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) with the tracing of anything that may have been in contact with birds on the infected premises or any other thing linked to the infected holding. This includes poultry, other captive birds, meat, eggs, feed, litter, people and vehicles as these can all spread the avian influenza virus.
- Provide information on poultry, captive birds or eggs which have moved onto or off your holding during the risk period
- Facilitate a census of all the birds on your holding which will be carried out by a member of DAFM
- Facilitate a DAFM vet to inspect all birds on your holding and, where appropriate, to take samples from your birds
- **Monitor your birds for any signs of disease, deaths or reduction in egg production and report any issues to your Regional Veterinary Office. See clinical signs of avian influenza here:** <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/acacf-clinical-signs/>

NB. Any increased levels of sickness or deaths in your birds or a reduction in egg production must be reported to your [Regional Veterinary Office](#) immediately (during office hours) or the National Disease Emergency Hotline at [014928026](tel:014928026) (outside office hours)

2. Movement Restrictions Applied to your Premises:

Avian influenza virus is very contagious and easily spread by infected live birds or indirectly through contaminated products, people, equipment and vehicles. It is **very important** that nothing that can potentially spread avian influenza moves off your premises during the restricted period.

None of the following can enter or leave your premises, unless under licence from DAFM:

- Live poultry or captive birds (all types and ages)
- Poultry meat obtained from birds located within the zones
- Eggs (including table eggs and hatching eggs)
- Other animals (mammals)*
- Litter/manure/slurry
- Poultry carcasses

*You will not need a movement license, however, for the movement of mammals (pets etc) provided they have no access to poultry or captive birds or to any cages or areas where these birds are kept

In order to move any of the above you must apply for an authorisation/movement licence to your [Regional Veterinary Office](#)

3. Housing of poultry and captive birds

- **Housing Order:** [The Avian Influenza \(Precautionary Confinement of Birds\) Regulations 2021](#) came into force on November 22, 2021. All birds should be brought indoors, where possible – this applies to all birds including free range and back yard poultry. This will reduce the risk of contact with infected wild birds
- Where it is not possible to confine poultry or other captive birds within a secure building, they must be confined in such a manner that they do not have access to other poultry, other captive birds or wild birds, and in accordance with the biosecurity measures laid out below.

4. Ban on Bird Gatherings and Release of Game Birds

- Fairs, markets and other gatherings of birds are prohibited under Avian Influenza (Restriction on Assembly of Live Birds) Regulations 2021, introduced on 17th November 2021
- Release of game for re-stocking purposes is prohibited in zones

5. Biosecurity measures

The importance of having good biosecurity on your holding cannot be overstated in order to prevent the introduction or spread of disease.

The following biosecurity measures must be implemented on your premises:

3.1 Feeding and watering your birds

- Measures to ensure that wild birds cannot access your feed and water supplies must be implemented such as:
 - Provide additional protection around the supplies (e.g. netting).
 - In cases where birds are not permanently hosed, they should be fed and watered inside
 - Prevent access to open water. Always use potable water i.e mains or treated water for the birds. Do not allow free standing water to collect as this will attract wild birds.
 - Clean up any feed spills immediately, so as not to attract wild birds or vermin

3.2 Premises

- Install bird deterrent systems e.g flutter tape, scarecrows.
- As with feed and water supplies mentioned above, wild birds must not have access to any material which will come into contact with your birds. This includes bedding, cleaning equipment, utensils etc which could become contaminated by wild birds.
- Ensure you have a good **perimeter fence** around your site. Ideally this should have a single entrance/exit with a lockable gate.
- Ensure all poultry houses, feed stores and any other storage areas are **wild bird and rodent proof** as they can carry disease. Keep the doors closed at all times and ensure that dogs and cats are kept out. If used, bird proof netting shouldn't have gaps any greater than 25mm.
- **Disinfection points (footbaths)** must be put in place at the entrances/exits of all holdings, and outside each poultry house where there is more than one poultry house on a holding.
- Use only **DAFM approved disinfectants, effective against avian influenza**, following the manufacturer's instructions. All footbaths should be replenished as necessary to remove organic matter and ensure they remain effective.
- A list of [approved disinfectants](#) effective against Avian Influenza can be found on the Department of Agriculture website.
- Keep areas outside poultry houses and the surrounding areas **free of overgrown vegetation** as this will make the area less attractive to vermin and wild birds.

- **Ducks and geese should be kept separate** from other poultry on your premises if possible.
- If you are restocking (under permit) operate and **all-in all-out policy** for your birds.
- **Remove carcasses of dead birds without delay** and store in a dedicated, leak proof and sealed container. If carcasses are due for removal to rendering, leave the container at the perimeter for collection. Note a permit/authorisation will be needed to remove carcasses to rendering plants.

3.3 Personnel

- **Only essential visitors** can be allowed access to your poultry site (e.g. your vet). The less movements that occur, the lower the chance of disease spread.
- Avoid letting any personnel access your poultry.
- Where possible feed deliveries should be made to the perimeter of the site.
- On arrival at your premises, essential visitors or personnel must:
 - Disinfect footwear in footbath
 - Wash hands using soap and warm water.
 - Wear washable dedicated or disposable protective clothing (at least footwear, overalls and gloves) before entering the site
- Before departure visitors and personnel must:
 - Remove protective clothing and double bag it (or leave on site if disposable)
 - Disinfect footwear
 - Wash hands.

Records of all people visiting the premises, apart from to dwellings, must be kept and should be made available to DAFM staff if necessary. This should include cab and trailer registration numbers, driver's name, date and time of visit, date time and location of vehicle cleaning and disinfection.

3.4 Vehicles and equipment currently on the premises

Vehicles and equipment can become contaminated with the virus and therefore can spread disease. It is important that you take measures to prevent this happening. For vehicles and equipment that are already on your premises the following requirements apply:

- Vehicles and equipment that have been used to move live birds, carcasses, slurry, manure, feed, bedding must be **thoroughly cleaned and disinfected following the procedures set out in ANNEX 1**. This includes any vehicles, buckets, bins, trolleys, crates or containers used for feed, water, eggs or any other thing associated with your birds.
- The vehicles and equipment described at the point above must be also cleaned and disinfected **after each use**.
- Vehicles used by staff that are in contact with the birds must also be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before leaving the premises following the procedures set out in the **ANNEX** (as appropriate).
- Only equipment that has been cleaned and disinfected should be allowed into poultry houses.

- Any materials or equipment that are likely to be contaminated with the virus that can't be effectively cleaned or disinfected must be destroyed (see advice from your RVO if in doubt).
- Where eggs are being moved off the premises they must be transferred in either single-use disposable egg trays or trays which have been cleaned and disinfected with an approved disinfectant, as well as observing all conditions within the appropriate movement licence.

3.5 Vehicles and equipment moving on to the premises during restriction period

- **Only essential vehicles** should be allowed on to the poultry premises.
- Staff, service vehicles, feed delivery vehicles should be parked outside the perimeter of the poultry premises where possible.
- All vehicles that enter the holding must be cleaned and disinfected beforehand by disinfecting the wheels, wheel arches, chassis and underbody, using an approved disinfectant.
- Before leaving the holding all surfaces which may have come into contact with potentially contaminated material in accordance with the procedure set out in **ANNEX 1** below, including:
 - Wheels, wheel arches, chassis, and underbody
 - Trailer
 - Equipment (e.g. trolleys, crates, modules, delivery pipes, sheeting, covers)
 - Vehicle driver's cab.

ANNEX 1: Procedure for carrying out cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and equipment

A list of approved disinfectants can be found on the Department of Agriculture website at: gov.ie - [Disinfectants \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Make sure to always use the recommended dilution rate and contact time

Cleaning the trailer/equipment

- Wear clean waterproof clothing
- Place the vehicle/equipment on a concrete area ensuring there is no run-off into nearby water bodies.
- Make sure that you do not contaminate other vehicles/equipment nearby
- Start on the outside and then do the inside
- Start at the top of the vehicle and work down
- Scrape and brush the side walls, partitions, floor and tail lift, as applicable
- Remove dirt from the wheels, wheel arches, mudguards and exposed chassis, as applicable
- Use **detergent** to clean all surfaces using a low pressure hose
- Include the equipment, tools and belly box
- Leave detergent on for 10 minutes contact time
- **Rinse** all surfaces with clean water using a high pressure hose.

Disinfecting the trailer/equipment

- Wear protective face-mask and gauntlets
- Apply an **approved disinfectant that is effective against avian influenza virus** to all surfaces of the vehicle/equipment, at the specified dilution rate
- Start on the outside and then do inside
- Start at the top of the vehicle/equipment and work down
- Pay particular attention to the wheels, wheel arches and mudguards as applicable
- Disinfect the equipment, tools and belly box.

Disinfecting the cab of vehicles

- Remove all removable items e.g. mats, boots
- Brush any dirt into a bucket/dustpan
- Dispose of this safely into a refuse sack
- The interior of the cab should be thoroughly cleaned and all surfaces disinfected with a product approved by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for the purpose of destroying or inactivating avian influenza virus. Always use the product as per the manufacturer's instructions

Disinfecting the wash area and equipment

- Park the vehicle/equipment on a slope to drain and dry
- After the vehicle has been removed, clean and disinfect the wash area avoiding run-off into nearby water bodies.
- Disinfect cleaning equipment and waterproof clothing.