

Safety Alert

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

31 October 2022

Background information

A highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) has been detected in the UK and parts of Europe, meaning that Avian Influenza Prevention Zones have been established in some parts of England, including in the East and South East Regions (Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex). The most current information can be found on the [Gov.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

This strain of avian influenza is ill-adapted to human hosts and the risk to humans remains low. However, some bird to mammal transmission has been noted and precautions should be taken when coming into close contact with live and deceased birds. It is also vital to aid in the established containment strategies by ensuring infected birds are not inadvertently transported long distances and between containment zones.

Avoid handling any live or deceased bird if possible and only handle them if part of your routine duties. If you do handle any birds then ensure you use the appropriate PPE and wash or sanitise hands immediately after. Report any issues to your manager and via HART.

We are asked to report instances of dead birds to DEFRA. You should call the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77) if you find:

- one or more dead bird of prey or owl
- 3 or more dead gulls or wild waterfowl (swans, geese and ducks)
- 5 or more dead birds of any species



Recommendations

- Avoid handling live or deceased birds where possible, wait for emergency services or professionals to attend
- If you do have to handle live or deceased birds then ensure you follow the appropriate work instructions and risk assessments. This will include:
 - Wearing appropriate PPE, including gloves
 - Cleaning hands with alcohol gel afterwards
- Do not transport live birds outside counties and ideally no further than 10km.
- Deceased bird should be double bagged and transported for safe disposal by contracted suppliers.

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