

Guidance - Plain Paper United Kingdom Certificate of Origin

Context

On the 7th of December 2022 the Certification Group agreed that UK Issuing Bodies should move to plain paper United Kingdom certificates of origin from the 1st of April 2022. The rationale for this change is as follows:

- ICC Regulations changed in 2018 to allow plain paper printing
- 12 countries have already switched
- 40% of Certificates of Origin (CO) issued worldwide are now printed on plain paper
- Certificates can be printed directly to a PDF for attachment to an email
- Pre-printed certificates can be problematic for customers using shared printers
- Registered software suppliers are ready to make the change, some already print to plain paper in other countries.
- The existing 12 countries do not report issues with customers or customs authorities where guideline have been followed
- This delivers an estimated £100k saving on printing costs to the network
- A step towards data certificates that will be required for the Single Trader Window in 2025

Chambers will be able to defer the move to plain paper COs from the 1st April 2023 till any point up to the 30th September 2023.

The new ICC stamp must be used from the 1st of April 2023 if you decide to use pre-printed certificates during the changeover period.

Plain Paper Certificates of Origin

The new original COs will need to be printed in colour to a suitable standard that will be accepted by Customs authorities.

The layout and style of the CO will not change as this is laid out in the revised Kyoto agreement.

The copy and application copy will be printed in black and white. The exporter will receive the CO and the Copy but will only need to print the CO. They can print the Copy for their records if they wish. The Chamber will be able to print all three parts of the CO.

If the CO is refused because of the quality of the printing or the paper, then this will be the exporters responsibility if they printed it themselves or the Chambers if they printed it on behalf of the exporter.

The Standard Rules will be updated to reflect this.

Chamber will be able to print out the COs for exporters if they wish.

If the country of final destination requires a wet stamp, then the Chamber will have to print the CO.

All applications will now need to be online.

Chambers can prepare and apply for CO applications on behalf of exporters if they refuse to complete them themselves online. We strongly recommend that Chambers make this a chargeable service. The person submitting the application does not need to be certification qualified however, if they are, they cannot both prepare and stamp a CO.

The online systems will ensure that a CO can only be printed once but if this is printed to a pdf file then we will be unable to control the number of times a CO is printed. This is unfortunate but given modern document scanners then exporters could already do this if they wished.

CO numbering will be in the same format as the current COs, but the initial two letters will refer to the Chamber that issued the CO on a particular platform. Chambers will be able to ask the RSS provider to start the number at a number of their choice

The BCC has drafted a letter which you can amend if you wish to send to your exporters which is shown below.

Sale of blank COs

Obviously, Chambers will no longer be able to sell blank COs and you may need to consider your charging structure to reflect this.

We would suggest that given the additional security and convenience of Plain Paper COs that exporters will be agreeable to paying an increased fee.

Chambers to manage existing stock of pre-printed COs

Chambers will need to consider how to manage the stock of existing pre-printed COs to avoid as far as practical wasting COs.

Chambers need to remember that if the current ICC logo is pre-printed on their COs, then these will not be valid after the 1st April regardless if the Chamber has swapped to plain paper COs.

Chambers to set date of switch to plain paper certificates

Chambers will need to decide when they are moving to plain paper COs between the 1st of April and the 30th of September 2023 and notify their RSS provider/s.

Template letter to exporters

Dear Exporter,

The British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) as the authorising body in the UK for Certificates of Origin has decided that plain paper United Kingdom Certificates of Origin will be issued from the 1st of April 2023 (Date to be amended to when the Chamber switches over) in the UK. Over 40% of Certificates of Origin issued worldwide are now printed on plain paper. As we move into a digital future the BCC wants the Chambers to be in the vanguard working with the Government to achieve its digital ambition for a paperless border by 2025. The move to plain paper Certificates of Origin is the first step in this journey.

From this date all applications will have to be made via our online platform/s which you have already been signed up to.

If required, the Chamber can prepare and complete applications for you on an online platform or where wet stamp legalisation is required by an importer, bank or destination country customs authority. Additional fees [will/may] apply.

Certificates of Origin printed via the online platform have additional security features such as the QR code allowing anyone with the Certificate of Origin to scan the QR code and see an online version of the Certificate of Origin so they can check the version they have has not been amended or falsified. Anyone with the Certificate of Origin will also be able to verify the authenticity of the Certificate of Origin via the ICC verification website (<https://certificates.iccwbo.org>). Increasingly Customs authorities worldwide are looking to be able to verify Certificates of Origin online.

This will also simplify the printing of Certificates of Origin by exporters as they will no longer need to insert a blank Certificate of Origin correctly into the printer before printing.

As a result of these changes, it has been necessary to review our pricing and from the above date our pricing will be as follows:

xxxxx

Yours truly,