Animal and Plant Health Agency

TR315 TB auditing Standard Operating Procedure

August 2026

Change notice

The following changes have been made to Version 3:

- Areas to be covered during the auditing process, Critical Control Points applicable at TT1, paragraph 2, added new. Subsequent paragraph renumbered.

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1. Prior to conducting an audit the auditor must confirm that the person to be audited holds the correct authorisation to test - either under the:

- **Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) - Tuberculin Testing (OCQ(V) - TT) for veterinary surgeons or**
- **OCQ (Animal Health Paraprofessional) - Approved Tuberculin Tester (OCQ(AHP) - ATT) for paraprofessionals**

Areas to be covered during the auditing process

1. It may not be possible to assess all areas, depending on the stage the test has reached when the auditor arrives and if the audit is carried out on day 1 (TT1), day 2 (TT2) or both days of the TB test. The audit length and number of animals tested during the audit should be sufficient for the auditor to be satisfied that testing is being carried out in accordance with requirements.
2. As an absolute minimum, auditors should check the following **Critical Control Points**:

- testing equipment is approved, clean and functioning properly
- animal's identification is checked and measurements/findings recorded
- injection sites are being/have been clipped in accordance with the correct procedure and clip marks are visible
- injection site location is in the border of the anterior and middle third of one side of the neck or one injection on either side of the neck if the animal is too small for the correct placement of both injections sites on one side
- callipers are being used correctly and all necessary measurements are being made and correctly recorded
- paperwork or a handheld device is available and being completed fully and correctly

Critical Control Points applicable at TT1

1. Tuberculin being used is in date and batches are corresponding.
2. Tuberculin storage requirements have been met, including temperature and time during storage outside of the practice fridge store.
3. Intradermal injection technique is followed.

Critical Control Points applicable at TT2

1. All animals must be palpated and any skin reactions recorded. Both injection sites must be measured even if only one site shows any reaction.
2. Skin measurements for TT1 and TT2 must be compared while the animal is still in the crush and interpreted correctly.
3. Reactors, Inconclusive Reactors (IRs) and other suspect animals must be clinically examined/inspected. This does not apply to Approved Tuberculin Testers (ATTs)

and APHA Technical Officers however any animal showing possible signs of TB or other notifiable disease must be referred to a vet.

4. Eligibility of animals must be established for statutory tests instructed by the authority (not applicable to private tests).
5. TB52 worksheets/equivalents must be available either as hard copies or in a hand held device format compatible with the TB52 format.

Important considerations prior to and during testing (not subject to audit)

Health and Safety (H&S)

1. H&S issues understood/considered before start of testing can include:

- suitability of handling facilities for category of stock to be tested
- necessity to carry out constant dynamic risk assessment
- obstacles, walls, access for testing

2. Personnel e.g. other APHA staff, farm employees etc. present.
3. Familiarity with Tuberculin Purified Protein Derivative (PPD) Kit, Summary of Product Characteristics, in particular section 4.5 (can be obtained from VMD website: Product Information Database - Home (defra.gov.uk)
4. Familiarity with walk away/abandoned test procedures.

Audit requirements

Hygiene

1. On-site requirements prior to testing:

Protective clothing

- appropriate for the weather
- wellington boots
- protective layer which is removed before leaving the farm, or spare set of clothing e.g.
    - waterproofs which are washed and disinfected
    - brown coat (or similar), bagged and washed after each visit
    - paper suit bagged and disposed
- disposable gloves (optional).

Biosecurity

- standard biosecurity protocol to be used on arrival and prior to departure from the farm
- bucket for water and brush

- disinfectant approved for TB, correct concentration used
- suitable location chosen on farm for disinfection to take place prior to undertaking the test
- bags available for dirty protective clothing and equipment if not all disinfectable on farm
- car parked away from animal areas
- car without visible contamination from manure or slurry and clean in the equipment area

Tuberculin

- correct tuberculin available in unopened vials and without visible contamination
- batches corresponding
- stored correctly
- in date

Equipment

Syringes

- equipment listed in TB Skin Testing Protocol used - McLintock or dental type syringes calibrated to administer 0.1ml
- identifiable (avian/bovine)
- correct procedures followed if guns filled incorrectly
- in good repair:
    - functionally sound
    - free from leaks and airlocks
    - knowledge of how to dismantle and maintain guns
    - knowledge of cleansing and disinfection of guns
- needles:
    - sharp, able to produce effective intradermal injection
- clean
- holsters (or suitable alternative) with disinfectant on cotton wool or cotton wool swab
- guns emptied, cleansed and disinfected (C&D) before the visit
- full repair kit including needles, spanner or a spare gun
- aware of disinfection routine

Callipers

- same callipers used at TT1 and TT2 unless there are exceptional circumstances
- in good condition and clean
- approved/recommended type for tested animals
- if ball-end type:
    - balls aligned

    - scale not bent and legible and reading zero when closed
    - wing nut and spring washer in good condition
- spare pair suitably identified

Scissors/clippers

- suitable (curved) scissors with rounded blunt ends
- sharp clippers with smooth or serrated edge
- clean and disinfected prior to use
- spare pair of scissors or clippers available
- clippers, if used, must be capable of full C&D between premises
- clippers, if used should have a blade size adapted to the type and coat of the animals so clip marks are visible

The test performance: The same tester should test TT1 and TT2

Recording of individual animals

1. Ensured correct stock are being tested.
2. Correct Sam printout used (if applicable), obtained not more than two working days prior to TT1 (unless not possible) or current data uploaded on the hand held device (if applicable).
3. Manual data (if applicable). Accurately and legibly recorded:

- Day 1:
    - Official Animal Identifier (OAI) for each animal
    - Breed
    - date of birth or age
    - sex
    - skin thickness measurements for each of the clip sites
- Day 2:
    - re-identified animals and checked against Day 1 record.
    - both sites re-measured with callipers when there is any detectable reaction at either site

Site location

- correct area of the neck used: border of anterior to middle third of neck
- able to determine when both sides of the neck should be used, e.g. small calves, excessive/other lumps in routine injection area
- procedure after incorrect injection. Correct rectification to inject intradermally

Clipping/site visibility

- clearly identified injection sites with two separate visible clip marks
- appropriately located clip marks at recommended spacing

- debris removed from site
- ensured there are no skin blemishes or other pathological conditions present that can interfere with skin measurements

Measurements

- accurately recorded measurements for avian and bovine injection sites on TT1 and TT2
- if not recording ear tags, measurements, etc. personally, checks made to ensure accurate recording is being undertaken

Intradermal Technique

- accuracy of injecting into clipped area at recommended spacing
- correct intradermal technique. Please be aware that nodule may not always be produced even if the technique is correct (i.e. in fatty animals or very thick skin, such as in adult breeding bulls)

Palpation of sites

- Day 1:
    - before clipping sites are visually inspected
    - after injection, area is palpated to verify correct intradermal injection/consistent palpable nodule, unless nodule visible
- Day 2:
    - skin palpated to determine whether there is a reaction
    - type of reaction (C, SO) correctly evaluated and contemporaneously recorded

Needles swabbed with spirit

- done between each animal
- sufficient supply of surgical spirit
- swab kept moist with surgical spirit
- swabs changed when soiled
- needles changed when blunt, bent or contaminated with faeces or blood

Additional tasks

Reactor tagging (England and Wales only)

- evidence bags available and used correctly
- sufficient number of Reactor DNA marking tags available (as minimum: 5% of the animals tested or up to 25 tags in High Risk Area (HRA)/High TB Area Wales (HTBAW) and Edge Area/Intermediate TB Area Wales (ITBAW) or at least 1% of the animals tested in Low Risk Area (LRA)/Low TB Area Wales (LTBAW))

- DNA marking tags in a good condition, corresponding numbers and tag numbers recorded against animal ID

Clinical examination

- if signs compatible with TB or other notifiable diseases are observed, animals are clinically examined and findings recorded
- Approved Tuberculin Testers (ATTs) and APHA Technical Officers only - visual inspection and findings correctly recorded and, if required, referred to a vet for assessment

Establishing eligibility

- ensured that all eligible animals tested or reasonable explanation sought why not all eligible animals presented for testing/reading
- animals within 60 days of the previous test not injected again
- skin or gamma Reactor animals from previous tests must not be retested

Completion of TB52/52a

- full, accurate and legible
- adequate control over the forms maintained during and after the test
- test results correctly interpreted
- ATTs and APHA Technical Officers only - test results referred to a vet for interpretation

Herd keeper information

- test results communicated to the keeper with Reactor and IRs identified
- keeper informed Reactor and IRs require isolation
- if required Information Note (TB181) and Owners Checklist (TR247) provided to keeper and explained
- batch numbers of the tuberculin used handed to the keeper and keeper advised to enter them in the medicine records book.

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Data Protection:
For information on how we handle personal data visit www.gov.uk and search Animal and Plant Health Agency Personal Information Charter.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.