

1. What is LAWGS?

LAWGS stands for Lacey Act Web Governance System and is an online tool that will allow filers to log into APHIS systems and enter their PPQ Form 505 information directly. This tool will also allow filers to save commonly used declaration data in templates for quick and easy future submissions. LAWGS is intended to assist importers who are currently filing Lacey Act paper declarations. This tool does not replace the Automated Broker Interface process currently used by the vast majority of importers to file Lacey Act declarations electronically.

2. Who can use LAWGS?

LAWGS is designed to be used by the Importer of Record. The Importer can invite their Broker/Agent to declare on the Importer's behalf through the LAWGS tool.

3. Does LAWGS replace the ABI submission of the Lacey Act Declaration data?

LAWGS is not intended to replace the Customs Automated Broker Interface (ABI) submission process. Filers currently using the ABI system are encouraged to continue to use the ABI process. The LAWGS system is intended to provide an electronic submission process for those filers who are submitting Lacey Act Declarations via paper. LAWGS is intended to eventually replace all paper submissions.

4. Do I now need to file my Lacey Act information twice, once in LAWGS and once in ABI?

If you have filed your Lacey Act data through Automated Broker Interface (following the data submission protocols in the CATAIR) you are not required to submit any other Lacey Act Plant and Plant Product Declaration for that shipment either through LAWGS or the paper submission process. Only one Lacey Act declaration per shipment is required.

5. What if I have multiple consignees in a given entry?

Currently the LAWGS tool cannot process Lacey Act Declarations which contain multiple consignees. We encourage filers with multiple consignees per entry to use either the Automated Broker Interface or paper submission processes.

6. How are LAWGS organizations formed?

LAWGS accounts are organized into filer organizations. These organizations represent either an Importer Account or a Broker Account. The first user from a given organization to create a user account also creates the Organization Account and automatically becomes an Administrator of that account.

7. How are LAWGS organizations managed?

Account Administrators can add users to the Organization Account through a PIN system. The Account Administrator will generate a PIN and send it to the new user directly. That user will enter the PIN when they create their own user account and will be assigned a user role from the Account Administrator. This ensures that only known persons will gain access to the Organization Account. The Account Administrator can change a user role at any time (granting or revoking Administrator status) or remove a user from the Organization Account completely.

8. What is the difference between a Brokerage Account and an Importer Account at the Organization Level?

An Importer Account is the only account type that allows users to file declarations by default. The Account Administrators can add/remove users and change their user roles. There are three user roles that can be assigned by the Account Administrator: Administrator, Filer, and Broker.

The purpose of a Brokerage Account is to organize brokers into discrete groups for improved Account management and security purposes. The Brokerage Account Administrators can add/remove users and grant/revoke Administrator status.

9. What is the difference between the Broker and Filer user roles?

Filer is a user role for Importers who have not been granted Administrative access to LAWGS. Filers are able to view/edit/resubmit any declarations created for the organization. A Filer is only a member of one Organization Account. Filers gain membership to the Importer Account when they receive a PIN from the Account Administrator.

Broker is a user role for brokers who have been invited to declare on the Importer's behalf. Brokers can only view/edit/resubmit declarations that they have created themselves. A Broker first becomes a member of a Brokerage Account when they receive a PIN from the Account Administrator. After they have joined a Brokerage Account they can then be invited via PIN to file on behalf of individual Importer Accounts. A Broker can be a member of multiple Importer Accounts but only one Brokerage Account.

10. Who can access my data?

Data can only be accessed by APHIS and the organization which created the data. Brokers can only access data which they have entered into LAWGS themselves. A Broker can only access information from one of their assigned Importer Accounts at a time.

11. Do I have to print out the LAWGS generated PDF and mail that to APHIS?

No. The PDF print functionality is an entirely optional feature that allows you to create a hard copy for your own records. If you have submitted your Lacey Act Declaration via LAWGS (or ABI) do not mail a paper copy to APHIS.

12. How long does it take to add a species to the LAWGS database?

The turnaround time to get new species added to the LAWGS database will not likely exceed an hour from the time that our staff confirms receipt of the request. We will verify that the species requested is currently not included in the database and is a real botanical name. Once verified the species will be added to the database. The user may have to log out and log back in before the new species will occur in the search field.