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# Commercial Vessel Fee

Last Modified:

The AQI program inspects commercial vessels of 100 net tons or more and associated cargo arriving at ports of entry in the customs territory of the United States.

User fee regulations ([7 CFR 354.3\(a\)](#)) define a commercial vessel as: “Any watercraft or other contrivance used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water to transport property for compensation or hire with the exception of any aircraft or ferry.” Commercial vessel fee regulations are listed in [7 CFR 354.3\(b\)](#).

## The Cost and What It Covers

The current commercial vessel fee is **\$825.00** (see [7 CFR 354.3\(b\)](#)). This fee covers the direct and indirect costs of clearing a vessel, including:

- Reviewing manifests and documents with incoming cargo
- Targeted, risk-based cargo inspection or clearance.
- Inspecting agricultural and agricultural-related commodities, containers, compliant wood packaging material, and packing materials to screen for plant pests and contaminants, ensure compliance with regulations, and determine entry status
- Inspecting the vessel for contaminants, pests, or invasive pests

- Inspecting the ship's stores to ensure they are free of prohibited items
- Monitoring storage and removal of regulated international garbage from the vessel to ensure consistency with all regulatory requirements
- Identifying pests found during inspection
- Safeguarding shipments pending APHIS' decision on treatment or final disposition
- Issuing phytosanitary permits for commodities moved by vessel

## **Exemptions**

Some categories of commercial vessels are exempt from paying an AQI user fee (see [7 CFR 354.3\(b\)\(2\)](#)). Cruise lines do not pay the commercial vessel fee because the cost of inspecting the entirety of the vessel is included in the international cruise (sea) passenger fee, and cruise vessels do not generally carry commercial cargo.

## **Paying the Fee**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) collects the commercial vessel user fee upon each arrival at a port of entry as described in [7 CFR 354.3\(b\)\(1\)](#). CBP remits commercial vessel fee collections to APHIS monthly.

## **Reimbursable Overtime Services**

Customers may request and receive AQI services associated with activities typically covered by an AQI user fee outside the normal tour of duty of the employee(s) providing the requested service. In such cases, overtime charges may be assessed as outlined in [7 CFR 354.1](#).

### **APHIS Reimbursable Overtime Services**

Refer to the [APHIS Reimbursable Overtime Services](#) web page for additional information including how to pay the reimbursable overtime fee.

### **CBP Reimbursable Overtime Services**

Any requests for agriculture reimbursable overtime will be made in accordance with CBP port policy. Please contact your [local CBP Port of Entry](#).

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