

## Breadcrumb

1. [Home](#)
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

# Commercial Aircraft Fee

Last Modified:

The AQI program inspects international commercial aircrafts arriving in the customs territory of the United States.

APHIS regulation [7 CFR 354.3\(a\)](#) defines commercial aircraft as: “Any aircraft used to transport persons or property for compensation or hire.” Commercial aircraft fee regulations are listed in [7 CFR 354.3\(e\)](#).

## The Cost and What It Covers

The current commercial aircraft fee is **\$225.00** per arrival (see [7 CFR 354.3\(e\)](#)). This fee covers the direct and indirect costs to inspect the aircraft, including:

- Reviewing manifests and documents accompanying incoming cargo
- Targeted, risk-based cargo inspection or clearance
- Inspecting agricultural and agricultural-related commodities, international mail, expedited courier packages, containers, compliant wood packaging material, and packing materials to screen for the presence of plant pests and contaminants, ensure compliance with regulations, and determine entry status
- Inspecting the aircraft hold or exterior for contaminants, pests, or invasive species
- Identifying pests found during inspection

- Safeguarding shipments pending APHIS' decision on treatment or final disposition
- Issuing phytosanitary permits for commodities moved by air

## Exemptions

Some categories of commercial aircraft are exempt from paying an AQI user fee (see [7 CFR 354.3\(e\)\(2\)](#)).

## Limitations on Charges

APHIS lists limitations on charges in [7 CFR 354.3\(e\)\(5\)](#).

## Paying the Fee

Each carrier is responsible for paying the appropriate commercial aircraft user fees detailed in [7 CFR 354.3\(e\)](#). APHIS provides a [Remittance Worksheet](#) (277.65 KB) to assist carriers with the process.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection conducts periodic audits on APHIS' behalf to determine compliance.

## How To Set Up a Payment Account

To set up a payment account with APHIS' Financial Management Division, send a completed [New Account Packet - Airlines](#) (306.12 KB) to the location indicated on the worksheet.

*Companies need a separate APHIS account for each user fee type, such as international air passenger, treatment monitoring, reimbursable overtime, and other types.*

## Refunds

Account holders may request in writing a refund due to overpayment. You must include proof that any applicable exemption criteria were met and that you paid the user fee(s). The request should include the following:

- Company name, address, and phone number
- Contact person
- Taxpayer identification number (TIN)
- Carrier name (if applicable)
- All certified supporting documentation

Send inquiries and refund requests to APHIS' Accounts Receivable Team at [ABSHelpline@usda.gov](mailto:ABSHelpline@usda.gov). The team will review each refund request on a case-by-case basis. Customers should receive a refund check within 4-6 weeks after the Accounts Receivable Team processes the refund.

## 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](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

Can companies remit payments more frequently than specified in the CFR?

To minimize administrative costs, please remit payments as outlined in [7 CFR 354.3\(e\)](#).

Are companies required to open a separate account at their bank to handle USDA fee collections?

No. Companies must account for user fee collections separately from their other business within their own accounting methods and systems.

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