



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Veterinary Services (VS) User Fee: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) charges various fees to cover the costs of conducting the Veterinary Services (VS) program. APHIS works in a variety of ways to protect and improve the health, quality, and marketability of our nation's animals (including various wildlife), animal products, and veterinary biologics.

APHIS Veterinary Services has many District Offices, or field offices, all over the country; you can find them listed on our [website](#). They perform the many VS services we offer including but not limited to; import/export, certificates, accreditations, animal health monitoring, etc. We also have a financial office located in Minneapolis, MN. This office handles the monthly billing, past due accounts, and collections. We have developed the below information to help you quickly and easily answer the billing and financial questions you may have about the Veterinary Services program.

What is a VS account and how does it work?

A VS account is set up like a charge or credit card account. All of the VS services you receive in a month, even if they are from different field offices or are different services, will be added to your account and you will receive a monthly billing statement. The balance of this statement is due by the end of the month in which you receive it.

Do I have to set up an account to receive services from VS?

No, you do not need an account to have VS services performed for you; you are able to pay for the services at the time they are performed. If you often receive services from us and you would like an account, you can apply for a VS account. To apply for an account you will need to have already used VS services 6 times in the last year, fill out the [APHIS-192](#), found here: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/aphis192.pdf>, and provide us with your W-9 (or W-8 for foreign customers) showing your current EIN/TIN. You can email them both to ABShelpline@usda.gov.

Who can have a VS account?

Anyone or any company can have a VS account after they have used our VS services 6 times in the last year and plan on continuing to use them at least 6 times per year going forward. You will then just need to complete our application, pass our credit check and have a valid US Federal Tax ID Number. (TIN/EIN/SSN) Each Federal Tax ID number is allowed one APHIS VS account.

How long does it take to set up a VS account?

It usually takes 3-5 business days to set up your account, but it may take longer if additional credit references need to be verified in the process. You should continue requesting all your services on a cash only basis until you are notified that your account has been approved.

Why do I get both an invoice and an account statement?

After you have received your services the field office will give you an invoice for your records. Then, at the end of the month you will receive an account statement from the finance office listing all of your invoices for the month and the total due on your account. Again, much like how your credit card company does it.

How can I make a payment to my account?

There are multiple ways to pay your VS account. Paying via check has the longest processing time, roughly 2 weeks from the mailing date. The preferred and fastest way to pay is by using Pay.gov to pay by either card or ACH. You can get further directions on how to use the pay.gov website as well as other payment options on our website by reviewing the [Veterinary Services \(VS\) User Fee Payment Options](#).

How are my payments applied to my account?

As required by regulation your payments are applied to the oldest invoice first, which may not necessarily be the one you intend to pay. You should pay only one payment each month based on the total due on your monthly statements, not by individual invoices.

Why is it taking so long to apply my payment to my account?

USDA APHIS receives thousands of payments each day. When sending in your payment we require that either the account number is listed on the payment or a remittance showing the account number is sent in with the payment for faster and more accurate payment processing. Payments not having this information generally take longer than a week to process once received by our office. This type of delay may cause your account to become delinquent and be placed on COD or suspended.

Do I pay each individual invoice or make one payment each month?

Much like a credit card you are expected to make only one payment each month which will cover all the services listed on your account statement for that month. When customers try to make more than one payment each month it results in accounts not being kept current for multiple reasons. Any accounts not kept current each month will be placed on COD, suspended or permanently closed.

Can I make one large payment and use it up over the year?

This is not allowed because this account is a credit account; not some type of pre-paid account. The account is expected to be paid in full according to the monthly statement amount due each month. Any over payments will be refunded back to the customer or turned over to Treasury Unclaimed.

How do I know if my account is accurate?

Each month after you receive your statement you should reconcile the charges, payments and adjustments to your payment records and the individual invoices you have received from the field offices. It is the account owner's responsibility to make sure their account contains the correct bills and to verify their payments have been applied to their accounts each month. Failure to do this can result in the account being placed on COD, suspended or permanently closed.

I am having some issues with my invoice, who do I contact?

You should contact the VS field office where your service was requested to help you with your invoice issues such as incorrect billings, backup documentation, questions on the service that was billed, etc. If you look at the top left corner of your invoice you will see the phone number of the field office where the service was performed. If you need a duplicate copy of your invoice you can send your request to ABShelpline@usda.gov.

I did not get my monthly account statement, who do I contact?

You can get another monthly statement by sending a request to ABShelpline@usda.gov. You should verify your current mailing address and primary contact information that we have on file to keep this from happening again in the future. Please include your customer account number, your name or business name, and a brief summary of your request in all messages to us.

What do I do if my VS account got placed on a cash only basis?

An account gets placed on a cash only basis if the account has not been paid in full within 60 days from the closing date on the monthly statement. This means you will not be able to charge services to your VS account; you can still receive VS services but you will need to pay at the time of service. Once the account is paid and in good standing you will be able to charge your VS services to your account again. To correct this issue faster, you should verify your account balance and process your payment at [Pay.gov - Home](#). Please note that credit accounts that have recurring instances of past due status are at risk for closure.

My account got suspended, what does that mean?

An account gets placed in suspense, or is suspended, if the account has not been paid in full within 90 days from the Closing Date on the monthly statement. When an account is suspended you are not able to receive any VS services until the account is paid and in good standing. To correct this issue faster, you should verify your account balance and process your payment at [Pay.gov - Home](#). Please note that credit accounts that have recurring instances of past due status are at risk for closure.

Why was my VS account closed?

Accounts will be closed permanently if they have been in COD or suspense status more than 3 times in a year. If you are having account issues please contact us right away to see if we can help to avoid permanent closure.

I received a past due notice but have paid all my invoices, what do I do?

The best thing to do would be to request an account activity report from ABShelpline@usda.gov and compare this to your records. If you find a discrepancy you should notify us right away to get it resolved. During this process your account may be put on a cash only basis until the account is reconciled.

Why do I get charged twice for an export certificate that has been re-issued but was for the same service?

If you request any changes or updates on your certificate you will be responsible for another fee. If there was an error made by us, please provide evidence of the error and the charge may be able to be removed.

I found an error on my invoice, how do I get it corrected?

You should immediately notify the field office where your service was requested and work with them to get the invoice corrected. The financial office in Minneapolis, MN is not able to do this.

I think my monthly account statement is incorrect. What should I do?

It is the responsibility of the account holder to reconcile their monthly statement checking for accuracy in both invoices and payments applied to their account. If you find a discrepancy please contact the financial office right away by emailing the details, including supporting documents, to ABShelpline@usda.gov. Please include your customer account number, your name or business name, and a brief summary of your request in all messages to us.

My company only pays off purchase orders, where can I request one?

Unfortunately our financial system does not produce purchase orders. You are provided with an invoice at the time of service and if you have a VS account, you are then provided with a billing statement of all invoices for that month. One option some customers have found helpful is to provide the field office with your purchase order number at the time of service and request that they put it in the remarks on the invoice.

Need more information?

Please contact your VS Debt Management Specialist:

Accounts that start with A-L: Shin-Jeong Christensen (612) 336-3262

Accounts that start with M-Z: Bonnie Ketola (612) 336-3267

Email: ABShelpline@usda.gov

Visit the Animal Health web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth.

You will also find more information related to AHPIS at www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/financial-management-division/financial-operations-branch.