

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

May 2014

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS (these apply unless an animal is exempt; see Section 5 for details):

1.1 The importer must obtain an import permit from:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Veterinary Services (VS)
National Import Export Services (NIES)
4700 River Road, Unit 39
Riverdale, MD 20737-1231

The import permit application (VS Form 17-129) can also be found on the APHIS website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/permits/ A non-refundable application processing fee should be submitted at the same time. Current processing fees may be found on the APHIS website at: [User fee](#)

Applications should be mailed to the address above, or may be faxed to 301-734-4704. Applications can also be emailed to:

VS-Live.Animals_Import.Permits@aphis.usda.gov

or may be submitted electronically via our ePermits System at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/permits/downloads/vs17-129-inst-online-epermits.pdf

Permits are generally processed within 5-7 business days of receipt of the application.

1.2 A Customs Declaration (VS Form 17-29) must also be provided to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the time the animals arrive in the United States. The VS Form 17-29 may be obtained from CBP at the time of arrival, or can be downloaded from:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/forms.shtml

1.3 An official health certificate is required. The official health certificate must be issued by a veterinarian designated or employed by the Competent Authority for animal health of the exporting country, and must be endorsed by an official veterinarian employed by the Competent Authority for animal health of that country.

1.4 All animals must be identified using official identification (including but not limited to ear tags, microchips, permanent unique tattoos, and/or brands). The animals presented for entry to the United States must be able to be reconciled by APHIS with the documentation required in this protocol.

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

May 2014

- 1.5 The official health certificate must include the following information, and the certifications listed in section 2 below:
- a) The name and address of the exporter.
 - b) The name and address of the importer (and address of final destination, if different)
 - c) The species, breed, number of animals to be exported, and purpose of the exportation.
 - d) Individual identification, which includes eartag, microchip or unique tattoo numbers, and a description of any other identification present on the animal, such as brands.
 - e) A description of the animals, including age in months, sex, breed, and markings
 - f) The address or other means of identifying the premises of origin, and any other premises where the animals resided immediately prior to export.
 - g) The port of embarkation in the exporting or other country, and the proposed port of entry in the United States.
 - h) Any identification numbers of official seals that have been applied to the vehicle, if applicable.
- 1.6 Permits are valid for 14 days from the proposed date of presentation for entry to the United States, and only at the port specified in the permit.
- 1.7 An elephant, hippo, rhino, or tapir may only be imported into the United States at Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; or Newburgh, New York; or, on a case-by-case basis, and with prior written approval by APHIS' National Import Export Services, at another port of entry if:
- a. The animals will be inspected and treated at a facility provided by the importer.
 - b. The Administrator has determined that the importer's facility is adequate for inspection, treatment, and incineration required under this section.
 - c. The Administrator has determined that an inspector is available to perform at the importer's facility the services that are required under this section.
 - d. The Administrator has determined that an inspector is available to perform at the port of entry the services that are required under this section if the animals will be inspected and treated at a facility provided by the importer.
- 1.8 All animals must be treated for ectoparasites (in accordance with section 2.2 below) prior to export, and again at the time of entry to the United States. Since some animals covered under this protocol may be especially sensitive to chemical treatments, NIES may be consulted as needed by importers or APHIS field staff regarding acceptable types of ectoparasite treatments for individual species.
- 1.9 User Fees apply for all aspects of entry inspections performed by APHIS personnel. Estimates of fees may be provided to importers through the relevant APHIS Service Center, or by the VS port veterinarian. Importers should contact VS port personnel at least 72 hours prior to arrival to confirm the time and date of arrival.

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

2. CERTIFICATION STATEMENTS (these apply unless an animal is exempt; see Section 5 for details):

May 2014

The following statements must be included on the health certificate:

- 2.1 The animals were inspected by the individual issuing the health certificate not more than 72 hours before being loaded on the means of conveyance which transported the animals to the United States, and were found free of any ectoparasites.
- 2.2 The animals were treated, under the supervision of the individual signing the health certificate, for ectoparasites at least 72 hours, but not more than 14 days, before being loaded on the means of conveyance which transported the animals to the United States. The entire surface area of all animals was thoroughly wetted by the treatment solution.

Date of treatment: _____

Name of product used: _____

Concentration of product used: _____

- 2.3 After being treated for ectoparasites, the animals did not have physical contact with or share a pen or bedding materials with any elephant, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, or tapir not in the same shipment to the United States.

3. PORT OF ENTRY INSPECTION

- 3.1 For exempt animals (see Section 5 for details), the VS port veterinarian should collect the supporting documentation and file a VS form 17-30 release in VSPS Animal Import Module. No user fees should apply for this process.

- 3.2 *[Note: Sections 3.2 through 3.8 apply to non-exempt animals]* An APHIS inspector at the port of arrival will verify the accuracy of the health certificate and conduct a visual health examination of the animals. If any animal is dead, or if there are any signs of communicable disease or other illness, or injury, the Import-Export Coordinators (IECs) for the relevant region should be notified immediately. The IECs will consult with NIES regarding additional movement options.

- 3.2. If the animals are inspected for ectoparasites at the port of entry, they should be offloaded onto a nonporous surface where they may be inspected safely and securely.

- 3.2.1 Sedation may be required for the inspection; if so, the importer should provide an attending veterinarian to assist with any sedation procedures. All surfaces of the animal should be examined. Ears, nose, lips, skin folds (axillary, inguinal, etc) and other areas such as under the tail should be included in the inspection. If the animals are found to have ectoparasites, they may proceed under seal to the destination facility for further treatments per section 3.3.1.c below. A VS Form 1-27 should be issued by the VS port veterinarian.

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

May 2014

- 3.2.2 Any ectoparasites that are detected should be collected and preserved in ethyl alcohol or formaldehyde for identification. Samples should be submitted to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames IA, using a VS Form 10-4. The port veterinarian should also inform the RIECs of any ectoparasite detections, who will convey the information to NIES.
- 3.2.3 If no ectoparasites are detected, the animals should be sprayed or dipped with a permitted dip (as listed in 9 CFR 72.13(b), or as approved by NIES). All wastes, straw, bedding or other materials accompanying the animals should be disposed of in accordance with section 3.4 below.
- 3.3 If the animal is to be inspected and treated at a destination facility, a plastic tarpaulin must be fastened around the shipping crate or conveyance so that all animal wastes, hay, straw, feed, bedding, and other materials accompanying the animals are retained inside the crate. The wrapping must cover the entire bottom of the container or conveyance, and extend up the sides to a minimum height of two feet, but must not interfere with ventilation, feeding, and watering of the animals. The crate or conveyance should be sealed and a VS Form 1-27 issued by the port veterinarian.
- 3.3.1 After the arrival of the animals at the facility provided by the importer, the seals will be broken by an APHIS inspector.
- 3.3.2 A deferred inspection for ectoparasites (and subsequent treatment[s]) at the destination facility, by or under the direct supervision of an APHIS inspector, will occur as follows:
- a. The animal(s) must be physically inspected for ectoparasites by or under the direct supervision of an APHIS inspector within 24 hrs of arrival at the destination facility. If inspection and treatment are not performed upon unloading, the animals must be isolated from all other animals, except those in the same shipment, and kept in a facility with a nonporous floor and where any ectoparasites that may drop off the animal can be contained and destroyed, until the animal has been inspected and treated.
 - b. The animal(s) will be removed from shipping crates or the conveyance and placed on a concrete or other nonporous surface. Sedation may be required; if so, the importer should provide an attending veterinarian to assist with any sedation procedures. If any animal is dead, or if there are any signs of communicable disease or other illness, or injury, the Import-Export Coordinators (IECs) for the relevant region should be notified immediately. The IECs will consult with NIES regarding additional options.
 - c. If no ectoparasites are detected, the animal(s) will be sprayed or dipped one time in accordance with label instructions with a permitted dip (as listed in 9 CFR 72.13(b), or as approved by NIES).

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

May 2014

- d. Any ectoparasites that are detected should be collected and preserved in ethyl alcohol or formaldehyde for identification. Samples should be submitted to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames IA using a VS Form 10-4. The APHIS inspector should also inform the Regional Import-Export Coordinators of any ectoparasite detections, who will convey the information to NIES.
 - e. If ectoparasites are detected, the animal(s) will be sprayed or dipped in accordance with label instructions with a permitted dip (as listed in 9 CFR 72.13(b), or as approved by NIES) for as many times as necessary until the inspector finds no ectoparasites; and one additional time after being found negative for ectoparasites (in accordance with the specific type dip and associated toxicity, per label instructions).
- 3.4 All hay, straw, feed, bedding, and other material that has been placed with the animal(s) at any time prior to the final treatment, must be sealed in plastic bags and incinerated under the supervision of an APHIS inspector.
- 3.5 The shipping crate must either be cleaned and disinfected, or incinerated, under the supervision of an APHIS inspector; if the shipping crate is cleaned and disinfected, it must then be treated under the supervision of an APHIS inspector with a permitted dip (as listed in 9 CFR 72.13(b), or as approved by NIES).
- 3.6 Any means of conveyance used to transport animals not in a shipping crate must be cleaned and disinfected under the supervision of an APHIS inspector.
- 3.7 A completed VS Form 17-30 will be issued after completion of all points in the inspection process listed above.
- 3.8 At the discretion of the APHIS inspector (in consultation with the APHIS Service Center, import coordinators, and NIES), any or all animals in a consignment that do not adequately meet the criteria in this protocol, or which show signs of communicable diseases of livestock at the time of inspection, may be refused entry.

4 ANIMALS REFUSED ENTRY:

Any elephant, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, or tapir refused entry into the United States for noncompliance with the requirements of this protocol must be removed from the United States within a time period specified by the Administrator, or will be considered abandoned by the importer. Pending removal or abandonment, the animal will be subject to such safeguards as the APHIS inspector determines necessary to prevent the possible introduction of ectoparasites or disease into the United States. If an animal that has been refused entry is not removed from the United States within a prescribed time period or is abandoned, it may be seized and destroyed, or otherwise disposed of as the Administrator determines necessary to prevent the possible introduction of ectoparasites or disease into the

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

United States.

May 2014

5 ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS FROM CANADA

Non-exempt animals from Canada are subject to all requirements in this protocol.

Elephants, hippos, rhinos, and tapirs from Canada are exempt from the regulatory requirements for a health certificate, import permit, declaration, port of entry inspection or ectoparasiticide treatments under the following circumstances:

(a) They are imported from Canada and are accompanied by a document signed by a veterinarian of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that states:

(i) The animals were imported into Canada other than the United States and have resided continuously in Canada since that time, and during the year preceding their exportation to the United States; AND

(ii) They did not, during the year preceding their exportation into the United States, have physical contact with or share a pen or bedding materials with any non-US-origin elephant, hippo, rhino, or tapir imported into Canada during that year;

OR

(b) The animals were legally exported from the United States to Canada and are returning to the United States; and are accompanied by a United States health certificate. The U.S. health certificate must be issued by a veterinarian licensed in the United States or Canada, and should contain information equivalent to the requirements under Section 1.5 of this protocol, as well as a statement that the animals were healthy at the time of exportation.

Importers are advised to contact NIES and VS port personnel at least 72 hours prior to crossing in order to avoid delays. If arriving by air, please contact NCIE 14 days in advance as further notification may be required.

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
 NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
 PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
 ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

May 2014

Sample Health Certificate:

HEALTH CERTIFICATE No:

HEALTH CERTIFICATE FOR THE EXPORT OF ELEPHANTS, HIPPOPOTAMI,
 RHINOCEROSSES AND TAPIRS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FROM
 _____(country):

I. Number and identification of the animals
 (if necessary a separate schedule may be attached)

Identification	Species/Breed	Sex	Age

II. Consignment information

A. Name and address of the exporter _____

B. Name and address of the importer (and address of the destination facility, if
 different) _____

C. Address or other means of identifying the premises of origin, and any other
 premises where the animals resided immediately prior to export.

D. Port of embarkation in the exporting or other country _____

E. Proposed port of entry in the United States _____

F. Any identification numbers of official seals that have been applied to the
 vehicle, if applicable _____

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**

May 2014

III. Health Information

I, the undersigned, certify that the animal(s) described above meet the following requirements:

- (a) on.....(date), being not more than 72 hours prior to loading for export I examined the said animals and found them to be free from clinical signs or symptoms of infectious or contagious disease, including infestation with ectoparasites and in my opinion fit for the intended journey.

- (b) on.....(date), being at least 72 hrs, but not more than 14 days, prior to loading the said animals were treated under my supervision for the removal of external parasites, by thoroughly wetting all external, parts of the animals by means of a sprayer, spray-dip or dip-vat, using the following licensed product: name of product:
.....
active ingredient:
concentration used:

- (c) the animals for export, after being treated as in paragraph IV (b) above, did not come into physical contact or share a pen or bedding with any other animals apart from those similarly treated for the same consignment to the USA.

- (d) I have received a written declaration from the owner/exporter that the crates and vehicles for transport will be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected with an approved disinfectant prior to loading.

IV. This certificate is valid for_____days from the date of signature.

Accredited or Approved Veterinarian (this section is not needed if the certificate is issued by an Official Government Veterinarian):

Signed _____

(Print name in block letters)_____

Date _____

**USDA, APHIS, VETERINARY SERVICES
NATIONAL IMPORT EXPORT SERVICES
PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPORTATION OF
ELEPHANTS, HIPPOS, RHINOS, AND TAPIRS**
May 2014

Official Government Veterinarian:

Signature of Official Government Veterinarian_____

Print name_____

Title_____

Date:_____

Official Stamp of the Competent Authority for Animal Health: