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Containment Facility Inspections

Last Modified:

One of the purposes of PPQ permits is to prevent the dissemination of plant pests into or through the United States. As a consequence, PPQ may only issue permits for certain organisms when the receiving facility can adequately contain the organisms so as to prevent dissemination of the organisms.

Containment of regulated organisms may be accomplished by a combination of proper handling of the regulated organisms and by physical and security attributes of the premises where the regulated organisms will be held. PPQ containment specialists can determine the adequacy of a facility either by a computer assisted facility evaluation (CAFÉ) or by a full inspection which includes an on-site inspection of the facility.

All facilities with PPQ -regulated organisms may be inspected at any time by agency officials during normal business hours.

Criteria used to Determine the Kind of Evaluation (CAFÉ or Full) Needed Before Permit Issuance:

- [Guidance for Containment Evaluation of Arthropod/Snail Permit Applications When Containment is Required](#)

- [Guidance for Containment Evaluation of Plant Pathogens and Noxious Weeds Permit Applications When Containment is Required](#)
- [Guidance for Containment Evaluation of Diagnostic Permit Applications](#)

Related Information

If you are applying for a PPQ permit that meets the criteria for an inspection and your facility or laboratory has not been previously inspected, then you should anticipate a one to three month delay in processing your application.

When PPQ evaluates the containment capabilities of a facility, physical and operational characteristics are examined relative to the risks of the organisms and their methods of actual or potential dispersal from the facility. The operational characteristics of the facility are developed by the applicant and the attached [Outline for Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP's\)](#) may be used to prepare this document. For butterflies, use the attached [Outline for Standard Operating Procedures](#). These documented operational features will be confirmed during the inspection.

- [Containment Guidelines for Educational Displays of Adult, Butterflies and Moths \(Lepidoptera\)](#)
- [Containment Facility Guidelines for Noxious Weeds and Parasitic Plants](#)
- [Containment Guidelines for Non-Indigenous, Phytophagous Arthropods and Their Parasitoids and Predators](#)
- [Containment Guidelines for the Receipt, Rearing and Display of Non-Indigenous Arthropods in Zoos, Museums, and Other Public Displays](#)
- [Containment Guidelines for Plant Pathogenic Nematodes](#)
- [Containment Guidelines for Non-Indigenous Snails](#)
- [Containment Guidelines for Plant Pathogenic Bacteria](#)
- [Containment Facility Guidelines for Viral Plant Pathogens and Their Vectors](#)
- [Containment Facility Guidelines for Fungal Plant Pathogens](#)

Before beginning construction of a containment facility, you should contact [Pest Permit Evaluations](#) staff and discuss our containment requirements with a Containment Facility Evaluation Specialist.

Fax: 301.734.5392

Email: Pest.Permits@usda.gov

Frequently Asked Questions

View a list of the commonly asked questions and concerns associated with containment facility inspections.

Do I need to have my laboratory inspected - the State inspector was already here (or CDC or Safety Officer).

The permit that you have applied for is a federal permit and therefore the inspections are done by Federal personnel. State inspectors are often invited to our inspections as a courtesy and we listen to any valid concerns they may have. PPQ 526 permits are issued for live plant pests and diseases; as well as bio-control organisms. They require a different inspection than that of CDC which deals with human pathogens. Institutional Safety Officers do not do our Federal Inspections but they may be present if they want to be. Do not confuse PPQ 526 permit inspections with inspections for soil import compliance or [genetically modified organisms](#).

Why does my facility need to be inspected?

To get a PPQ 526 permit, the researcher must have a facility (laboratory, greenhouse, growth chamber) that adequately contains the organism ([7 CFR 330](#)). APHIS officials will determine the adequacy of the facility during their containment inspection.

Why do I need a bio-safety cabinet to open shipments from foreign sources?

Shipments from foreign sources (even “pure” cultures) may be contaminated with fungal spores, bacteria, minute weed seeds, nematodes, and other plant pathogens. The bio-safety cabinet has HEPA filters and air flow patterns that prevent contaminating aerosols from getting out of the cabinet and into the environment.

For questions about permits for regulated organisms and soil:

Pest Permits Team

Email: pest.permits@usda.gov

Phone: [301-851-2285](tel:301-851-2285)

Alt-Phone: [866-524-5421](tel:866-524-5421)

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