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Importing Commercial Birds into the United States

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The USDA defines commercial birds as those birds which are imported for resale, breeding, public display, or any other purpose, except pet birds, zoological birds, research birds, or performing or theatrical birds. Shipments of birds that contain six or more are considered commercial.

Only U.S. returning pigeons or doves (any quantity) with a pre-export U.S. health certificate, used in theatrical performances, qualify for this import type. U.S. returning performing pigeons and doves import under different requirements from other columbiforms. Import requirements are listed on the issued permit. To obtain more information about this import type, contact the following email address: LAlpermits@usda.gov

Requirements

Import Requirements for Commercial Birds (for all countries except for Canada)

The U.S. imposes prohibitions to import commercial birds from some countries. Shipments of commercial pigeons and doves (columbiforms) may import with additional health restrictions as listed below. The list of countries is found at [Animal Health Status of Regions](#).

- Commercial bird shipments must be accompanied by a USDA import permit (application to obtain a permit is form: [VS Form17-129](#) (73.07 KB)). Processing time for the application is approximately 7 – 10 business days. Applications should be received no less than this time prior to shipment of birds. There is a processing fee which can be paid by check, money order, charge card or by providing a USDA user fee account. For an additional fee, the permit can be amended after issuance by request.
 - Please sign up for an e-authentication account if you are based in the United States or have a U.S. address. Electronic-authentication (e-authentication) is a registration system that enables customers to access the online Electronic Permits (eFile) system in order to submit import permit applications independently. Create an e-authentication account and register for permits by following the steps outlined on the eFile website [Register for E File](#)
 - [Download the import application](#) or contact the Strategies & Policies, Live Animal Import Team: VS.Live.Animals.Import.Permits@aphis.usda.gov
- A health certificate, issued within 30 days of leaving the country of export, must accompany all commercial bird shipments. A full-time salaried veterinarian of the veterinary competent authority, located in the exporting country, must endorse the health certificate, with English translation.

- The following list of health certificates are for countries that have negotiated health requirements with the United States. All other countries of export must use language listed on the model health certificate, listed below.
 - [Portugal Health Certificate for Commercial Birds \(does not include poultry\)](#) (159.06 KB)
 - [Brazil Health Certificate for Commercial Birds](#) (168.02 KB)
 - [Guyana Health Certificate for Commercial Birds](#) (170.27 KB)
 - [Netherlands Health Certificate for Commercial Birds](#) (137.82 KB)
- Exporting countries can use the [model health certificate](#) (125.12 KB) provided or use their own document which carries the following U.S. health certificate requirements.
 1. The veterinarian issuing the certificate completed inspection and testing of the birds covered under this health certificate.
 2. The bird(s) was/were not vaccinated against any H5 or H7 subtype of avian influenza.
 3. The veterinarian issuing the certificate examined the bird(s) within 30 days prior to export and saw no evidence of communicable disease of poultry.
 4. The bird(s) covered by this certificate do not originate from flocks nor had contact with any birds or poultry originating in a control zone established by the state/province/federal animal health authorities due to outbreaks of Newcastle disease or Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the 90 days preceding the exportation.
 5. The bird(s) was/were not vaccinated against Newcastle disease OR the bird(s) has/have been vaccinated against Newcastle disease (avian Paramyxovirus) at least 21 days prior to export, using vaccines that do not contain any velogenic strains of Newcastle disease virus. The certificate must state which applies.
 6. The shipment will not transit through any region where APHIS considers [highly pathogenic avian influenza](#) to exist.
 7. Birds were inspected within 24 hours of export.
 8. The birds were placed in new or appropriately sanitized packaging materials at the premises from which the birds were being exported.
- A USDA port veterinarian at the first U.S. port of entry must inspect birds (unless stated differently on the import permit). The importer must arrange for this inspection by a USDA port veterinarian at least 3 business days in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian at the telephone number listed on the

import permit.

- Commercial birds are required at U.S. arrival, to proceed immediately into 30 days quarantine. There are two USDA quarantines which can be used or the importer can create a private quarantine facility. If a private facility is used, it must be approved by APHIS before an import permit can be issued.
- The importer should retain the services of a customs broker to facilitate the importation and, in some cases, to transport the birds from the port of entry to the USDA Animal Import Center. The importer should contact the USDA Animal Import Center for a list of customs brokers to provide this service.

Information on Quarantine Requirements

An import permit will not be issued until quarantine arrangements have been finalized.

- The USDA Animal Import Center will provide an estimate of fees, which includes port inspection, laboratory testing that occurs during quarantine, and the quarantine stay.
 - A list of current fees to support the import process is at [VS User Fees](#)
- Commercial avian quarantines must take place at one of the USDA facilities listed below or private quarantine may occur in an APHIS approved zoological facility.

Miami Animal Import Center

USDA-APHIS-VS

6300 NW 36 Street

Miami, FL 33122

(305) 876-2200 (phone)

(305) 876-2201 (fax)

NotifyMAIC@usda.gov

New York Animal Import Center

USDA, APHIS, VS

474 International Boulevard

Rock Tavern, NY 12575

(845) 838-5500 (phone)

(845) 838-5575 (fax)

- Importers must obtain the approval for a private facility to be used as quarantine prior to applying for an import permit. Information and guidance on obtaining that approval can be received by contacting the Strategy & Policy, Live Animal Imports Team.
- There is no quarantine requirement for imports from Canada.
- Birds are tested in quarantine to determine if they are free of certain communicable diseases. The cost of diagnostic testing is separate from the quarantine fee. The USDA Animal Import Center will provide the total fee for services for the inspection and quarantine.
 - Quarantine activities: Outside visitors into quarantine are prohibited except for accredited veterinarians providing necessary treatment. Birds are tested in quarantine to determine if they are free of certain communicable diseases and all samples must be negative for the shipment to be eligible for release. The cost of diagnostic testing is separate from the quarantine fee. If birds show clinical signs of disease, additional diagnostic testing will occur, at the importer's expense. The importer can refuse such additional testing; however, APHIS will not release into the U.S. birds that are ill or diseased. Birds that are found with diseases that are communicable to poultry, will be refused entry. If a shipment is refused entry, the importer must remove the shipment within 10 days of official notification. Options for the importer are to remove to the country of export or ask APHIS for euthanasia services. If such services are provided, it is at additional costs to the estimate originally provided by APHIS.
- Find estimates of quarantine costs at [VS Import/Export User Fees](#)

Transit Requirements for Commercial Birds through the United States

- Contingency Plan Requirement:
 - Shipments which transit a U.S. port must have an approved contingency plan. Importers should work with transited port veterinary office to obtain approval. Plans are reviewed annually to maintain approved status.
- A U.S. import permit to transit can be issued within 30 days of U.S. transit (application # [VS Form17-129](#) (73.07 KB)) by the US port which will be transited.

- A current veterinary health certificate issued within 30 days of U.S. transit and endorsed by a full-time salaried veterinarian of the agency responsible for animal health of the national government of the exporting country. A health certificate with English translation must meet all of the requirements listed below and accompany the shipment. See an [example of model health certificate](#) (236.65 KB).
- The USDA will monitor transit shipments at the ports of entry. The importer must arrange for USDA services at least 72 hours in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian at the telephone number listed on the import permit. Additionally, the import permit lists any approvals, along with any special instructions for the importer and port staff.

Import Requirements for Commercial Birds from Canada

- There are no quarantine requirements for commercial birds imported from Canada into the United States.
- An import permit is required for commercial birds imported from Canada via air or sea port.
 - Submit application ([VS Form17-129](#) (73.07 KB)) to request an import permit.
- An import permit is not required for commercial birds being imported through a land border port.
- A veterinary health certificate, endorsed by the Canadian government (CFIA) and issued within 30 days of import. [Example of a health certificate containing requirements from Canada](#) (363.28 KB).
- USDA will inspect commercial bird shipments at U.S. ports of entry. The importer must arrange for USDA inspection services at least 72 hours in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian at the telephone number listed on the import permit.
- The import/transit permit lists any additional requirements that may be imposed, along with any special instructions. If traveling by land, the importer should call the port by phone and ask to be directed to the assigned USDA veterinarian. The call will assist in ensuring there is a veterinarian available at the port to receive the shipment at the time of crossing.

Fish and Wildlife Service Permit Information

In the United States, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regulates the importation of birds protected by the Convention on International trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 (WBCA). These regulations are part of an international conservation effort to protect some species of wild birds subject to trade. Most non-native U.S. pet birds including parrots, parakeets, macaws, lorries, and cockatoos are affected by CITES and the WBCA. However, the budgerigar, cockatiel, and rose-ringed parakeets and peach-faced lovebirds are exempt.

Visit the FWS web site at: <http://permits.fws.gov/> to obtain more information and the permit application, if applicable. If you have questions, contact the FWS at (800) 358-2104. Calls from outside the U.S. should use (703) 358-2104. Birds arriving at U.S. ports of entry may need to be inspected by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Inspectors. The FWS provides a list of [U.S. Wildlife Inspection Offices](#). Importers with birds regulated by the USFWS should reach out to the office assigned to the port prior to U.S. arrival of birds.

[VS Guidance and Other Documents for Avian Importation](#)

Questions?

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import Permit team if you have questions before you apply for a permit.

For questions about import permits or permit applications:

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Email: laipermits@usda.gov

Phone: [301-851-3300](tel:301-851-3300)

APHIS Port Services

For questions about import inspections at a port of entry, quarantine of animals arriving from a foreign country, or requesting approval as a private animal import quarantine facility, contact APHIS Port Services.

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Live Animal Import and Export

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import and Export team for questions about current trade restrictions, or other questions not related to permits.

For general questions related to the import of a live animal:

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: [301-851-3300](tel:301-851-3300)

[All Contacts](#)