Frequently Asked Questions: Regulated Organism and Soil Permits

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This page answers common questions about the application process for a permit to move live plant pests or noxious weeds.

Process and Timeframes

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How long does it take to receive a permit?

The application could be processed in as little as 30 days, but there are many factors that cause the review process to take longer. These factors include, but are not limited to the need:

- for a facility inspection,
- to obtain additional equipment or equipment certifications, or
- for additional information by APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) or your State department of agriculture.

All PPQ 526 permit applications are submitted to the destination States(s) for review. PPQ staff process permits in the order they are received; we recommend that you **apply for your permit 4–6 months in advance.**

I am leaving for Australia next week to collect samples. Can I have a permit expedited?

No. We do not expedite permits. This is because so many applicants want their permits expedited, it would cause a backlog of the other permits.

I need my permit right away. Can I skip the State review?

No. We have an agreement with the States that they may review and provide input on PPQ 526 permits. The State review is an important part of the evaluation process.

How long does the permit last?

Permits are generally issued not to exceed 3 years. However, permits may be issued for shorter time periods depending on the plant pest, risk evaluation, and intended use.

Requirements

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Do I need a USDA permit to import dead plant pests?

USDA does not require permits for dead plant pests.* Under 7 CFR 330.200, "biological specimens of plant pests, in preservation or dried, may be imported

without further restriction under this part, but subject to inspection on arrival in the United States to confirm the nature of the material and freedom from risk of plant pest dissemination." Packages must not contain any plant material, soil, or other plant pests and are subject to inspection by U.S. Customs and Border Protection or USDA officials at the port of entry.

In addition, the importer is responsible for complying with other Federal or State requirements (for example: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [FWS]). A completed FWS Form 3-177 may be required to accompany shipments at the point of entry. If you have questions about this form, email FWS at R9LE_WWW@fws.gov.

* Dead bees in the superfamily Apoidea require a notification of arrival, under the authority of 7 CFR 322.28.

Do I need a permit to move regulated articles interstate even if they are established in the State where I plan to move them?

Yes. You need a PPQ 526 permit to move interstate **all** plant pests, whether they occur in the destination State or not.

What level of containment is necessary for the pest I plan to move?

This depends on the species and its intended use. Domestic, widely distributed plant pests may require little or no containment.

However, if you plan to import an exotic, field-collected regulated article of pest status into an area of the United States where it could easily establish, you may be required to import the organism into a high-security containment facility. Non-indigenous, lab-reared organisms, pests of low establishment potential or low dispersal capability may require inspection of your facility by State and/or local officials.

Other factors we take into consideration when evaluating level of containment include the following:

- Whether the agent is indigenous to the United States and to the area where you plan to contain the organism
- Host plant availability
- Size and mobility of organism
- Life stage
- Number of organisms shipped
- Whether you plan to maintain a colony or culture

Amendments

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Someone in our company has the PPQ 526 permit in their name, and they are leaving the company. Can I change the permit to my name?

The following options are available:

1. You may apply for a new permit to replace it, especially if the permit is within 3 months of expiration; **or**
2. The person's former supervisor may transfer the permit(s) via written request to APHIS for amendment.

I need to have a change made on my permit. How can I have it amended?

You must send us an amendment request in writing (email, fax, or letter). Some changes can be made by amending the permit, but not all. For example, if you need to change the name of the permittee or the address, you will have to apply for a new permit.

I already have a PPQ 526 permit. I need to move to a laboratory in a different location. Do I need a new permit to work with the plant pest in the new location?

Yes. You will need to apply for a new permit, because PPQ 526 permits are address-specific.

Contact Us

For questions about permits for regulated organisms and soil:

Pest Permits Team

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