

Questions and Answers: Plant Protection and Quarantine Permits

Q. What is a permit?

A. A permit is a written or electronic authorization by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program that allows, under prescribed conditions, the movement of regulated articles, including: plants, plant products, biological control organisms, plant pests, noxious weeds, items that may harbor these organisms, or means of conveyance.

Q. Who needs a PPQ permit?

A. Any person interested in moving a regulated article (as described above) needs to obtain a permit.

Q. What is a plant pest?

A. A plant pest is any living stage of the pests listed below that can directly or indirectly injure, cause damage to, or cause disease in any plant or plant product.

- a protozoan
- a nonhuman animal
- a parasitic plant
- a bacterium
- a fungus
- a virus or viroid
- an infectious agent or other pathogen
- any article similar to or allied with any of the articles previously specified

Q. Why would APHIS require me to have a PPQ permit?

A. APHIS requires permits under the authority of the Plant Protection Act of 2000, in order to help safeguard the health of U.S. agricultural and natural resources.

For example, import permits are required for the entry and transit through the United States of agricultural products that pose a risk of introducing exotic plant pests and diseases. Permits are also required for the transit through and interstate movement of regulated plant pests, including arthropods, mollusks, plant pathogens, vectors, nematodes, federally listed noxious weeds, and items that may harbor these organisms.

Additionally, import permits are necessary for the movement of plants whose populations are threatened in the wild and are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

When making decisions concerning permit requests, PPQ carefully weighs the potential risks and benefits of the request and reviews the related scientific information.

Q. How do I apply for a PPQ permit?

A. You can apply for and receive permits online through APHIS' ePermits system. To apply online, please visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/permits>.

Additionally, you can apply for a PPQ permit by completing an appropriate permit application obtained from PPQ's Permit Services staff. The address and contact information is:

USDA, APHIS, PPQ
4700 River Road, Unit 133
Riverdale, MD 20737

Toll-free Telephone: (877) 770-5990 (automated system)

Applications are also available on PPQ's Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/permits.

Q. What is ePermits?

A. ePermits is a Web-based system that gives customers online access to agricultural permits. The system gives customers the ability to apply for a permit, track its status, and pay application fees online—anytime and anywhere. Individuals who use the ePermit system are required to complete a registration process called eAuthentication. This process enables individuals to obtain access to USDA services online. For more information on eAuthentication, please visit <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/permits>.

Q. Is there a fee for obtaining a PPQ permit from APHIS?

A. There are currently no fees for PPQ permits, except for the "General Permit to Engage in the Business of Importing, Exporting, or Re-Exporting Terrestrial Plants" listed under CITES. The fee for this permit is \$70.00.

Q. How do I obtain more information on this subject?

A. For more information concerning PPQ permits, please visit the program Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/permits.

Permit information can also be obtained by contacting program officials at:
USDA, APHIS, PPQ
4700 River Road, Unit 133
Riverdale, MD 20737
Telephone: (301) 734-0841
Toll-free Telephone: (877) 770-5990

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