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Regulated Organism and Soil Permits

Last Modified:

APHIS Revises the Regulations for the Movement of Plant Pests and Biocontrol Agents

The U.S. Department of Agriculture published a final rule to revise the regulations in Title 7 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 330 that govern the movement of plant pests. The final rule aligns plant pest regulations with current APHIS policies, removes obsolete requirements, streamlines the permit process for low risk organisms, and updates requirements for the import of foreign soil.

Learn More

Under the authority of the Plant Protection and Honeybee Acts, a Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) 526 permit is required for the importation, interstate movement and environmental release of plant pests (plant feeding insects, mites, snails, slugs, and plant pathogenic bacteria, viruses, fungi, etc.), biological control organisms of plant pests and weeds, bees, parasitic plants, and Federally listed noxious weeds.

APHIS also requires a 526 permit for the importation and interstate movement of soil or other potentially infected host material for the purpose of isolating or culturing microorganisms from those materials. Those materials may include but are not

necessarily restricted to; plant material, insects/arthropods, environmental samples such as water, dust, sediments, etc. If the organism is imported on/in host material, no separate permit is required for the host material if the host material is not intended for propagation.

APHIS is authorized to inspect shipments and/or facilities at any time to verify compliance with permit conditions. Receipt of a PPQ permit does not relieve the applicant from the obligation to comply with the regulations of other Federal, State, and local agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Environmental Protection Agency).

PPQ 526 Permit

The PPQ 526 permit is required for the importation, interstate movement, possession, and/or environmental release of the following:

- Insects and Mites
- Bees
- Butterfiles and Moths
- Biocontrol Organisms
- Pet Food, Fish Bait, and Animal Feed
- Invertebrate Pets
- Plant Pathogenic Bacteria, Viruses, Fungi, Mycoplasms, and Nematodes
- Snails and Slugs
- Federal Noxious Weeds and Parasitic Plants
- Earthworms
- Soil
- Western Corn Rootworm, Diabrotica virgifera
- Plant Growth Enhancers

Frequently Asked Questions

View a list of the commonly asked questions and concerns associated with the application process for a permit to move live plant pests or noxious weeds.

How To Apply for a PPQ 526 Permit

APHIS offers both the online APHIS eFile system and a manual process for application submission. PPQ strongly recommends applicants submit permit applications online, via the APHIS eFile system because the online system efficiently provides applicants electronic access to their applications and permits. Select the following link to start the application process.

Apply for a Permit

PPQ 526 Permit Application Processing Steps and Timelines

The USDA-APHIS-PPQ processes PPQ 526 applications in the order received. APHIS-PPQ receives over 10,000 PPQ 526 applications per year. The average application processing time is 127 days. The processing time depends on the complexity of the request. Based on the figures shown below, we advise Applicants to submit their applications at least 40 weeks (280 days) prior to obtaining APHIS-PPQ authorization (Permit or Official Letter), especially if a containment facility evaluation would be required.

Petitioning and permitting for the environmental release of novel biological control organisms includes Endangered Species Act, Tribal, and National Environmental Policy Act consultations, which are not represented in the table below. These additional steps add significant processing time in the range of 2 – 5+ years.

The PPQ 526 Application for Permit review process includes the following steps*:

Step	Application Status	Time Range
Application review for completeness and assignment to Permit Scientist	Submitted	1- 2 Weeks
Application technical review – Risk analysis	Review Initiated	1- 6 Weeks
Evaluation of Containment Facility, if necessary	Pending Containment Facility Review	1- 20 Weeks
Determination of permit conditions to mitigate risk	In Review	1- 2 Weeks
Consultation of draft permit with the State	Pending State Review	1- 2 Weeks

Step	Application Status	Time Range
Evaluation of State response	Pending APHIS Review	1- 2 Weeks
Review of draft permit conditions by Applicant	Applicant Action Required	1- 4 Weeks
Review of Applicant’s response and issuance of the Permit (Official Letter(s) may be issued if necessary).	Pending APHIS Review	1- 2 Weeks
	Processed Application	8 - 40 Weeks

**These steps and timelines are not all-encompassing; if necessary, additional steps or time may be required.*

See More See Less

Shipping Labels

- Shipping Requirements for Importing Regulated Organisms Requiring Red and White Labels
- Shipping Requirements for Importing Regulated Soil Requiring Black, White, Green, Yellow Labels

Containment Facility Inspections

A facility inspection may be required before a PPQ 526 Permit is issued. A PPQ inspector will document aspects of the facility to determine if the facility and equipment are adequate for containment of the organism(s). A PPQ containment specialist will evaluate the documentation and determine if the facility is adequate. In most cases, if the application is for the receipt of foreign organisms (i.e., foreign strain, biotype, race, isolate) or a Program Pest (i.e., currently under federal quarantine) the facility must be inspected. Diagnostic facilities are also inspected. The applicant will be informed if their facility must be inspected after review of the permit application. Guidelines are available.

Containment Facility Inspections

Contact Us

For questions about permits for regulated organisms and soil:

Pest Permits Team

Email: pest.permits@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-2285

Alt-Phone: 866-524-5421

Stakeholder/Customer Satisfaction Survey

One of the goals and objectives of the APHIS-PPQ- Permit Unit's Quality Management System is to increase our customer service awareness. To address this, we are initiating our Stakeholder/Customer Satisfaction Survey to hear from you. We need your valuable feedback to help us evaluate and improve our customer service. We would like to thank you in advance for completing the survey.

Take the Survey

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