Soil

Last Modified:

Soil is strictly controlled under APHIS quarantine regulations 7 CFR 330 because it can readily provide a pathway for the introduction of a variety of dangerous organisms into the United States.

Importing soil into the United States from foreign sources is prohibited. Moving soil within the continental United States is restricted unless authorized by APHIS under specific conditions, safeguards, and controlled circumstances described in a permit and/or compliance agreement.

Use PPQ Form 525-A, Application for Permit To Receive Soil or PPQ Form 526, Application for Permit To Move Live Plant Pests, Biological Control Agents, or Noxious Weeds.

Apply for a Permit

General Information

Shipping Labels

View shipping requirements for importing regulated soil requiring black, white, green, and yellow labels.

Frequently Asked Questions

View a list of the commonly asked questions and concerns associated with the application process for a soil permit.

Circular

(PDF, 50.67 KB)

Soil from almost all foreign countries and many U.S, States can move only if conditions and safeguards are met. View circular for more information on how to import and move soil.

Soil Permit Process

Importing and moving untreated soil is an extremely high risk activity. Several levels of review and approval are required before a permit can be issued. Learn more about the soil permit process.

Permit Eligibility for Graduate Students and Post-doctoral Workers

View guidance that is considered when deciding whether or not to issue a permit to a graduate student/post-doc.

Hand-Carry Conditions

View information related to hand-carry conditions for all authorized soil hand carry events.

Foreign Soil Under 3 Pounds

APHIS can issue a permit usually within 2 weeks if the applicant requests authorization for less than three pounds of soil (per shipment), and the soil can be heat sterilized by PPQ at ports with appropriate facilities.

Foreign Soil Over 3 Pounds

Soil that cannot be treated at the port of entry may be allowed to move to a facility approved in advance and authorized under a permit issued by PPQ. Specific safeguard provisions are described in the permit and compliance agreement with the facility.

Domestic Soil

Soil from Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands is handled as foreign soil and authorized movement into the continental United States under the provisions described for foreign soil.

Isolating Organisms From Soil

APHIS may authorize soil imports for the purpose of isolating organisms if the soil is handled and treated as prescribed in an APHIS permit.

Importing Soil Amendments

Permits or other documentation may be required for entry of these products into the United States from foreign countries.

Canadian Soil

Soil from areas regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for soil-borne pests requires a permit. Soil from other parts of Canada may be imported into the United States without a permit and is subject only to inspection and verification of origin.

View the import requirements for soil from Canada, including the list of regulated areas

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