Transit of Live Bees through the Contiguous United States

Last Modified:

The regulations covering the importation of honey bees and other pollinator bees into the contiguous United States were revised. The new regulations went into effect 22 November 2004 (7 CFR 322).

The Following General Restrictions Apply to the Transit of Live Honey Bees, Bee Byproducts, and Bee Equipment

- Whole colonies in hive bodies cannot transit from any country; only queen bees with attendants and package bees are authorized.
- Used beekeeping equipment cannot transit.
- Beeswax for beekeeping requires special treatment as noted under Importation or Transit of Restricted Articles and Organisms (7 CFR 322.28-32).
- Honey for bee feed cannot transit without special treatment noted under Importation or Transit of Restricted Articles and Organisms (7 CFR 322.28-32).
- Pollen cannot transit the United States.

General Shipping Requirements for Transit of Honey Bees from...

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Canada and New Zealand

General Shipping Requirements for Transit of Honey Bees from Canada and New Zealand

- Shipments can be transloaded between aircraft in the continental United States. Bees from Canada and New Zealand can transit the continental United States by land provided the requirements noted below are met.
- The exporter must have all of the colonies from which the bees originate inspected by an official approved by the appropriate government regulatory agency of the exporting country no more than 10 days prior to shipment. This inspection will result in a Honey Bee Export Certificate that must accompany the shipment. The official export certificate must detail any diseases, parasites, or undesirable species or subspecies of honey bee found during the inspection. If the export certificate identifies a bee disease or parasite of concern to the United States, including, but not limited to, Thai sacbrood virus, *Tropilaelaps clareae*, and *Euvarroa sinhai*, or an undesirable species or subspecies of honey bee, then the shipment will be refused transit through the United States.
- The shipment must have the official government agency honey bee export certificate along with a manifest that details the full contents of the shipment.
- The importer must notify APHIS of the pending shipment 10 or more days prior to transit. Contact information for APHIS Headquarters is noted below. APHIS can be notified by email, fax, or surface mail. The information must include the full name, address, and phone number of the consignee and the consignor, and full details of the airline flight arriving in the United States. You must also provide full details of how many queens or packages of bees will be shipped. APHIS will forward the information to Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Inspection (CBP AI) but will not make any further arrangements for delivery.

  APHIS PPQ
  Pests, Pathogens, and Biocontrol Permits, Unit 133
  4700 River Road

Riverdale, Maryland 20737
Facsimile 301-734-8700 or 301-734-5392

- The export certificate must detail the origin of the genetic stock. All honey bees must be derived from colonies that originated in Canada or New Zealand.
- If the bees are to be picked up at the airport (Canada and New Zealand origin only), the importer must make arrangements for 1) inspection and 2) transfer for pick-up. Before arrival at the port you must make arrangements with Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Inspection for inspection and customs clearance. You must also make arrangements with a broker to pick-up the bees. You will not be able to meet the aircraft. The broker will transport the bees to a location where you can pick them up. APHIS Headquarters can provide information following receipt of the required 10 day notification.
- If the bees are being shipped by an express package delivery service you do not need to contact the airport but you must still provide the 10 day notification to APHIS prior to arrival in the United States.
- The bees must be packaged in a manner that will prevent the escape of any bee or bee pest. If the shipment is palletized the pallet must be completely wrapped on all sides with the appropriate mesh as noted for the specific country requirements.
- The package must be manifested to read live bees.
- The package must be labeled on all sides with letters 1 inch tall or more that read live bees.

New Zealand

- Honey bees from New Zealand must arrive to the continental United States on a non-stop flight.
- The honey bee export certificate must be prepared by an approved official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and must be on the approved official document prepared no more than 10 days prior to shipment.
- If the shipment is on a pallet the pallet must be completely covered with a material with a mesh opening smaller than 2 mm (0.079 inch) to prevent the escape of all bee pests.

Canada

- The exporter must have all of the source colonies inspected by an official approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency no more than 10 days prior

to shipment. This inspection will result in a Honey Bee Export Certificate that must accompany the shipment.
- The honey bees must be packaged in a manner that will prevent the escape of any honey bee. If the shipment is palletized the pallet must be completely covered with a material with a mesh opening small enough to prevent escape.

Other Countries

General Requirements

- You may ship restricted organisms only on board aircraft through the United States for transit to another country.
- You may transload a shipment to another aircraft only once while in the continental United States.

Documentation and Packaging Requirements

- Each shipment must be accompanied by the appropriate regulatory authority of the national government of the region of origin stating that the shipment has been inspected and determined to meet the packaging requirements below.
- Bees must be shipped in securely enclosed packages that prevent escape of any of its contents during shipment. Each package must be covered by an escape-proof net secured to prevent escape.
- The outside of the package must be clearly marked with the contents of the transit shipment with the words “Live Bees” and the name of the exporting region.

Notice of arrival

- At least two business days prior to the expected date of arrival the shipper must contact the port and provide the name of the airport where the shipment will arrive, where (if applicable) it will be transloaded, the names, phones numbers, and addresses of both the shipper and receiver, the number of units (packages of bees or queen bees), and the name of the airline carrying the shipment.

Inspection and Handling

- All shipments are subject to inspection. You may transload adult bees from one aircraft to another only under supervision of an inspector. If bees cannot be

transloaded immediately to the flight, they must be stored inside a completely enclosed building. Adult bees from countries other than Canada and New Zealand may not be transloaded to a land vehicle. You may transit bees only through an airport staffed by a Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Inspector.

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

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