

How to Apply for Phytosanitary Inspection and Certification

Apply online through the USDA Phytosanitary Certification Issuance and Tracking system (PCIT) http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_exports/pcit.shtml.

Make sure you have all pertinent information regarding your shipment. You will need the following information to enter into the application through PCIT:

Name and Address of Exporter: The address must be in the United States or a U.S. territory or commonwealth, which includes American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Name and Address of Foreign Consignee: Include the complete name and physical address of the ultimate consignee of record. The country listed in this block must be the same country as that listed in the Declared Point of Entry.

Name and Address of Applicant (or Exporter's Agent): The complete name, mailing address, and phone number of the applicant or the exporter's agent. Only U.S. addresses will be accepted.

Place Where Articles Will Be Made Available for Inspection and/or Treatment and Certification: Besides the address where the shipment will be available for inspection and/or treatment you should also identify the location at the site, such as a dock or warehouse.

Approximate Date of Departure: This is the expected date of departure from the United States.

Port Of Departure: The port the shipment will be exported from.

Description of Articles to Be Certified

a. **Quantity and Scientific Name of the Commodity:** This is needed for each commodity. If you have a large number of species in the shipment you may simply state "see attached" and attached a detailed listing. Do not list sizes or serial numbers. Indicate total number, amount or weight. Examples: 1,500 pounds of Zea maize, 100 Quercus logs, 172,000 pounds Triticum aestivum

b. **Number and Description of Packages:** Enter the number and types of shipping containers. Size is not necessary. Examples: 1,000 cardboard flats, 50 wooden crates, 4 steel containers, 1,720 polypropylene bags, 16 bundles.

c. **Distinguishing Marks:** Enter the markings exactly as they appear on the containers, cartons, bags, bales, boxes, products, truck licenses, or railway cars. A Letter of Credit (LC) number may be included only when the packaging is clearly marked with the LC number. If there are no distinguishing marks, enter "NONE". It is not necessary to list all of the individual distinguishing marks on commodities which are shipped in a large container, such a serial numbers on logs shipped in a large container. Only list the marks on the container.

d. Certified Origin: Enter where the product was grown or cultivated by state, county, or other geographical or political subdivision as required by the destination country's regulations. Documentation supporting the origin of commodity may be required.

Declared Means Of Conveyance: Enter the name of the airline or name of the vessel. If the means of conveyance is unknown, enter, as appropriate, "airfreight", "ocean vessel", "railroad", or "truck line". For rail or truck shipments to Canada or Mexico, enter the name of the railroad or truck line, if known. For mail shipments, enter "air mail", "surface mail", "express mail", or the carrier name.

Declared Point Of Entry: Enter the point(s) of entry.

Types of Phytosanitary Certificates

A phytosanitary certificate is an official document issued by a plant regulatory official in the United States to a United States exporter. In Michigan these documents can be issued by specially trained Michigan Department of Agriculture or the USDA staff. These credentialed staff that are trained in export certification is referred to as Authorized Certification Officials or "ACOs".

Phytosanitary certificates are official documents which certify that the plants or plant products have been officially inspected, are free from quarantine pests, are practically free from other injurious pests, and conform to the current phytosanitary regulations of the importing country. Each importing country determines its own phytosanitary regulations.

There are two kinds of phytosanitary certificates used, depending on the origin of the plant or plant product.

1). PPQ Form 577 – Federal Phytosanitary Certificate - This document is used to certify domestic plants or unprocessed plant products for export. Domestic means grown in the U.S., Puerto Rico. or a U.S possession.

2). PPQ Form 579 - Phytosanitary Certificate for Re-Export - This document is used to certify foreign-origin plants or plant products for re-export from the United States to a foreign country. Naturally, a number of conditions must be met.

In addition exporters may request a certificate to accompany certain types of highly processed plant products, known as a PPQ Form 578 - Export Certificate, Processed Plant Products.

Exporter Responsibilities

1. Contact MDARD well in advance of the shipping date. Exporters should contact their ACO or the regional supervisor that oversees work in the duty station area.

2. Apply for inspection and phytosanitary certification through PCIT.

3. Make the shipment available for inspection. The exporter must export plants and plant products within the time limits prescribed by the importing country. If the importing country does not prescribe a time limit, the general rule is that inspections must be conducted within 30 days of shipping.
4. Provide treatment if required. The ACO should be contacted prior to treatment to assure that the treatment is appropriate to satisfy foreign import regulations. The ACO will arrange for supervision of the treatment.
5. Safeguard the certified shipment prior to shipping.
6. Comply with U.S. export control regulations. No special license is required to engage in export trade. The federal government controls the export of U.S. goods to all foreign countries. The Department of Commerce is the authority for licensing most items for export. Other federal agencies such as the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) handle the certification for specific products. For further information, exporters should contact the Office of Export Control, Bureau of International Commerce, Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230.

Terms & definitions

Authorized Certification Official (ACO). A federal or state department of agriculture inspector who is officially trained and credentialed to conduct export inspections and issue Federal Phytosanitary Certificates

Export Certificates - these are documents that attest to the phytosanitary condition of plants or plant products and are issued by an ACO. Three types of export certificates are issued by ACO's in the United States: PPQ Form 577, Phytosanitary Certificate; PPQ Form 578, Export Certificate, Processed Plant Products; and, PPQ Form 579, Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport.

Export Certificate, Processed Plant Products, PPQ Form 578 - an accountable certificate used to certify eligible processed products for which PPQ Form 577 or PPQ Form 579 cannot be issued. The intended purpose of the Export Certificate, Processed Plant Products is to assist U.S. exporters whose shipments may be placed in jeopardy if such a document is not issued.

Federal Phytosanitary Certificate, PPQ Form 577, (FPC) – an accountable inspection certificate used to certify domestic plants and unprocessed or unmanufactured plant products for export. The purpose of the FPC is to certify that plants and plant products conform with the current phytosanitary requirements of the importing country.

Federal Phytosanitary Certificate for Reexport, PPQ Form 579 - used to certify that, based on an original foreign phytosanitary certificate and/or an additional inspection, the plants or plant products officially entered the United States, are considered to conform to the current phytosanitary regulations of the importing country, and have not been subjected to the risk of infestation or infection during storage in the United States.

Import Permit – An official document authorizing importation of a commodity in accordance with specified phytosanitary import requirements. The Import Permit (IP) is

issued to the consignee who is the importer in the receiving country--not to the exporter. If the exporter has a copy of the permit, the exporter would have received it from the importer. Also, if the IP is in a foreign language, it must be translated in the United States and notarized as a true translation.

Phyto – see Federal Phytosanitary Certificate

Helpful Hints

Using certificates as commercial documents is discouraged.

Contract requirements, letter of credit, or consular visas are not phytosanitary conditions and are not certified using export certificates.

No Changes Allowed – Exporters may NOT make any changes or corrections to a certificate. If a change is required, it may only be made by the certifying official.

Original Phytosanitary Certificates Required - The original phytosanitary certificate must be presented to the plant quarantine officials in the foreign country. Photocopies are not acceptable, although customs officials may retain copies.

Below are frequently requested statements that may not be entered on a phytosanitary certificate:

- Grade or quality
- Fitness for human consumption
- Pesticide or other chemical residues
- Freedom from animal diseases (Refer to USDA, APHIS - Veterinary Services)
- Level of radioactivity (Refer to USDA/FAS, Office of Food Safety and Technical Services (202 720-1301))
- Genetic composition
- Aflatoxin or other mycotoxins
- Intended use such as “for scientific purposes”
- Letter of Credit number (If a letter of credit number is emblazoned on the outer surface of every bag, box, etc. it may be listed as a distinguishing mark.)
- Advice number
- Import reference number
- Import tariff item number
- Authorization number
- Letter of commitment number
- Purchase contract number
- References to a permit issued by the Office of Management Authority for protected plant species