



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services
Strategy and Policy
Live Animal Imports

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Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Transit Permits

USDA APHIS is focusing on the following issues and concerns regarding import permit time frames and standards including contingency plans for transit shipments.

Effective immediately, the following will apply at all ports of entry and for all live animal imports requiring an import permit.

Import Permit Application Timeframes and Standards

- Standard processing times for routine import permit applications for the import or transit of livestock (including horses), avian and non-pet birds, hatching eggs, aquaculture, and germplasm is **7-10 business days** from the day of application submission. Import permit applications are subject to standard processing User Fees in accordance to [CFR Part 130](#).
 - Permit applications for more complex imports not managed by the ports of entry as well as pet bird imports will take longer to process.
 - When applications are submitted after 2:30pm eastern time, the next business day will be considered "Day 1" of the processing time.
- Additional considerations for imports:
 - All species: Import quarantine reservation information is not required to submit a permit application. Service for request must be submitted to the port of entry VS office at least 72 hours in advance.
 - Equine imports: CEM quarantine permit numbers are required before an APHIS permit is issued.
- Additional considerations for transits:
 - All transits through the United States must be arranged to use the shortest, most direct route possible for animal movement. The route of travel must be documented on the transit permit application for APHIS review and approval.
 - All transit shipments are required to provide a written contingency plan to APHIS for approval with the transit import permit application and prior to import. Please note that transit import permit applications will not be processed until the complete contingency plan is received. This plan must include measures that address:
 1. Emergency contacts/ points of contacts (to include veterinarians)
 2. Transport conveyances/containers
 3. Loading densities and space requirements
 4. Holding facility arrangements/rest stop arrangements
 5. Environmental/weather protections
 6. Effective ventilation/air supply
 7. Safe feed and water supply
 8. Sick/injured animal management
 9. Deceased animal management

New Import Permit Applications- Rush/ Priority Requests

Permit applications are processed in the order they are received. If an importer requests APHIS to process a new import permit application in less than the required 7-10 business days prior to the estimated shipment date, the importer will have to pay a compliance fee in addition to the regular import application fee. This additional fee is needed to cover the additional costs APHIS incurs related to the actions and personnel needed to accommodate a rush request. Please note, any application submitted less than 7 business days may be asked to submit a new shipping date, if adequate coverage is not available.

- Applications submitted within 4-6 business will be assessed a simple import compliance assistance user fee in addition to standard import permit processing fees.
- Applications submitted 3 business days or less will be assessed a complicated import compliance assistance user fee in addition to standard import permit processing fees.

Amendments/ Changes to Import Permits

Requests to amend an import permit must be made at least 5 business days in advance of the estimated shipment date. If there is a change in any of the following areas, an amendment will be required:

1. Route of travel
2. Port of entry
3. Increase in number of animals imported
4. Replacement of individually identified animals imported (when specific animals are listed)
4. Consignee/ Consignor
5. Port of embarkation

If the flight information changes or there is a delayed date of arrival (still within the validity of the import permit), but all remaining information remains the same, an amendment to the import permit is not required. However, the updated flight information and date of arrival **must be submitted** to the port of entry office as soon as possible, to ensure adequate coverage will be available. If coverage is not available, a revised shipping date may be requested.

Amended permit applications are processed in the order they are received. If an importer requests an amended permit in less than the required 5 business days prior to the estimated shipment date, the importer will have to pay a compliance fee to cover the additional costs APHIS incurs related to the actions and personnel needed to accommodate a rush request. Please note, any application submitted less than 5 days prior to the estimated shipment date may be asked to submit a new shipping date, if adequate coverage is not available.

- Amended permit applications submitted within 3-4 business days will be assessed a simple import compliance assistance user fee in addition to standard amendment permit processing fees.
- Amended permit applications submitted 2 business days or less will be assessed a complicated import compliance assistance fee in addition to standard amendment permit processing fees.

For further information about import permit requirements please visit the following website: [USDA APHIS VS Live Animal Imports](#)

For questions or concerns, please contact the Acting Director for Live Animal Imports, Dr. Amber Headen, at amber.l.headen@usda.gov or the Acting National Port Services Director, Dr. Rachel Cezar-Martinez, at rachel.cezar-martinez@usda.gov or at the following phone number (301)-851-3300.