Soil Permit Process

Last Modified:

The importation and interstate movement of soil, including soil originating from Hawaii and U.S. Territories, is considered by APHIS to be an extremely high-risk activity that requires a permit authorizing such movement.

For this reason, a number of safeguarding measures will be implemented as part of the permit issuance process. The permit issuance process is determined by the volume and proposed treatment of soil indicated on the permit application. The process for obtaining a permit for movement of soil is initiated by submitting the completed PPQ Form 525-A online through ePermits, or if paper copy, send to: USDA/APHIS/PPQ/Permit Services, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., Beltsville, MD 20705. Once an application is in the ePermits system, the review process is initiated.

Foreign- non-sterile soil: (DNA and/or RNA extraction is allowed)

A permit is required to import or move non-sterile soil interstate from Hawaii, or the U.S. territories that will not undergo treatment at the port of entry into the U.S. upon arrival. Untreated soil from these sources may only be moved to an APHIS approved facility. If your facility is not already approved, up to three months may be necessary for review, processing, and approval of your permit application. For additional

information, see the Soil not treated at the Port of Entry web page.

Applications for soil movements from foreign countries or Hawaii and the U.S. territories require a permit and are processed similarly to the 526 (regulated organisms permit which is needed instead if biological analysis of soil including isolation or culture of living organisms occurs) as follows: (see “Permitting Processing Steps and Timelines” at: USDA APHIS | Regulated Organism and Soil Permits).

3 lbs or less for sterilization treatments at the port of entry

Importation or interstate movement of non-sterile soil from all foreign countries, Hawaii and the U.S. territories that will be shipped in quantities of 3 lbs or less for sterilization treatments at the port of entry requires a permit for movement prior to the treatment facility, but does not require a compliance agreement for subsequent movement within the United States.

Applications for movement of 3 lbs or less of soil to a plant inspection station for sterilization treatment are processed by the Permit Unit, Riverdale, MD as follows:

1. The application is reviewed and a draft permit is prepared.
2. A copy of the draft permit is sent to the applicant for their review and concurrence. Concurrence is indicated by initialing the permit conditions, and returning the draft to the permit unit.
3. Permit is issued by the Permit Unit, Riverdale, Maryland.
4. The Permit Unit will send the permit directly to the applicant, and copies will be sent to appropriate State and PPQ offices.

For additional information, see the Soil for sterilization treatments at the port of entry web page.

All soil intended for extraction of biological organisms:

Please refer to the Apply for a PPQ Permit web page for a 526 application. A 525 permit application will not be accepted for this application.

Label information

If a permit is issued for soil samples to be treated at a Plant Inspection Station, a permit condition will specify that the applicant will need to request PPQ Form 508 Green and Yellow labels and how to obtain them.

If a permit is issued for soil samples to be treated at the applicant's facility, a permit condition will specify that the applicant will need to request PPQ Form 550 Black and White labels and how to obtain them.

Although a permit is needed to move soil to the mainland from Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, PPQ Form 550 labels are not. However, soil from these areas must pass Pre-Departure inspection prior to shipment.

Print