

VS Guidance 13404.2

Import Transit Shipments of Live Animals

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1. Purpose and Background

This document provides guidelines for Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) employees who inspect or monitor regulated shipments of live animal commodities (ruminants, swine, avians, horses, certain aquatic species and miscellaneous animals including elephants, hippos, rhinos, tapirs, hedgehogs, and tenrecs, as defined in [9 CFR parts 93](#) and [98](#)), including germplasm and hatching eggs. All personnel involved with transit shipments should use these guidelines to uniformly implement VS live animal commodity movement regulations and policies.

This guidance document represents the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS') position on this topic and is intended solely as guidance. It does not have the force and effect of law, does not create or confer any rights for or on any person, and does not bind the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the public. Language suggesting that this guidance is mandatory (e.g., "shall," "must," "required," or "requirement") should not be construed as binding unless the terms quote from a statutory or regulatory requirement. The information this document contains may be made available to the public. While this document provides guidance for users outside VS, VS employees may not deviate from the directions provided herein without appropriate justification and supervisory concurrence.

2. Document Status

- A. Review date: 10/15/2025.
- B. This document replaces VSG 13404.1.

3. Reason for Reissuance

The document is being updated to reflect current VS structure and to add a statement on contingency plans.

4. Authority and References

- A. Authorities (Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)):
 - [7 CFR 371.4](#)
 - [Animal Health Protection Act \(2002\), 7 U.S.C. 8301 et. seq.](#)
 - [Restriction on importation or entry, 7 U.S.C. 8303](#)
 - [28 Hour Law, 49 U.S.C. 80502](#)
 - [28-Hour Law Statement of Policy, 9 CFR Part 89](#)
 - [9 CFR 93.101 General prohibitions; exceptions](#)
 - [9 CFR 93.201 General prohibitions; exceptions](#)
 - [9 CFR 93.301 General prohibitions; exceptions](#)

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- [9 CFR 93.401 General prohibitions; exceptions](#)
- [93.702 Restrictions](#)
- [9 CFR 93.501 General prohibitions; exceptions](#)
- [9 CFR 93.805 Ports of entry, inspection, and treatment](#)
- [93.901 General restrictions; exceptions](#)

B. References

- [Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits](#)
- [VSG 13803.1, Contaminated Aircraft Cleaning, Decontaminating, and Inspection.](#)
- [VSG 13804.1, Disinfection of Animal Embryo or Semen Containers Returned to the United States.](#)

C. Definitions

Third-country import transit: A shipment that originates in a foreign country and moves through one or more U.S. ports while transiting the United States to a third-country destination.

5. Audience

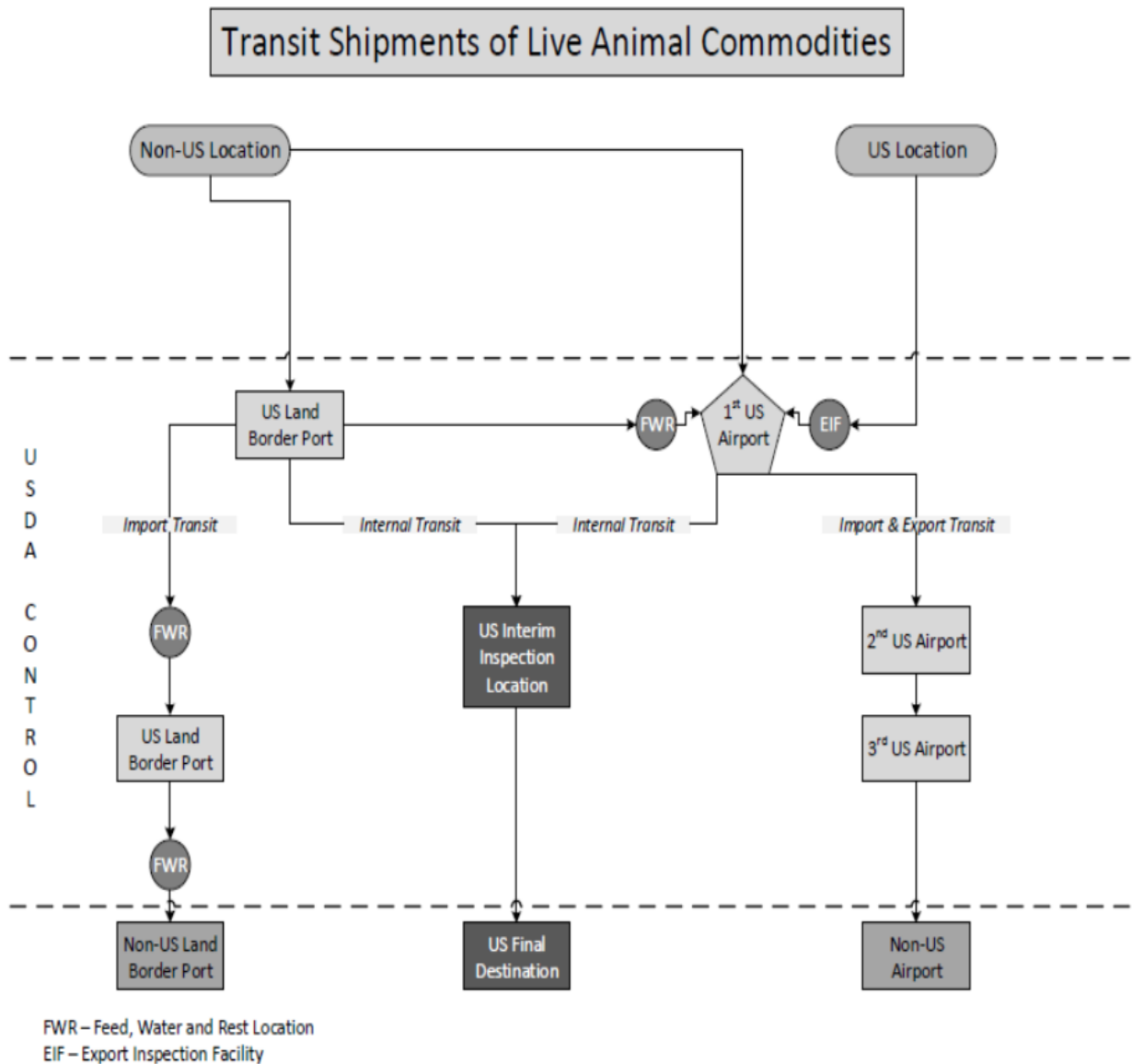
VS employees, other affected State and Federal agencies, and members of the public.

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6. Guidance



A. General

- 1) For the health and safety of transiting regulated animals through the United States, under the [Animal Health Protection Act \(2002\), 7 U.S.C. 8301 et. seq.](#) , APHIS will require the same standards that are required for the domestic movement of these animals.

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- 2) Regulated live animal commodities move internationally to and through the United States as:
 - a. Third-Country Import Transits (includes land import transits and land- air or airport to airport import transits through U.S. airports)
 1. These are shipments originating in a foreign country that move through one or more U.S. ports while transiting the United States to a third-country destination. Third-country import transits always involve a port of entry and a port of exit, which may be the same location or may involve numerous stopping points within the United States.
 2. The live animal commodities in these import transits are not eligible for release for entry into the United States. Import transits of live animal commodities must occur under an import permit.
 3. The commodities may not travel on the same conveyance with commodities released for entry into the United States and must be monitored by VS while moving through the United States. The VS Strategy & Policy (S&P) Live Animal Import staff has discretion to grant exceptions.
 - b. Internal Import Transits
 1. These are shipments originating in a foreign country, intended for import into the United States, but are transferred from the port of entry to a location such as an Animal Import Center (AIC), private quarantine facility, or other receiving destination where they receive clearance.
 2. Internal live animal commodity transits must occur under an import permit and otherwise meet U.S. import requirements.
 - c. Monitored Transits
 1. These are shipments under APHIS VS oversight, supervision, or other control of regulated live animal commodities while:
 - i. Moving through the United States to a designated point of exit.
 - ii. Moving under an import permit from the U.S. port of entry to another port or U.S. location where additional entry procedures, including any required inspections, treatments, or quarantine and release, will occur.

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3) Permits

- a. A VS S&P Live Animal Import permit team member or VS Field Operations port staff member issues import transit permits ([VS Form 17-135, U.S. Permit to Import](#)) for regulated live animal commodity shipments.
- b. Import transit permits list conditions applicable to each shipment. Importers or their agents should apply for such permits using [VS Form 17-129, Application for Import or In-Transit Permit](#), following [application guidelines](#) on the VS website.
 1. A written [Contingency Plan](#) must be submitted with all import transit permit applications. Contingency plans are procedures to be enacted when an emergency arises. Examples include prolonged aircraft ground delay, flight cancellations, accidents/breakdowns involving land import transits, inclement weather and other transport issues that may occur. During these situations, transporters may need to temporarily offload the animals, which should only be done in USDA-approved facilities. Permanent facilities do not exist at all USDA or USDA-approved locations or may be unavailable or inappropriate for the species in question. See Section D of this document for more detailed facility criteria.
 2. Import transit permit applications will not be processed until VS receives the complete contingency plan. All contingency plans submitted to VS must address the following items:
 - i. Emergency importer/broker/animal transporter contact information for the duration of the transit in the United States, from the port of entry until departure at the port of exit.
 - ii. Contact information for a USDA-accredited veterinarian available for emergencies during the entirety of import transits by land, and for each permitted port for transits by air.
 - iii. The importer's confirmation of a plan to provide water for the animals during import transit stops, should it be needed based on conditions and species.
 3. VS recommends a comprehensive contingency plan which also addresses the following items, but these details do not need to be included in the plan submitted to VS:
 - i. Transport conveyances/shipping containers.

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- ii. Loading densities and space requirements.
 - iii. Environmental/weather protections.
 - iv. Ventilation/air supply.
 - v. Feed supply.
 - vi. Management of animals that are sick, injured, or unable continue travel.
 - c. Importers or their agents must allow at least 7 to 10 business days for VS to process the permit.
 - d. The import transit permits must be issued before the shipment's expected arrival at the port of entry.
 - e. The Live Animal Import permit team will review and approve all non-routine transits and newly developed transit protocols.
- 4) Import transit permits are issued only when:
- a. VS has adequate personnel available at all applicable ports to inspect, monitor, and supervise the shipments.
 - b. Conflicting service requests do not exist (e.g., simultaneous imports or exports of similar species) at the same port facilities.
 - c. The shipper has submitted a contingency plan as outlined above and in accordance with the guidance found within the [Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits](#). The contingency plan must also comply with all applicable local, State, and other Federal requirements.
 - d. VS has the authority to designate a dedicated, secure facility or space at a port of entry (or other locations en route) to ensure the health and safety of import transit animals, if needed to plan for emergency situations with specific shipments.
- 5) If VS must enact a contingency plan and is not able to execute an importer's plan based on the information provided, VS may suspend or withdraw future import transit permits for that transit shipper until the shipper submits a revised contingency plan.

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B. Import Transits Through Airports

1) APHIS oversight of import transits and inspection at airports

- a. Unless the import transit permit specifically exempts it, VS must have continuous oversight of all regulated live animal commodity shipments throughout the import transit.
- b. VS personnel charged with monitoring an import transit shipment ensure continuity of control occurs until the shipment leaves the United States or arrives at the final approved port. Personnel must be aware of the commodities' location. VS personnel may seek temporary assistance from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or other Federal personnel working at the ports. However, VS personnel must supervise these personnel and are responsible for their work.

2) APHIS ensures that transiting animals:

- a. Are continuously confined aboard the conveyance under VS oversight.
- b. Are held for a relatively short period (subject to rare exceptions, at the discretion of the VS port Veterinarian in Charge) in a VS pre-approved dedicated and secure holding facility/space until transferred to the next conveyance.
- c. Continue to the next approved destination on the transit permit.
- d. Are refused entry, if deemed necessary and if feasible.

3) VS import transit shipment monitoring includes:

- a. Review of accompanying documents, such as import transit permits and health certificates, to verify presence and to confirm the shipment meets all applicable requirements. If the shipment does not meet these requirements, VS port personnel will work with the importer to correct discrepancies. If discrepancies are irreconcilable, they notify the Field Operations port Veterinarian in Charge, who will communicate with appropriate Live Animal Import personnel.
- b. Visual inspection of the animals by VS officials or their designates. If the animals appear diseased, VS port personnel notify the Field Operations port Veterinarian in Charge who communicates issues to appropriate Live Animal Import personnel and/or the Veterinarian in Charge of the final approved destination. VS Field Operations port personnel, at their discretion, contact

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the shipper's listed emergency contact and enact the pre-approved contingency plan (contingency plans are required to be submitted at the time of import permit application for review and approval).

- c. For animal import transits not meeting permit requirements, VS Field Operations port personnel, appropriate Live Animal Import personnel, and the Port Veterinarian in Charge may permit the shipment of permitted species for approved countries to continue movement to a USDA-approved quarantine facility and will notify S&P when this occurs.
- 4) Crates or cages holding transit animals must be sufficiently constructed to minimize escape, promote the animals' survival, and contain all animal waste and debris. All shipping containers should comply with [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\) Live Animal Regulations](#). VS may refuse entry to shipments not meeting these criteria.
- 5) Third-country import transits at airports. These shipments originate in a foreign country and move through one or more U.S. ports before exiting the United States en route to a third-country destination. (see flow diagram on page 2 of this guidance). The following applies:
 - b. Livestock and birds
 - 1. VS port personnel confirm the presence of U.S. import transit permit(s) and foreign health certificates for the shipment.
 - 2. VS port personnel monitor the animals for the duration of the time at the port as indicated on the import transit permit. VS port personnel have the discretion to stop monitoring when the airplane cargo doors are closed. In this case, VS port personnel must have a reliable way to receive notification of flight delays or cancellation, or the need to offload animals for any reason. VS must approve and oversee any offloading.
 - c. Poultry (hatching eggs and day-old chicks):
 - 1. Originating from countries other than Canada
VS port personnel monitor the transit in the same manner as for livestock and birds (see above).
 - 2. Poultry (hatching eggs and day-old chicks) originating from Canada

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On arrival, VS personnel inspect the shipment and verify that documents include Canadian health certificates and U.S. import transit permits.

- 6) Internal import transits at airports. VS will allow these shipments on a case-by-case basis for specific commodities for importation into the United States, but they may move through multiple domestic ports en route to the final port or another VS-approved facility for a more thorough or final inspection prior to release.
 - a. The import transit permit and other accompanying documents (such as an import protocol or compliance agreement) indicate the required documents, methods of monitoring the shipment, and location and time VS personnel will inspect the shipment.
 - b. VS may consider permission to continue to a USDA-approved quarantine facility for internal transit shipments containing dead animals (or, in the case of birds or aquatic animals, a higher-than-expected level of mortality for the species), or which could introduce disease. Continued movement is at the discretion of VS port personnel, appropriate Live Animal Import permitting team personnel, and the port Veterinarian in Charge of the quarantine facility. VS personnel monitoring these shipments should note any mortalities on the documents accompanying the shipment and work with appropriate Live Animal Import permitting team personnel and/or the VS Field Operations port Veterinarian in Charge to notify the destination. If applicable, necropsies of dead animals will be completed at the destination.

C. Criteria for Airport Import Transit Animal Holding Facilities

- 1) Transporters may offload regulated import animals transiting the United States for inspection. Animals may also be held in VS-approved facilities/spaces during emergencies or flight delays.
- 2) For animals to be offloaded or held at an airport, the port must have a facility capable of handling animals of that species. The port Veterinarian in Charge must approve the facility before the shipment arrives. The facility must be:
 - a. Sufficiently isolated and designated to ensure biosecurity including: Vector proofing (when applicable), preventing direct contact with all other animals, and limiting human contact with the regulated shipment.
 - b. Appropriately cleaned and disinfected.
 - c. Able to dispose of animal and bird excrement, bedding, shipping materials, and other wastes to prevent disease dissemination. Current disposal options

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include incineration and other methods acceptable under international regulated waste regulations.

- d. Able to supply animals with ample feed, water, and care.
 - e. Able to comply with any additional VS requirements for a particular shipment or species.
 - f. Able to comply with all applicable local, State, and Federal environmental quality requirements.
- 3) Similar standards must be met for emergency offloading of land import transit animals moving by land routes through the United States.
 - 4) Fish species VS regulates for spring viremia of carp may be allowed to remain at an approved holding facility for up to 7 days while in transit. See [9 CFR 93.901\(b\)\(4\)](#).
 - 5) VS will apply user fees to inspect, approve, and monitor such facilities per shipment, including verification of disinfection between shipments as VS requires.
 - 6) The importer, agent, or shipper must ensure that proposed facilities/spaces meet the above criteria before VS issues a transit permit or facilitates the import transit.

D. Export Transits at Airports

These shipments originate within the United States, proceed through an export inspection facility, and then go to an initial U.S. airport. They may move through other domestic ports, where VS considers them transits, before exiting the United States en route to a foreign country (see flow diagram on page 2 of this guidance). The following applies:

- 1) Livestock
 - a. At the initial U.S. port, VS port personnel follow routine export procedures for that commodity.
 - b. At subsequent ports through which the live animal commodity transits, VS port personnel may:
 - 1. Evaluate the animals after arrival. VS port personnel must have a reliable way to receive notification of flight delays or cancellation, or the need to offload animals for any reason. VS must approve and oversee any offloading.

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2. Refer to the [Export Notice of April 9, 2018](#), for further information.

2) Birds/ Poultry (hatching eggs and day-old chicks): VS does not conduct export transit monitoring.

E. Roles and Responsibilities at Airports

1) Importers, brokers, agents, or shippers must:

- a. Submit import transit permit applications to VS at least 7 to 10 business days before a regulated live animal transit shipment arrives.
- b. Coordinate with VS port personnel, through a service request at least 3 business days before the shipment's arrival to confirm port personnel availability, logistics, and payment method for applicable inspection fees.
- c. Provide VS with required entry documentation.
- d. Arrange for a [contingency plan](#) and facility or space (where there are no permanent facilities available). VS must approve the space before issuing the permit.
- e. Arrange for appropriate veterinary care, if needed, for the import transit animals.
- f. Provide VS port personnel with emergency contact information during the time of the shipment.
- g. Arrange to pay all fees incurred.

2) Live Animal Imports will:

- a. Serve as subject matter experts on live animal import transit matters.
- b. Set transit requirements based on disease risk.
- c. Identify risk mitigation methods.
- d. Identify countries affected by diseases making them ineligible to export specified live animal commodities to the United States. Animals may not transit these countries en route to the United States.

3) The Live Animal Imports permit team will:

- a. Review import transit permit applications and submitted contingency plans.

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- b. Determine the shipment's eligibility for the import transit requested including ensuring that animals do not originate from or transit countries not eligible to export similar commodities to the United States.
 - c. Consult with VS Field Operations port personnel to ensure ports have adequate staff and review submitted contingency plans.
 - d. Issue the appropriate permits and collect associated user fees.
 - e. Fully inform field VS port personnel regarding additional or non-routine required documents and content, including certifications and health certificate test results, for the shipment.
 - f. Specify additional import transit permit restrictions case by case.
 - g. Provide the final import transit permits to importers or their agents, VS port personnel, and any applicable interim inspection locations required by the transit permit conditions.
- 4) VS Field Operations port personnel will:
- a. Confirm, on request of the Live Animal Imports permitting team, that the Field Operations port Veterinarian in Charge has validated the shipper has an adequate contingency plan.
 - b. Confirm that importers or brokers have arranged for shipment inspection and payment for expected VS services.
 - c. Review required documents (such as import transit permits, health certificates, and declarations of importation) accompanying the shipment. If personnel note discrepancies, they must notify their supervisory chain.
 - d. Review the shipment's travel route to the port to confirm that animals did not originate from or transit countries not eligible to export similar commodities to the United States.
 - e. Inspect shipments and confirm that the animals appear healthy for further travel.
 - f. Verify that current seals on shipments and any seal changes match accompanying paperwork, if applicable.
 - g. Offload animals as needed. Seals, if present, may be broken as needed. Supervise proper reloading onto a conveyance if applicable.

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- h. Re-seal the conveyance with USDA seals, if necessary. Indicate seal number changes on [VS 1-27 \(Permit for Movement of Animals\)](#) forms accompanying the shipment.
 - i. Review feed, water, and rest logs for the time the shipment was within U.S. borders.
 - j. Complete and return any VS 1-27 forms to the originating port, if applicable. Correspond with the port of entry regarding the animals' condition.
- F. Disinfection of Conveyances, Shipping Containers, Other Equipment, and Contingency Facilities/Space Used for Import Transit Animals.
 - 1) Consult the following regulations and VS Guidance for additional information on inspecting, cleaning, and disinfecting animal conveyances and/or shipping containers:
 - a. [9 CFR 93.202](#), [93.302](#), [93.402](#), [93.502](#), and [93.904](#).
 - b. [VSG 13803.1, Contaminated Aircraft Cleaning, Decontaminating, and Inspection](#).
 - c. [VSG 13804.1, Disinfection of Animal Embryo or Semen Containers Returned to the United States](#).
 - 2) VS Field Operations port personnel should oversee disinfection of conveyances, permanent or contingency facilities/spaces, equipment, or other physical materials associated with transit shipments or supervise personnel hired to do so.
 - 3) Shippers should arrange in advance to adequately contain and dispose of wastewater from cleaning and disinfection procedures. Such liquid should be directed into municipal or private sewage systems and treated with chlorine or other means to neutralize pathogens such as viruses or bacteria. Subject to applicable Federal, State, or local ordinances, wastewater may be suctioned or otherwise directed into portable containers and disinfected onsite.
 - 4) Any contractors or subcontractors performing disinfecting work should sign a service agreement. At a minimum, these agreements should require VS to perform or supervise the following:
 - a. Meet and board the conveyance after CBP clearance as outlined in [VSG 13803.1](#), if applicable.
 - b. Examine the cargo and the conveyance for contamination.

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- c. If the conveyance or any item on it (such as feed, bedding, or riding equipment) is contaminated with any materials, such as manure or soil, that could spread diseases, prevent the shipper from offloading any animals or other cargo from any contaminated area until personnel remove all contaminants and disinfect the affected area.
- d. If the conveyance is not obviously contaminated, allow the shipper to offload the animals or other cargo.
- e. Either clean and disinfect the conveyance or notify a service contractor to clean and disinfect the conveyance. The cleaner must use an approved cleaning agent to remove organic material followed by use of an approved disinfectant. Refer to [9 CFR 71.10](#) for approved disinfectants. [VS Guidance 13803.1](#) lists cleaning and disinfection instructions for aircraft.
- f. After cleaning and disinfecting the conveyance, VS personnel or designees will visually inspect animals to determine health status for further movement. Inspect animals in shipping containers, in transport vans, or in examination pens as appropriate. The conveyance may be reloaded if applicable.
- g. Dispose of boots and coveralls of anyone in contact with the inside of the conveyance or examination pen in a biosecure manner or remove visible organic matter and disinfect using an agent listed in [9 CFR 71.10](#).
- h. Place any removable equipment service contractors will clean (such as shipping stalls, reusable crates, etc.) near an electrical outlet so the contractors can vacuum the equipment after removing the bulk of the waste material.
- i. Monitor the cleaning and disinfection process. Inspect conveyances and equipment on completing cleaning and disinfection.
- j. If the contractor does not clean the conveyance/equipment/contingency facility/space to the VS inspector's satisfaction, the inspector instructs the contractor to repeat the cleaning process.
- k. Once VS approves the cleaning and disinfection, issue a VS Form 1-86A (Cleaned, Washed, Disinfected tag) for the conveyance and, if applicable, for each stall or piece of equipment cleaned. Give the contractor the form originals. VS retains a log of VS 1-86A forms issued for a minimum for 3 years.

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G. Import Transits Through Land Border Ports

Live animal commodities originating in Canada may enter the United States at land border ports designated in [9 CFR 93.102](#), [9 CFR 93.203¹](#), [9 CFR 93.303](#), [9 CFR 93.403](#), [9 CFR 93.503](#), [9 CFR 93.703](#), [9 CFR 93.805](#), [9 CFR 93.902](#) and transit the United States en route to a third country. These shipments exit the United States at a U.S. airport or at another U.S. land border port (see flow diagram on page 2). Unless the transit permit exempts it, VS personnel must monitor regulated live animal commodity shipments throughout the import transit.

This section covers third country import transit shipments both entering and exiting the United States at land border ports. This section also includes guidelines for import (internal) transits entering at U.S. land border ports and proceeding to an approved U.S. interim destination for full inspection and clearance.

1) Permits and other forms at land border ports

a. Importers, agents, or shippers:

1. Apply for an import transit permit through Live Animal Imports or the Field Operations port permitting team sufficiently in advance to allow the permit to accompany the shipment. Importers, agents, or shippers must apply for the permit at least 7 to 10 business days before the shipment arrives ([Import Notice - Live Animal Import and Transit Permits](#)).
2. Provide Field Operations port personnel with appropriate documentation including a valid import transit permit, a [VS 17-29 \(Declaration of Importation\)](#), copies of valid health certificates, and feed, water, and rest (FWR) logs. Transit shipments will be required to meet U.S. animal transport regulations, including requirements for FWR.
3. If applicable, identify an approved FWR facility for the shipment. If an approved facility does not exist in the geographic area through which the shipment will travel, importers must locate a suitable facility and complete the approval process before receiving a transit permit.
4. APHIS has posted [a list of approved FWR facilities](#) to its website for the convenience of importers, shippers, and agents.

b. Live Animal Imports or the Field Operations port permit issuing team will:

1. Determine the shipment's eligibility for transit.

¹ Unless the ports are closed owing to understaffing, underuse, or other reasons.

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2. Determine that the type, size, and number of animals on the proposed shipment and weather conditions at the time of shipment are not likely to endanger the animals' fitness to travel.
 3. Consult with port personnel or port services offices to ensure the availability of staff and facilities.
 4. Issue the appropriate import transit permit including case-by-case specification of any special conditions or restrictions.
 5. Provide import transit permits to importers, Port Services offices, VS port personnel, and any applicable FWR stations or interim inspection locations. Permits must clearly indicate locations for mandated stops at FWR stations.
- c. Field Operations port (entry or exit) personnel will:
1. Review import transit permit conditions before the load arrives to confirm the type, size, and number of animals on the proposed shipment.
 2. Notify the Live Animal permit team or the Field Operations Port Services office if they have not received transit permits 1 or 2 days before a shipment with an appointment arrives. Importers must apply for permits at least 7 to 10 business days prior to the shipment of their commodity ([\(Import Notice - Live Animal Import and Transit Permits\)](#)).
 3. Verify adequacy of documents presented with the shipment, including import transit permits, health certificates, [VS 17-29 \(Declaration of Importation\)](#) forms (port of entry only), [VS 17-30 \(Report of Animals, Poultry, or Eggs Offered for Importation\)](#) forms, [VS 1-27 \(Permit for Movement of Animals\) forms](#), and FWR logs.
 4. Review the shipment's route to the port to confirm that animals did not originate from or transit countries not eligible to export similar commodities to the United States.
 5. If the shipment is fit for further travel, complete [VS 17-30, VS 1-27, VS 17-41 \(Notice of Animals Not Shipped\)](#) (port of exit only) with comments regarding the animals' condition and user fee statements as appropriate.
 6. If personnel refuse entry to all or part of the shipment or deem it unfit for further travel, complete [VS 17-41 \(port of exit only\)](#). List refusal reasons in the [Veterinary Services Processing System \(VSPS\)](#) (at the port of entry) as appropriate.

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2) Noncompliant Shipments

- a. If a shipment cannot meet one of the above conditions for any reason (including unavailability of an approved holding center) or is otherwise not eligible to transit the United States, a “transit” designation will not be allowed, and the shipment must be refused entry or imported into the United States. When qualified, the shipment may be exported from the United States as a U.S. commodity.
- b. The export of the newly qualified U.S. commodity must comply with [9 CFR Part 91](#), with paperwork (the [VS Form 17-41](#)) needed for the export dependent on the animal health requirements of the United States as well as the country of destination.

H. Scheduling and Notification at Land Border Ports

1) Importers, agents, or shippers will:

- a. Coordinate with Field Operations personnel at ports of entry, ports of exit, and any FWR facilities or other designated facilities (internal transits) to confirm logistics at least 72 hours in advance of a shipment’s arrival.
- b. Arrange for a contingency facility or space.
- c. Review appropriate loading densities for the species being shipped, and fitness-to-load, plus weather conditions potentially affecting the health and safety of the animals for the projected transport period.

2) Port (entry or exit) personnel will:

- a. Respond to special import transit load scheduling requests. Shippers may have little control over flight scheduling or entering foreign countries. Minimize wait times for animals in transit when reasonably possible.
- b. Via schedule management, attempt to limit contact of import transit loads at the port with conveyances containing slaughter, mixed source and/or untested animals. Animals transiting to a third country may have extremely high health status which may be jeopardized by close contact with animals of lower health status. If limiting contact is not feasible, inform importers or their agents that import transit loads may be near to conveyances containing animals of lower health status.
- c. If needed, confirm subsequent stops (FWR stops, ports of exit and/or interim inspection locations for internal transfers) that the importer or his or her

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agent has made appropriate appointments for the shipment. These arrangements are typically confirmed before permit issuance.

I. Monitoring and Inspection at Land Border Ports

1) Importers, agents, or shippers should:

- a. Carry adequate equipment and supplies for watering and feeding animals en route.
- b. Arrive on time for their inspection appointment. If this is not possible, notify entry and exit ports, FWR stops, and/or interim inspection facilities and reschedule the appointment.

2) Field Operations port (entry or exit) personnel will:

- a. Inspect shipments and confirm that animals appear healthy to travel.
- b. Verify that identification matches health certificates on a small percentage of animals, as applicable.
- c. Refuse entry or further travel to animals appearing unhealthy to travel or not matching animal IDs listed on health certificates.
- d. Verify that current seals on the shipment and any seal changes match accompanying paperwork.
- e. Offload animals as needed. Break Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) seals, if present, as needed. Supervise proper reloading onto the conveyance if applicable.
- f. Review FWR logs for the time the shipment was within U.S. borders (port of exit).
- g. Seal or re-seal the conveyance. If CFIA seals appropriately seal the trailer, these seals may remain in place with their numbers recorded. CFIA seals may be used in place of, or with, USDA seals on these vehicles.
- h. If the shipment is fit for further travel, complete [VS 17-30, VS 1-27, VS 17-41 \(port of exit\)](#) with comments regarding the animals' condition and user fee statements as appropriate.
- i. If the shipment or part of the shipment is refused entry or deemed unfit for further travel, complete [VS 17-41 \(port of exit\)](#) or refusal reasons in [VSPS \(port of entry\)](#).

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J. Feed, Water, and Rest Requirements and Locations for Regulated Animals After Entering at Land Border Ports

- 1) U.S. domestic animal movement regulations, [49 U.S.C. 80502](#), require that transporters not confine animals for more than 28 consecutive hours without unloading for feed, water, and rest. The feed, water, and rest period may take place inside the transport conveyance if all the animals have room to lie down at the same time. Time spent unloading and reloading is not included as part of a confinement period. Animals should be unloaded humanely into pens equipped for feeding, watering, and resting for at least 5 consecutive hours at the owner's or agent's expense.
- 2) Import transit animals will be required by APHIS to meet equivalent standards while in the United States to maintain the health safety and status of the transit animals under [Animal Health Protection Act \(2002\), 7 U.S.C. 8301 et. seq.](#).
- 3) For reference: APHIS placed its Twenty-Eight Hour Law policy statement at [9 CFR part 89](#). It can be summarized as follows:
 - a. **Feed.** The amount of feed required for livestock in transit should sustain the animals until the next feeding station or destination. Feed amounts for various species and quantities of livestock appear in a table at [9 CFR 89.1](#). If further delays in movement of animals occur, or if animals remain at a feeding station 12 hours after the previous feeding, feed again. Transporters may feed animals in the conveyance if there is ample room for all animals to lie down at the same time. Evenly distribute feed throughout the conveyance.
 - b. **Water.** Livestock should be furnished enough clean, potable water so that all animals can drink their fill. In cold weather, water should be free of ice. Troughs or other drinking receptacles should be clean. Transporters may water animals on the conveyance.
 - c. **Rest.** Pens or other enclosures should have:
 1. Sufficient space for all animals to lie down at the same time.
 2. Properly designed equipment for feeding and watering the animals.
 3. Well drained, clean, and safe floors.
 4. Appropriate protection from weather reasonably expected in the region.
 - d. If animals will be unloaded, use APHIS-approved facilities.

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- e. Transporters may find [a current list of APHIS-approved FWR facilities](#) on the APHIS website for use by transit livestock.
 - 4) If animals are unloaded for feed, water, and rest, VS personnel or designates must:
 - a. Verify that seals on the conveyance match those on accompanying documents.
 - b. Break seals and supervise offloading into a VS-approved FWR facility.
 - c. Ensure that transporters have fed, watered, and rested animals as described in [9 CFR part 89](#) as summarized above.
 - d. Supervise reloading of animals onto the conveyance.
 - e. Apply new seals to the conveyance where necessary. VS and/or CFIA seals, which appropriately sealed the conveyance on arrival at the FWR facility, may remain in place. VS personnel or designates may use additional USDA seals to seal any doors opened to allow unloading of animals.
 - f. Note new seal numbers on the [VS 1-27](#) accompanying the load.
 - 5) The applicable Field Operations Service Center may designate a facility for use during emergencies such as mechanical breakdowns or accidents. When transporters reload the shipment for further movement, personnel should reseal the conveyance and note any seal changes on the accompanying [VS 1-27](#).
 - 6) Refer to [VS Guidance 6002.1, Determination of the Seriousness of Alleged Violations of Statutes and Regulations Administered by Veterinary Services and Enforcement Actions](#), when an investigation is warranted.
- K. Communication at Land Border Ports
- 1) The Live Animal Imports or Field Operations port permit team will:
 - a. Provide to importers, port services offices, VS port personnel, and any applicable FWR stations or interim inspection locations the permit or permits associated with the import transit. Permits will clearly indicate locations for mandated FWR stops for specific species.
 - b. If the route requires an FWR stop, or a contingency offload, the permit issuing office will require the applicant to identify a location for the stop and will work with VS personnel in that State to inspect and approve the location as needed in advance of the import transit.

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- c. Ascertain that the importer has scheduled appointments with VS ports and applicable FWR stations or interim inspection locations.
- 2) VS Field Operations port of **entry** personnel will:
 - a. Provide to the port of exit, FWR stations, and/or interim inspection locations the following:
 - 1. The [VS 17-30](#), which shows the importer's contact information, type and number of animals, and time of the shipment's clearance at the port of entry.
 - 2. The [VS 1-27](#).
 - 3. The import transit permit.
 - 4. An estimated time of arrival at subsequent ports or FWR facilities obtained from the load driver.
 - 5. A statement on the animals' condition, especially if there is a concern with adverse temperatures and potential severe weather conditions later in the trip.
 - b. Communicate with the importer, the CFIA, and Live Animal Imports and Field Operations port permit team (if applicable) regarding negative outcomes of import transit loads.
 - c. Retain completed [VS 1-27s](#), [VS 17-41s](#), and any correspondence regarding condition of the animals with the remaining documents for the shipment.
- 3) The Field Operations port of **exit**, and/or APHIS approved FWR stations used by import transit animal transporters, and/or interim inspection locations will:
 - a. Provide to the port of entry the completed [VS 1-27](#), and a [VS 17-41](#) for each shipment. Comments on the condition of the animals, particularly if there are negative outcomes, should be listed on the [VS 1-27](#) form or a written addendum attached to the VS 1-27 form. Enter a notation in the [VSPS](#) system concerning the issue or issues.
 - b. Retain completed [VS 1-27s](#), [VS 17-41s](#), and any correspondence regarding condition of the animals with the remaining documents for the shipment.
 - c. Contact Live Animal Imports concerning serious transport health and safety issues, especially increased incidences of animal deaths, unexpected numbers of deaths, or downed/ debilitated animals.

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- d. Any euthanasia of downed or debilitated animals should also be recorded on the [VS 1-27](#). The total listed on the VS 1-27 should be marked received, regardless of health status and the VS 17-41 should be used to account for those not shipped.

7. Inquiries

For questions related to this document, please contact: Field Operations Port Services [Port Information](#), or Strategy and Policy, Live Animal Imports VS.Live.Animal.Import.Export@aphis.usda.gov.