Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

Notice to Industry   23/2009

Changes to AQIS Documentation Requirements for the Clearance of Imported Cargo

This notice is to advise that AQIS has recently undertaken a review of the documentary requirements for the clearance of imported cargo. The purpose of the review was to clarify and simplify the 'rules' under which documents used for the clearance of imported cargo were either acceptable or unacceptable to AQIS.

The review was conducted in consultation with industry and has resulted in the development of two new policies:

1. **Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy**

   This policy defines the minimum requirements for documentation presented to AQIS to support the risk assessment of imported cargo and non-commodity concerns, whether for quarantine or imported foods purposes.

2. **Non-Commodity Information Requirements Policy**

   This policy defines the information requirements that must be met to support the assessment of non-commodity concerns associated with imported cargo. It covers the type of consignment, the types of packaging materials used in the consignment, and the container cleanliness statement.

These two policy documents will support the decision making process when assessing the documentation associated with the clearance of imported cargo.

Impact on existing publications

Cargo Containers – Quarantine Aspects and Procedures
The AQIS publication 'Cargo Containers – Quarantine Aspects and Procedures' has served as a source of information on the clearance of imported containerised cargo, packaging and dunnage, and acceptable treatments.

Broker Accreditation Scheme (BAS) Resources Document
For brokers accredited under the Broker Accreditation Scheme (BAS), the Containerised Cargo Clearance Resources Document served the same purpose as the Cargo Containers – Quarantine Aspects and Procedures document.

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The new policy documents will replace much of the information currently contained in these two documents. Information in these documents not replaced by the policy documents will remain publically available through the AQIS website.

The new policy documents will become the 'one stop' standard reference documents for all AQIS clients presenting documents to AQIS for clearance of imported goods.

What are the major changes under the new policies?

To highlight the major changes in the assessment of documentation for the clearance of imported cargo, a table showing these changes has been included as Attachment A to this notice.

Action required

Importers and brokers are strongly encouraged to advise their overseas clients and suppliers of these impending documentary changes to assist them to comply with the new policies. AQIS will accept documentation issued in compliance with the new policies immediately where indicated with an asterisk (*) in Attachment A. However, accredited brokers operating under a current Compliance Agreement must continue to assess documentation in line with the current assessment requirements of that *Scheme*.

Implementation

The proposed implementation date for the new policies is **1 August 2009.**

To allow sufficient time for the reissue of Annual Packing Declarations, there will be a phase in period where the revised requirements will not be enforced for Annual Packing Declarations until 1 January 2010.

Information Updates

AQIS will be issuing further industry notices during the implementation period to ensure that industry is kept informed of progress and actions that need to be taken.

Enquiries

All enquiries regarding the impact of the non-commodity documentation requirements on the Broker Accreditation Scheme (BAS) should be directed to the Industry Partnerships Unit, AQIS Canberra by email at brokeraccred@aqis.gov.au.

Other enquiries should be directed to the Entry Management Team, AQIS Canberra by email at entrymanagement@aqis.gov.au.

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	Current Documentary Requirements	New Documentary Requirements	Policy
New terminology	'General Requirements' for non-commodity documentation.	*Changed to 'Overarching Requirements' applicable to all documents.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy
	'Specific Requirements' and 'Critical Fields' applicable to specific documents.	These requirements for specific documents have been combined and re-named 'Prescribed Information Requirements' which are applicable to the specific documents.	
Documents – must be in English	All critical fields for a document must be in English. The exceptions are: • A letterhead need not be in English; and • A critical field need not be in English if it appears in the Translation Tables in the CCC Resources Document.	*All 'prescribed information' required to be on a document must be in English. The only exception is that the company letterhead does not need to be translated into English but must be in English characters.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy
Non-commodity concern statements	Not applicable.	*Declarations relating to the type of packaging and dunnage used in a consignment will be called the 'Non-Commodity Concern Statements'.	Non-commodity Information Requirements Policy
Container cleanliness statements	A container cleanliness declaration is applicable to all containerised consignments except LCL.	*Changed to the 'Container Cleanliness Statement' and is mandatory for all containerised consignments except LCL, ISO tanks, and hard frozen containers.	Non-commodity Information Requirements Policy
Prohibited packaging materials statement	A straw packaging declaration is required for all containerised cargo consignments.	Changed to the 'Prohibited packaging materials statement' to include other materials that cannot be used as packaging materials in consignments.	Non-commodity Information Requirements Policy
Who can issue Packing Declarations & Annual Packing Declarations?	It is implied but not specified that packing declarations must be provided by the packer or supplier of the goods.	*Annual Packing Declarations and consignment specific Packing Declarations **must be issued by the packer or supplier of the goods.**	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy

	Current Documentary Requirements	New Documentary Requirements	Policy
Newly manufactured plywood/veneer products declaration	Newly manufactured plywood/veneer products declaration is accepted for packaging and dunnage made from plywood/veneer.	*The newly manufactured plywood/veneer products declaration **is no longer acceptable for packaging and dunnage.** Packaging and dunnage made from plywood/veneer must be declared as timber packaging and is subject to mandatory treatment.	AQIS Import Conditions database (ICON)
Treatments – Validity Requirements	"Containerisation/shipment" dates are currently being used to calculate whether or not the treatment date is acceptable.	*Treatments must meet the **Validity Requirements**, which states that 'all treatments must be performed by an acceptable treatment provider within the mandated timeframe prior to export as outlined in the applicable import conditions'.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy
Methyl bromide fumigation certificates – plastic wrapping declaration	A plastic wrapping declaration is currently not a mandatory requirement on all methyl bromide fumigation certificates.	*All treatment certificates issued for the fumigations using methyl bromide must include a Plastic Wrap Declaration.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy
ISPM 15 treatment certificates	AQIS currently accepts ISPM 15 declarations on a Packing Declaration, a Phytosanitary Certificate or a treatment certificate.	*Treatment certificates for ISPM 15 treatments **will no longer be accepted**.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy
Permanent preservative treatment certificates	Treatment certificates for approved permanent preservatives must state the name of the preservative used, the chemical composition of the preservative, and the retention rate.	AQIS will continue to accept certificates for permanent preservative treatments using the existing format and information (until further notice). From August 2009 AQIS will also accept a treatment certificate stating that the treatment complies with Australian Standard AS1604.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy
Import permits – validity requirements	The validity period of an import permit is currently specified on the permit.	*All import permits must meet an additional validity requirement in that the permit must be valid at the time the goods are landed.	Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy