

AQIS Fact Sheet

Traditional Diwali gifts and quarantine risks



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine
and Inspection Service

Why is AQIS interested in items mailed to Australia during the Diwali festival?

Diwali is an important festival that involves the exchange of gifts. Some gifts that contain quarantine risk items could introduce pests and diseases, having devastating effects for Australia's import and export markets.

AQIS manages quarantine controls at our borders to minimise the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia. Part of AQIS's role is to check international mail arriving in Australia for anything containing prohibited items.

What type of items are seized?

During the Diwali festival, typical gifts that could be seized consist of prohibited:

- Indian sweets such as: barfi, ras malai, gulab jamun and pedas
- products containing dairy
- fresh and dried fruit
- nuts, seeds, herbs, spices and tea
- plants, flowers and plant material.

How can I help reduce the risk of pests and diseases entering Australia?

If you are expecting mail from overseas, you should familiarise yourself with what cannot be sent to Australia. You should also advise your family and friends not to send prohibited items and to correctly fill in the declaration form, by accurately listing the contents of each parcel including packing material. This includes items such as: plant material, animal products or food including spices, seeds, nuts, dried fruit or Indian sweets.

What happens to mail detained for quarantined reasons?

If you are the recipient of international mail you will be notified by AQIS of the removal or seizure of any items from your parcel. Items will only be held for 30 days and depending on the risk, you will be given the option to:

- pay for the item to be treated make it safe
- pay to re-export the item, or
- have the item destroyed by AQIS.

For serious breaches of Australian Quarantine laws, you could be prosecuted and face fines of over A\$60 000 or 10 years imprisonment which may result in a criminal record.

For more information about quarantine:

- Visit www.aqis.gov.au/mail
- Download or request a copy of the What Can't Be Mailed To Australia? brochure
- Call AQIS on 1800 020 504 (free call in Australia).