



Changes to AQIS documentation requirements for the clearance of imported cargo Frequently Asked Questions

Updated August 2010

IMPLEMENTATION

When are the new policies effective?

The *Minimum Documentary Requirements* (Version 1.5) and *Non-Commodity Information Requirements* (Version 1.6) policies became effective 1 July 2010.

A table highlighting the *Minimum Documentary Requirements* and *Non-Commodity Information Requirements* amendments can be found alongside each policy.

Please note that the previously advised conditions applying to wrapping declarations for Fumigation Certificates remain in place. Refer to page five 'Methyl Bromide Fumigation Certificates.'

AQIS will continue to consider comments received on the policies and will further clarify and enhance the policies as appropriate to improve guidance and conformity.

I am an accredited broker, how do the changes affect me?

All accredited brokers will have completed AQIS training (online or face-to-face) that aligned with the policy requirements and the compliance agreement. Accredited brokers must continue to comply with the requirements of their compliance agreement.

EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS AND TEMPLATES

Has AQIS issued any templates/sample documents?

[Example packing declarations](#) and treatment certificates that meet the requirements of the policies have been published on the AQIS website under [Co-Regulation Import Schemes](#).

Note: Whilst the example templates of acceptable documents issued by AQIS contain the required information, **the formats are not mandatory**, e.g. Packing declarations will not be rejected if they fail to include a "not applicable" box for the bark and/or ISPM 15 statements. Brokers, importers, suppliers and treatment providers can continue to create their own documents, provided that the documentation and information complies with the policies.

ANNUAL PACKING DECLARATIONS (APDs)

How has implementation of the amendments to the policies affected APDs?

Please see the "Amendments Table" for information relating to the amendments made to the policies.

What has been the changes to the validity statement and validity requirements for the Annual Packing Declaration (APD) template?

The validity statement is no longer required on the APD template as the Exporter and Importer details will provide the necessary consignment linkage.

The Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy has been amended to provide further clarity being that Annual Packing Declarations must be valid at the time of assessment and lodgment of the entry.

Why has the validity statement been re-instated for the Annual Packing Declaration (APD) template?

The Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy has re-instated the validity statement to clarify that Annual Packing Declarations must be valid at the time of assessment and lodgement of the entry.

PACKING DECLARATIONS

Do the non-commodity statements need to be word-for-word?

Word-for-word non-commodity statements should be used where possible. However slight variations that still meet the policy requirements may be accepted. For example:

Is all timber packaging/dunnage used in this consignment free from bark?

or *All timber packaging/dunnage used in this shipment is free from bark*

For annual packing declarations, acceptable alternative statements may include:

The container covered by this document has been cleaned and is free from material of animal and/or plant origin and soil

or *The container covered by this document will be cleaned and will be free from material of animal and/or plant origin and soil*

Please Note: If a broker is unsure if the Non-Commodity statements meet the policy requirements they should volunteer the entry to AQIS.

Can additional statements in accordance with New Zealand requirements be added to Australian packing declarations?

Yes, provided that all the Australian requirements for packing declarations are met in accordance with policy requirements. Additional statements for New Zealand may be included for dual import consignments.

I have an LCL shipment destined for Australia and the cargo is packed to ensure that no wood is used in the consignment. It is then delivered to the LCL consolidator who packs it into the container. As I am not the packer how am I to communicate the information required on the packing declaration?

The Packing Declaration is to be issued by the **packer** or **supplier** of the goods. It is in the client's best interest that the declarations are made by the person who is in the best position to most accurately declare what is in the actual consignment.

If I answer NO to the timber packaging/dunnage statement on an APD or consignment specific Packing Declaration, how do I answer the ISPM15 and bark statements?

If suppliers or packers answer **NO** to the timber packaging/dunnage statement, for the ISPM15 and bark statements they may:

- a) Remove the ISPM15 and bark statements from the document;
- b) Not answer the ISPM15 and bark statements;
- c) Answer the statements with **Not Applicable** (N/A).

Providing one of the above responses in this scenario will avoid confusion for AQIS and accredited persons who are assessing the Packing Declarations. Clients are asked to remember that the ISPM15 and bark statements are required **only** where timber packaging and dunnage has been declared.

My Packer/Supplier has answered NO to the Timber packaging/dunnage statement on an APD or consignment specific Packing Declaration, however they have also ticked the subsequent bark statement or ISPM statement. How will this be assessed by AQIS?

AQIS will accept the Packing Declaration if the Packer/Supplier has ticked 'No' to the Timber statement but ticked the subsequent bark statement box or ISPM 15 statement box. AQIS will continue to advise clients that they should be accessing the new templates and ticking the N/A box for future consignments to avoid this issue.

If I answer 'Yes' to the timber packaging/dunnage statement on an APD or consignment specific Packing Declaration and 'Yes' to ISPM15 statement, how do I answer the bark statements?

If suppliers or packers answer 'yes' to the timber packaging/dunnage statement and 'yes' to ISPM15 it is recommended that they also tick 'yes' to the bark statements.

My Packer/Supplier has declared ISPM 15 Compliant Timber packaging/dunnage on an APD or consignment specific Packing Declaration, however they have not ticked the subsequent bark statement. How will this be assessed by AQIS or the Broker?

If timber packaging/dunnage is declared as ISPM 15 compliant and the bark statement is not completed then the AQIS officer or broker should accept the packing declaration (annual or consignment specific) as being compliant with AQIS requirements.

Do the letterhead contact details for the packer/supplier have to be an overseas address or will the Australian Head Office contact details be sufficient?

AQIS will accept the Australian Head Office contact details.

Note: *AQIS officers may request further information to satisfy the documentation requirements. The power for a Quarantine Officer to request further information is provided for under the Quarantine Act 1908.*

Why has the requirement for wall lining declarations been removed from the policy?

Following the low incidence of plywood lined shipping containers imported into Australia, AQIS, in consultation with industry, has concluded that plywood lined shipping containers will now be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Note: *Whilst the container wall lining statement requirement has been removed from this policy, documentation that continues to include this statement will still be accepted.*

NON-COMMODITY CONCERN STATEMENTS

What are the changes to the requirements for the Container Cleanliness Statements?

Container Cleanliness Statements, previously known as Cleanliness Declarations, are required for all FCL or FCX consignments. The statement must be declared on a document listed in the AQIS [Non-Commodity Information Requirements Policy](#).

How has the straw packaging statement requirements changed?

The straw packaging statement has been changed to the 'Prohibited Packaging Material Statement'. The scope of the statement has been extended to include other materials that cannot be used as packaging materials. Further information about packaging materials can be found in the import conditions database (ICON) on the AQIS website at [ICON: Packaging materials for general use](#).

CHANGES TO THE CARGO CONTAINERS: QUARANTINE ASPECTS AND PROCEDURES (CC-QAP) MANUAL

How does this affect the new policies?

For further clarification on the CC-QAP changes please refer to the [Notice to Industry 28/2009](#).

EMBOSSSED SEALS ON GOVERNMENT CERTIFICATES

What do I do if the only Official seal on a certificate is embossed and not visible when photocopied, faxed, or scanned?

If you are faxing or e-mailing a scanned Government certificate that only has an embossed official seal, it may not be possible for AQIS to see the seal and verify the document as authentic. To overcome this issue, AQIS recommends lightly shading over the embossing with a lead pencil to make it visible when electronically transmitting.

ISPM15 REQUIREMENTS

What do the changes mean for the [ISPM15](#) treatment certificates and declaration requirements?

ISPM15 requires that the treatment provider must treat the timber and mark the timber with the approved stamp/markings that will identify the treatment provider and the treatment used.

The requirements for timber packaging material used in an imported containerised cargo consignment remain unchanged. The statement indicating whether all the timber packaging/dunnage used is ISPM15 compliant is still required.

ISPM15 compliance declaration can only be certified on

- a) packing declaration (either annual or single consignment); or
- b) a packing list; or
- c) an invoice; or
- d) a phytosanitary certificate.

Please refer to the AQIS [Non-Commodity Information Requirements Policy](#) for additional information.

If timber is not marked with ISPM15 stamps but has been treated by an AQIS approved method, the packer or supplier cannot declare that the timber used is ISPM15 compliant. The packer or supplier will need to ensure that an appropriate treatment certificate for that consignment is provided to AQIS.

Note: If a misleading ISPM15 statement is declared by the packer or supplier it will result in a profile being raised.

What is the difference between the terms 'ISPM15 declaration' and 'ISPM15 treatments'?

The ISPM15 declaration is when the packer/supplier declares that all timber packing/dunnage used in the consignment has been treated and marked in compliance with ISPM15.

The ISPM15 treatments are the actual treatments performed (and marked) on the timber (e.g. heat treatment or methyl bromide).

IMPORT PERMIT VALIDITY REQUIREMENT

The new documentary requirements state that an Import Permit “...may only be used by (or on behalf of) the person or entity named as the importer and must be valid at the time the cargo is landed.” How does this impact the importer?

If the goods arrive into Australia and an expired import permit is produced to AQIS front counter or no import permit is produced and is required as per the import conditions, the case will be referred to the National Program manager for consideration. Please note that permission to grant a post arrival permit is unlikely.

It is in the importers best interest to ensure an Import Permit is obtained or will be valid on arrival before the goods are exported, to avoid delays or export on arrival. This is particularly important as import conditions for the goods may have changed within the permits lifetime, and different certification or documentation could be required.

TREATMENT CERTIFICATES

What will the requirements be for a plastic wrap statement?

All treatment certificates issued for fumigations using methyl bromide will require a statement relating to the use of plastic wrapping in the consignment. Clients will need to ensure that the fumigation company provides the appropriate statement, such as:

- a) “Plastic wrapping has not been used in this consignment”; or
- b) “This consignment has been fumigated before application of plastic wrapping”; or
- c) “Plastic wrapping used in this consignment conforms to the AQIS wrapping and perforation standard as found in the AQIS Methyl Bromide Fumigation Standard”.

All treatment certificates issued for Methyl Bromide fumigations will need to include a Plastic Wrap Declaration. Does this mean that Plastic Wrapping Declarations on Packing Declarations, or other documentation, will not be accepted?

Yes. This is not a declaration that can be made on supplementary document from a 3rd party.

The Methyl Bromide fumigation certificate that has been presented/I am assessing meets all AQIS requirements except that it does not have the plastic wrap declaration, is this acceptable?

Whilst AQIS strongly encourages all fumigation providers to comply with the new requirements, AQIS has agreed to continue to accept both the old and new requirements for fumigation certificates only to allow all countries to make the required changes. This will allow accredited brokers to continue to process such consignments without referral to quarantine or risk of non conformity. AQIS will advise when the new requirements will be enforced for fumigation certificates. For further information please refer to the [Notice to Industry 55/2009](#).

What is the AQIS requirement for treatment certificates for mixed packaging (e.g. structured with timber with plywood sides)?

The packaging and dunnage must be covered by the appropriate treatment certificates as per ICON. If mixed packaging is used each portion will need to be treated in an AQIS approved method.

Has AQIS advised AFAS and non-AFAS fumigators of the new Fumigation Certificate requirements?

Yes, for AFAS participating countries, the changes to the minimum documentary requirements have been clearly communicated to government agencies and through them to fumigation companies. Non-AFAS countries have been advised via AQIS Industry Notices.

NEWLY MANUFACTURED PLYWOOD DECLARATION

What is the new quarantine requirement for plywood/veneer used only as packaging in consignments?

The quarantine requirement for plywood/veneer used only as packaging material with imported goods has changed. Australia no longer requires a "Newly Manufactured Plywood Declaration" for plywood/veneer packaging material.

Is plywood/veneer packaging material required to meet the timber packaging treatment requirements eg ISPM 15

No. A treatment is not required, but if quarantine pests are detected during AQIS surveillance or when pests are detected on the plywood/veneer packaging during a commodity inspection then an appropriate treatment is required.

If I have only plywood/veneer packing material in my consignment do I need to declare it as timber on the packing declaration?

No. Plywood/veneer used only as packing material does not need to meet the timber packing treatment requirements.

Please note: AQIS will monitor the risks associated with plywood/veneer packing through Import Clearance Effectiveness surveys and may periodically increase surveillance for packing to verify that risks are adequately being managed.

TAILGATE EXEMPTIONS

Is it possible to obtain a rural tailgate exemption for premises to unpack cargo in a rural area?

No. Premises located in a rural location are not eligible for a rural tailgate exemption. Rural tailgate exemptions will only be considered for premises to unpack cargo in designated **fringe rural** areas. To apply for rural tailgate exemption (for a fringe rural area) information must be submitted to the local AQIS office for assessment.

SUPPLIER DEFINITION

Who does AQIS regard as the supplier?

The supplier is taken to be the person/entity named on the Import Declaration (lodged through the Australian Customs Service Integrated Cargo System) as the supplier. In most cases this is the exporter in the country of origin.

DEFINITION OF "EXPORT"

All treatments must be performed... "within the mandated timeframe prior to export as outlined in the applicable import conditions" What is meant by export? And where can I obtain the applicable import conditions?

The Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy has recently been clarified to define "export" in the table of "definitions" as the time that the consignment is either:

- a) shipped on board the vessel; or
- b) lodged with the freight forwarder, shipping line, charter operator or an appointed agent in the country of export for ultimate destination in Australia.

It is the responsibility of the importer/agent to provide documentary evidence of this event. This can be provided on:

- a) the Bill of Lading or Air Waybill "Shipped on Board" date; or
- b) or the lodgement date shown on an electronic tracking website printout; or
- c) an Interim Receipt; or
- d) a commercial declaration regarding receipt of consignment.

The applicable import conditions can be found by searching ICON www.aqis.gov.au/icon for the commodity or non-commodity type.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the AQIS Minimum Documentary Requirements Policy please email the [Entry Management Program](#).

For further information regarding the AQIS Non-commodity Information Requirements Policy please email the [Co-regulation Administration and Support Program](#).