



99/2750

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## **CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF LIVE MARINE ORNAMENTAL FINFISH INTO AUSTRALIA**

### **1. General**

These Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) conditions apply to the importation of marine ornamental (aquarium) finfish listed on the Australian permitted species list that is current at the time of importation. This list is maintained by the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage as Schedule 6, Part II, Division 2 of the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982* (hereafter referred to as Schedule 6).

### **2. Documentation**

- a. Permission to import live marine ornamental finfish must be obtained in writing from AQIS prior to arrival of the fish in Australia. Permit applications can be obtained from, and completed forms are to be submitted to, the AQIS office in the State or Territory to which the importation will be made. Import permits generally have a validity of one year from the date of issue. It is the Australian importer's responsibility to ensure that they have a current permit.
- b. Each importer must have a valid permit to import and, prior to the arrival of the fish, must notify the AQIS office in the State or Territory of destination of the address of the approved premises where the fish are to be detained in quarantine.
- c. Each consignment of live marine ornamental finfish must be accompanied by documentation in English including:
  - a list of the individual box or carton identification numbers, and the scientific name and number of fish corresponding to each box or carton of the consignment,
  - the Australian importer's permit number,
  - the name and address of the premises where the fish will be detained in quarantine on arrival in Australia, and
  - health certification from the Competent Authority of the exporting country.

### **3. Quarantine**

All marine ornamental finfish intended for entry into Australia are subject to the following quarantine requirements:

- a. The fish must be exported by an exporter currently approved by an AQIS-recognised Competent Authority of the exporting country. The criteria for approval of marine ornamental finfish exporters are provided in Appendix 1.
- b. All consignments of marine ornamental finfish must be accompanied by a health certificate, written in English and, where necessary, in a language understood by the certifying individual. The certificate must be issued by an individual authorised by the Competent Authority of the exporting country who has an appropriate knowledge of fish health and the exporter's operations. A sample health certificate is shown in Appendix 2.
- c. All consignments of marine ornamental finfish must meet the specified handling and packaging conditions in Appendix 3.
- d. All shipments of marine ornamental finfish will be inspected by AQIS on arrival to ensure that they are healthy, are an approved species on Schedule 6, and that they do not contain prohibited material or material of quarantine concern. Any prohibited fish species will be re-exported or destroyed, while prohibited material or material of quarantine concern will be seized and destroyed, all at importer's expense.
- e. All marine ornamental finfish will be ordered into quarantine at AQIS approved marine ornamental quarantine premises on arrival for 7 days.
- f. Quarantine premises will only be approved, as a place for the performance of quarantine of live fish under Section 46A of the *Quarantine Act*, when they meet AQIS standards (Appendix 4). An application form for approval of premises for the quarantine of live marine ornamental finfish may be obtained from the State/Territory AQIS Office.
- g. Quarantine detention will be performed in accordance with the requirements described in Appendix 5.

Note 1: Based on the submission of relevant information by the Competent Authority of the exporting country, AQIS will determine the recognition of the Competent Authority with respect to approval of marine ornamental finfish exporters and export certification.

Note 2: Based on fish species, country of origin, historical factors or any other relevant information, AQIS may test samples of imported fish during quarantine to determine their health status and thereby monitor exporting country compliance with AQIS quarantine requirements. The cost of such testing will be borne by the importer.

Note 3: In the event of any imported fish showing clinical signs or producing a positive result to any tests indicating the presence of an infectious disease agent or pest, AQIS may cause any or all of the fish in the premises to be either detained in quarantine for further observation, testing and/or treatment, or be destroyed. Costs of any such action will be

borne by the importer. If any fish are destroyed during any period of quarantine, compensation will not be paid by the Government.

Note 4: Parties seeking to use alternative risk reduction measures to those listed in these conditions — for example, an extended period of quarantine detention or a specified testing regimen — should obtain prior approval of alternative measures from AQIS. A submission including supporting scientific data that clearly explain the degree to which alternative measures would reduce risk, should be provided to AQIS for consideration.

#### **4. Review**

At any time at the discretion of AQIS a permit/approval may be revoked or modified if these conditions are not met or if there is a change in quarantine risk.

SARAH KAHN  
Director, Fish Quarantine Policy Unit

## STANDARDS FOR COMPETENT AUTHORITY APPROVAL OF MARINE ORNAMENTAL FINFISH EXPORTERS

### 1. General

An AQIS-recognised Competent Authority of the exporting country must have in place a system for the approval of marine ornamental finfish exporters to ensure that such exporters maintain standards required for export of marine ornamental finfish to Australia. The system is subject to audit by AQIS at any time. Animal Quarantine Policy Memorandum 1999/62 — *Guidelines for the approval of countries to export animals (including fish) and their products to Australia* — provides guidelines for the approval of countries to export animals and their products, including ornamental finfish, to Australia.

### 2. Competent Authority standards

- a. The Competent Authority of the exporting country must have the authority to suspend or withdraw export certification or approval of an exporter at any time if the requirements are not being met.
- b. Approval of exporters must be undertaken by a responsible official of the Competent Authority of the exporting country whose duties relate to fish health and who has knowledge of the export operations.
- c. Before approving premises for export of freshwater ornamental finfish to Australia, a Competent Authority must have in place a system that ensures:
  - that the fish being exported to Australia are not sourced from an area associated with any significant infectious fish disease or pests, nor from an area within 5 kilometres of foodfish (fish farmed for human consumption including recreational fishing) aquaculture operations,
  - that the fish collection and holding (if applicable) operations do not come into contact with water, equipment or fish associated with farmed foodfish (fish farmed for human consumption including recreational fishing),
  - the competence and integrity of the exporter, and
  - that the exporter is aware of the conditions which apply to the export of fish to Australia, including the species permitted for export to Australia at the time of export, and understands the restrictions which apply to such transactions.

**APPENDIX 2**

**HEALTH CERTIFICATE FOR MARINE ORNAMENTAL  
FINFISH EXPORTED TO AUSTRALIA.**

I, the undersigned, certify that:

- 1. The exporter named below is approved for the purpose of export of marine ornamental fish to Australia under Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service *Conditions for the Importation of Live Marine Ornamental Finfish into Australia*:

**Exporter:**

Name:.....

Address: .....

.....

Phone No:..... Fax No: ..... E-mail:.....

- 2. The fish were collected from an area at least 5 kilometres from any finfish aquaculture operation and the fish in the consignment have not come into contact with water, equipment or fish associated with farmed foodfish (fish farmed for human consumption including recreational fishing).
- 3. The fish are not sourced from a population associated with any significant infectious disease or pests and there have not been any unusual or substantial outbreaks of infectious fish disease or pests in the areas from which the fish have been collected during the 6 months prior to collection.

Signature: ..... Issued at: .....

Name: ..... Date: .....

Official position: ..... Stamp:

Address: .....

.....

Phone No:..... Fax No: ..... E-mail: .....

**STANDARDS FOR HANDLING AND PACKAGING OF LIVE  
MARINE ORNAMENTAL FINFISH FOR EXPORT TO  
AUSTRALIA**

1. All fish in the consignment must be packaged in leak-proof bags, each bag containing only one species. The bag must be colourless and sufficiently transparent to enable proper inspection and identification of the fish and must not contain any extraneous matter, unapproved plant material, pests or unauthorised species of fish. The use of outer bags of opaque materials or half-black bags to provide a dark shipping environment is acceptable, provided the contents of the bag can be properly inspected to the satisfaction of AQIS.
2. The inclusion of inert material such as zeolite, activated carbon, shredded plastic or dried terrestrial plants is permitted provided the contents of the bag can be properly inspected to the satisfaction of AQIS and the material is disinfected or destroyed as directed by AQIS.
3. Each bag must be of a size and weight that will allow inspection to the satisfaction of AQIS.
4. The bags must be placed within polystyrene boxes or cartons fitted with a plastic lining. Each box or carton must be clearly identified as a part of a shipment/consignment and be individually identified.
5. The consignment must be accompanied by documents that include the identification number of each box or carton, and the scientific name and number of the contained fish. It is recommended that the common names of the fish also be included on the papers.
6. The fish in each bag must be stocked at a density that will facilitate inspection and hence must not be overcrowded. When packed for export, fish must be placed in clean water. The use of a pH indicator in the water is permissible, provided it does not interfere with inspection.
7. Only finfish listed on Schedule 6 of the *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982* are to be included in the consignment. Each consignment must only include fish that are sufficiently mature to permit accurate identification.
8. Each consignment of fish must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the Competent Authority of the exporting country, signed by an individual with an appropriate knowledge of fish health and the exporter's fish collection and handling operations (see Appendix 2).

## STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL OF PREMISES FOR QUARANTINE OF IMPORTED LIVE MARINE ORNAMENTAL FINFISH

1. Premises for post-arrival quarantine detention may only be approved under Section 46A of the *Quarantine Act* as a place for the performance of quarantine with respect to live fish when they meet the requirements of this document and additional requirements under AQIS Quarantine Approved Premises Criteria, Live Freshwater and Marine Ornamental Finfish, Class 7.0, issued from time to time.
2. It is the importer's responsibility to be aware of and to ensure compliance with the requirements of all Commonwealth, State/Territory and local government regulatory organisations prior to and after importation.
3. The requirements for quarantine premises to hold live marine ornamental finfish are that:
  - a. The location of the approved quarantine premises must be such that AQIS officers can make satisfactory arrangements for inspection to the satisfaction of AQIS.
  - b. The quarantine premises must not be located in an area classified by the appropriate State/Territory or local authority as a flood prone area, nor in any area adjacent to a foodfish (fish farmed for human consumption including recreational fishing) farming/hatchery operation.
  - c. Access to the quarantine premises must be through property owned, rented or leased by the importer.
  - d. The quarantine room must have a quarantine sign prominently displayed on or near the entrance to the satisfaction of AQIS.
  - e. The quarantine room is not used for any purpose other than as a place for the performance of quarantine.
  - f. The quarantine room may share a building with other areas which are used for other purposes (including fish wholesale or retail activities), but must not be used as an access-way to other parts of the building.
  - g. The quarantine room must be fully enclosed and the walls and floor must be impervious and sufficiently smooth to enable adequate cleaning and disinfection. Windows may be installed in the quarantine room, but must be either sealed or, if capable of opening, must be adequately screened to prevent entry of insects. The door must either have a self-closer to ensure it remains shut after entry, or must have a self-closing insect proof screen door installed.

- h. The floor of the quarantine room must be able to retain all spill water. All wastewater must be disposed of into an approved municipal sewage or approved septic tank system. The drainage outlet should be supplied with a plug or other means of closing the outlet. Where no sewerage or septic system is available, overseas water and other wastewater must be disinfected as in Appendix 6 prior to discharge, provided that this does not provide direct entry to natural waterways.
  - i. Facilities must be available for proper disinfection of wastewater (where necessary) to AQIS approved standards (Appendix 6).
  - j. Facilities must be available for adequate disinfection of all equipment that comes into contact with water or fish under quarantine.
  - k. Facilities must be provided for staff and inspectors to wash their hands prior to leaving the quarantine room.
  - l. All tanks and associated equipment in the quarantine room are to be installed in such manner that allows their ready inspection and proper maintenance. The tanks must be individually identified to the satisfaction of AQIS.
  - m. All tanks must provide good visibility of the contained fish to the satisfaction of AQIS.
  - n. Lighting in the quarantine room must be of sufficient intensity to permit adequate inspection of all fish. If, in the opinion of an AQIS inspecting officer, there is insufficient illumination of the tanks, a hand-held electric light with a double insulated lead or other approved light source must be supplied.
  - o. The quarantine premises should have a designated refrigerator or deepfreeze used solely for the storage and preservation of dead fish. It should be located within or close to the quarantine room, and must be kept locked if located outside the quarantine room.
  - p. The quarantine room must be kept locked when staff are not present, and must provide adequate deterrence to unauthorised entry.
4. Before an import permit is issued, the importer must have access to a quarantine premises approved by AQIS. Approval of quarantine premises will be renewable every 12 months. Quarantine premises must be inspected by AQIS prior to approval to ensure standards are met. Approved quarantine premises may be inspected at other times to determine if standards are being maintained. In addition to those requirements identified above, AQIS may require other quarantine measures for the effective running of approved quarantine premises. Approval may be cancelled or suspended by AQIS if the quarantine standards are not maintained.

Note: Marine ornamental finfish are permitted to share quarantine rooms with freshwater ornamental fish, but must then meet all relevant conditions applying to the performance of freshwater ornamental finfish quarantine detention.

## APPENDIX 5

### STANDARDS FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF MARINE ORNAMENTAL FINFISH QUARANTINE DETENTION

1. Each consignment of marine ornamental finfish entering Australia (including packaging) will be examined on entry by AQIS inspectors who will evaluate the health of the fish, check that all documentation is in order, that only approved species are included, and that no material of quarantine concern is present. Any prohibited species or materials of quarantine concern must be re-exported, destroyed or treated to the satisfaction of AQIS, all at the importer's expense.
2. After inspection, all fish will be ordered into quarantine at a place approved by AQIS as a live marine ornamental fish quarantine premises.
3. Damaged bags, damaged polystyrene boxes and cartons that are wet or contaminated with overseas water must be either incinerated or effectively disinfected by an AQIS approved method prior to disposal. Imported bags and polystyrene boxes containing leaked overseas water that are in good condition may be reused provided they are first disinfected by an AQIS approved method. Boxes and cartons that are clean and free of leaked overseas water (dry) may be reused without disinfection.
4. All fish must be kept in tanks. Tanks must be kept clean at all times. Tanks may contain plastic or other habitat material that can be disinfected, provided that fish can be inspected to the satisfaction of AQIS. Tanks must be fitted with lids (or approved equivalent) to prevent fish jumping out of the tanks and to minimise splash contamination.
5. A standard AQIS tank record sheet must be maintained for each tank. A template of a tank record sheet may be obtained from AQIS.
6. Tank record sheets must be legible and available for inspection by AQIS officers during the quarantine period and for 12 months thereafter.
7. Where separate consignments of fish share a water recirculation system, then all fish sharing the system may be subject to quarantine risk management measures (eg destruction, treatment or detention beyond the normal quarantine period) if any fish in the system are suspected to carry disease agents/pests of quarantine concern. In deciding on the need for measures to be applied to all fish sharing a recirculation system, AQIS will take into account the presence of water sterilisation systems (eg ozonation or ultraviolet irradiation).
8. The premises must be kept clean to the satisfaction of AQIS.

9. All wastewater (including overseas water), when discharged from the quarantine room, must either enter directly into an approved municipal sewerage system or approved septic tank. Alternatively the wastewater may be disinfected as described in Appendix 6, after which the water may be discharged, provided that this does not flow directly into adjacent waterways.
10. A water treatment record should be maintained for all water treatments.
11. All nets and equipment shared between tanks must be disinfected in the quarantine room by a method approved by AQIS (Appendix 6) before being used for other consignments of fish or prior to removal from the quarantine room.
12. All equipment must be disinfected prior to removal from the quarantine room. All filter material must be disinfected prior to removal from the quarantine room or disposed of by incineration.
13. Staff and visitors must leave their street footwear outside the quarantine room, and use separate waterproof footwear within the room. The footwear used in the quarantine room must remain inside the quarantine room. Alternatively, footwear may be removed from the quarantine room after being cleaned and disinfected to AQIS standards (Appendix 6). Disposable overshoes may also be used provided they are destroyed to AQIS standards after use.
14. Staff and visitors that make contact with fish or water within the quarantine room must wash their hands with soap and water prior to exiting the quarantine room.
15. Any unusual levels of mortality or unusual signs of disease/pests (levels of mortality or illness above that normally observed in imported fish) must be reported to AQIS immediately.
16. All drug/chemical treatment of fish must have AQIS approval and be recorded on tank record sheets. Approval of requests for on-going prophylactic or therapeutic treatments will be considered by AQIS, taking into account the need to ensure that exotic disease agents are not inadvertently released from quarantine. Any treatments may result in the extension of quarantine detention period or other measures as deemed necessary by AQIS.
17. All dead fish must be removed from tanks as soon as possible and placed (while in the quarantine room) inside a plastic bag that is clearly identified with the tank number and scientific name of species contained. The bags must be stored in a refrigerator or freezer located in or near the quarantine room. Dead fish are to be disposed of by AQIS or by the importer under AQIS supervision after each corresponding consignment has been released.
18. The importer must ensure that no fish leave the quarantine room under any circumstances without AQIS approval, excepting dead fish moved to a nearby refrigerator or freezer.
19. Fish may not be released from quarantine before completing 7 days quarantine detention and fulfilment of all quarantine requirements to the satisfaction of AQIS.

20. Where AQIS has reason to believe at the end of the quarantine detention period that the fish still present an unacceptable risk of disease or pest introduction, the fish may be kept in quarantine detention for further investigation, observation, treatment, testing or for any other purpose appropriate to the circumstances. If the risk cannot be effectively managed, destruction of the fish will be ordered. The costs associated with any of these measures will be borne by the importer.
21. Permission may be granted by AQIS for healthy fish to be held in the quarantine room after release from quarantine provided that all quarantine requirements are met during the time that the fish remain in the quarantine room.
22. Entrance to the quarantine room is restricted to the importer, his nominated employees and AQIS officers, or other persons approved by AQIS.
23. Access to the premises must be available to AQIS officers during normal business hours and at such time that fish are entering or leaving the premises. The importer must notify AQIS of the times when the premises will be attended and any alteration to the regular hours.

## APPROVED DISINFECTION PROCEDURES

### General

Water sterilisation and equipment disinfection should be effective against the more resistant fish disease agents or pests. Disinfection/sterilisation protocols should reduce pathogen titres to levels below that likely to cause infection when exposed to a susceptible host. The following protocols provide an indication of the level of disinfection and/or sterilisation required by AQIS. Alternative methods that, to the satisfaction of AQIS, provide an equal or greater level of quarantine security may also be used.

### A. STERILISATION OF AND WASTEWATER (INCLUDING OVERSEAS WATER)

#### Hypochlorite treatment of water

Chlorine is very toxic, hence hypochlorite powders and concentrated hypochlorite solutions should be kept in properly sealed containers in a well ventilated area outside the quarantine room. This is to prevent volatilisation of chlorine gas to the air with risk to staff, and to reduce the possibility of chlorine dissolving in aquarium water, with risk of toxicity to fish.

- a. All water to be treated must pass through a filter capable of removing suspended organic material prior to hypochlorite treatment.
- b. All water to be treated must pass to a retention vessel where sufficient hypochlorite must be added to achieve a final concentration of 200 ppm. Sodium hypochlorite (bleach) should be used at 1.6 millilitres of hypochlorite solution (12.5% available chlorine) per litre of water, while calcium hypochlorite powder (eg Pool Chlor, 65-70% available chlorine) should be used at 0.3 g of powder per litre of water.
- c. Following addition of hypochlorite, wastewater must be agitated, for a period of not less than 10 minutes, to ensure thorough mixing of hypochlorite and retained for a period of not less than 1 hour.
- d. After the one hour retention period, the chlorine in the wastewater may be neutralised by adding sodium thiosulphate (photographic hypo) at a rate of 1.25 g (2.5 ml of 50% sodium thiosulphate solution) per litre of treated wastewater, then agitated for not less than 10 minutes before discharge.

#### Heat treatment of water

Each water heating unit requires AQIS approval. Water heating units will be required to be fitted with temperature and flow recorders and to heat water to a minimum of 85°C for at least thirty minutes.

**B. DISINFECTION OF EQUIPMENT:**

Tanks and tank equipment to be disinfected must be thoroughly cleaned and treated with hypochlorite solution at 200 ppm concentration for 5 minutes or with an iodophore solution containing 0.5% available iodine for 5 minutes or by other approved disinfection methods.

**C. DISINFECTION OF HANDS:**

Hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and water to remove any contaminant material, prior to exiting the quarantine room.

**D. DISINFECTION OF FOOTWEAR:**

If footwear is to be removed from the quarantine room, it should be clean and the soles and lower portion of the footwear must be disinfected by immersion of the exterior surface in an approved disinfectant such as a 5% solution of Betadine.

Note 1: AQIS will require a register to be kept of all water treatments/batches of discharged water.

Note 2: AQIS may audit the efficacy of disinfection procedures to ensure compliance.