



Australia's importing country requirements for phytosanitary certificates from 1 May 2023

5 January 2023

Who does this notice affect?

Importers, customs brokers, and exporting National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) of horticultural fresh produce, cut flowers, plants, seeds and other plant-based commodities.

What is the issue?

Australia is receiving some paper phytosanitary certificates that are not signed, dated and stamped in accordance with ISPM 12.

Requirements for paper phytosanitary certificates from 1 May 2023

From 1 May 2023, paper phytosanitary certificates must have all required information in accordance with ISPM12, including being signed, dated and stamped. This applies to paper phytosanitary certificates dated on or after 1 May 2023.

Australia will not accept paper phytosanitary certificates dated on or after 1 May 2023 presented with QR codes only and without a signature, date and stamp.

Australia's importing country requirements for phytosanitary certificates

Australia accepts phytosanitary certificates that are:

1. Delivered via an agreed, secure government-to-government digital exchange, known as electronic certification or ePhyto/eCert. Australia currently only has such an arrangement with New Zealand for use in import clearance.
2. Original paper hardcopies issued by trading partners that have been dated, signed, and stamped.
3. Certified copies that are copies of an original hardcopy or printouts of an electronic phytosanitary certificate that have been dated, stamped, and countersigned.

On paper certificates, a 'stamp' can be in the form of a watermark or logo on the document that has been approved for use by the exporting country and communicated to the Australian IPPC contact point (ippc.contactpoint@agriculture.gov.au).

A 'signature' can be in the form of either a pen-inked signature directly onto the document or a printed image of a signature inserted into the document. Printed names will not be accepted.

Australia's acceptance of ePhytos or eCerts

Australia only accepts ePhytos or eCerts for use in import clearance where there has been a prior agreement to accept them via a government-to-government electronic exchange. This arrangement currently only applies to the government-to-government exchange of eCerts from New Zealand.

Countries sending ePhytos or eCerts to Australia without prior agreement and arrangements for electronic exchange cannot be accepted. Paper certification continues to be required until ePhytos or eCerts are bilaterally negotiated between Australia and the exporting NPPO.

Class 19 approved arrangements

From 1 May 2023, brokers or self-reporting importers lodging under a Class 19 approved arrangement must ensure that paper phytosanitary certificates have been signed, dated and stamped.

Until 1 May 2023, brokers operating under a Class 19 approved arrangement may accept phytosanitary certificates that are not signed, dated and stamped providing they can be verified using the QR code or website link.

Further information

If you have questions or need further information, you can contact our Biosecurity Import Support team on:

- Email at imports@agriculture.gov.au
- Phone (from within Australia): 1800 900 090
- Phone (from outside Australia): + 61 3 8318 6700

If you have questions or need further information relating to Class 19 approved arrangements:

- Email at AEPsupport@agriculture.gov.au