



NAPPO Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPM)

RSPM No. 8

The Accreditation of Individuals to Sign Federal Phytosanitary Certificates

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Review

NAPPO Standards for Phytosanitary Measures are subject to periodic review and amendment. The next review date for this NAPPO standard is October, 2009. This standard was last reviewed in April, 1998. A review of any NAPPO Standard may be initiated at any time upon the request of a NAPPO member country.

Approval

This standard was approved by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) Executive Committee on October 17, 2004, and is effective immediately.

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Implementation

No Implementation Plans are required as only minor revisions have been made to this standard.

Amendment Record

Amendments to this Standard will be dated and filed with the NAPPO Secretariat. The most recent version will be posted on the NAPPO website at: www.nappo.org/stds_e.htm.

Distribution

This standard is distributed by the Secretariat of the NAPPO within NAPPO, including Sustaining Associate Members and Industry Advisory Groups, to the FAO IPPC Secretariat and to the Administrative Heads of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs).

Introduction

Scope

This standard describes the responsibilities of national plant protection organizations and the base level of knowledge, skills, ability, and authority for Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) to sign Phytosanitary Certificates under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

References

Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms, 2004. ISPM No. 5, FAO, Rome
Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms, 2004, NAPPO
International Plant Protection Convention, New Revised Text, 1999, FAO, Rome
Nursery Inspection and Certification Guidelines, 1995. National Plant Board Plant
Norma Oficial Mexicana NOM 035-FITO-1995
Part 353, Export Certification Code of Federal Regulations, 2000, USDA
Plant Protection Division Standards for Phytosanitary Measures, Requirements for the Certification of Nurseries under the Canadian Nursery Certification Program, 1998, CFIA
Principles of Plant Quarantine as Related to International Trade, 1995. ISPM No. 1, FAO, Rome
Quality System Procedure - CFIA Regional Audits, 1998, CFIA

Definitions, Abbreviations, and Acronyms

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| Accreditation | Official recognition of proficiency resulting in the approval and authority to perform specific tasks or provide specific services in full or partial support of fulfilling official obligations. (NAPPO) |
| Authorized Certification Official (ACO) | A public officer who is authorized by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and accredited for the signing of phytosanitary certificates, who 1) possesses the required education, experience, and training; and 2) has written confirmation of having successfully passed an approved examination. (NAPPO) |
| NAPPO | Acronym for North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) |
| NPPO | Acronym for National Plant Protection Organization. (FAO) |
| Phytosanitary Certificate | A certificate patterned after the model certificates of the IPPC. (FAO) |
| Phytosanitary Certification | Use of phytosanitary procedures leading to the issue of a phytosanitary certificate. (FAO) |
| Phytosanitary Measure | Any legislation, regulation or official procedure having the purpose to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pests (FAO) |

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| Phytosanitary Procedure | Any officially prescribed method for performing inspections, tests, surveys or treatments in connection with regulated pests (FAO) |
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Outline of Requirements

The NPPO must take appropriate measures to ensure the integrity of the phytosanitary certificate signed by its officials. The NPPO must be able to provide the information and resources to implement and maintain the accreditation program.

Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) must meet the criteria outlined in this standard based on a combination of training, experience and education, in order to sign phytosanitary certificates. ACOs must:

- Possess the required training, experience and education;
- Meet proficiency standards as specified in Appendix I and successfully pass an examination approved by the NPPO;
- Possess a valid certificate of authorization issued by the NPPO;
- Maintain accreditation by fulfilling the requirements specified in Section 2.6, Renewal of ACO Accreditation.
- Meet other requirements as specified in section 2, Specific Provisions; and Appendix 1.

1. General Provisions for Accreditation

Accreditation, as a means of recognizing a consistent level of competency and conferring specific authority, is acknowledged by NAPPO member countries to be a legitimate means for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) to enhance their ability to protect plant resources and to facilitate safe trade. NAPPO views regional and international agreement on standards for the accreditation of personnel, organizations, facilities, and processes associated with phytosanitary certification to be fundamental to the international harmonization of phytosanitary measures and systems.

1.1 National Plant Protection Organization

The National Plant Protection Organization must be a signatory of the IPPC and have agreed to follow IPPC guidelines for issuing phytosanitary certificates. The NPPO shall be responsible for, or shall make provision for:

- the issuance of certificates relating to the phytosanitary regulations of importing countries for consignments of plants and plant products;
- the surveillance of growing plants and of plants and plant products in storage or in transportation, particularly with the object of reporting the occurrence, outbreak and spread of pests;
- the inspection of consignments of plants and plant products moving internationally;
- ensuring through appropriate procedures that the phytosanitary security of consignments after certification is maintained;
- training and development of staff;
- the distribution of lists of regulated pests;

- research and investigation in the field of plant protection;
- accurate and timely diagnostic capabilities;
- maintenance of accurate records and timely reporting mechanisms;
- ensuring staff knowledge of general agronomic and crop production principles; regulated pests; pest-host relationships; current phytosanitary regulations of other countries; and inspection techniques.

1.2 Infrastructure and Resources

It is recognized that factors such as access to information, adequate facilities, computer skills, and other resource limitations may impact on the performance of an ACO regardless of the qualifications and authority vested in the ACO. NPPOs are accountable for ensuring that sufficient resources and an adequate work environment are provided by the agency and/or private sector industries requiring phytosanitary certification, to ensure the proper execution of the required procedures.

1.3 Maintenance of accreditation

The NPPO must demonstrate the ability to verify that accredited individuals continue to meet the standard through the application of internal and external audit mechanisms.

1.3.1 NPPO accreditation system documentation must be available to other NPPOs.

1.3.2 The NPPO is responsible for identifying criteria for granting and revoking accreditation and the circumstances under which accreditation may be reinstated.

1.4 Records

The NPPO must develop a quality manual, based on ISO 9000 series, for the accreditation of ACOs and must maintain records. Records must include, but are not limited to:

- courses successfully completed by the ACO
- verification that the ACO has met this standard
- examination records and dates
- an inventory of ACOs, including dates of latest testing

2. **Specific Provisions - Provisions for the Accreditation of an Authorized Certification Official (ACO)**

2.1 Level of Authority

ACOs must be accredited by the NPPO to sign phytosanitary certificates, and must possess documentation of this authority. The ACO is accountable for ensuring that NPPO procedures are followed to support of the issuance of the phytosanitary certificate. The ACO's actions must be based on the requirements of the program in question and the scientific, technical, or other pertinent information available to the ACO.

2.2 Objectivity and Independence

2.2.1 ACOs must be able to refuse to sign phytosanitary certificates without interference when the phytosanitary requirements of importing countries have not been met. ACOs must demonstrate fairness, and be independent from external pressures (political, commercial,

financial, etc.) in the execution of their official responsibilities. The official must be able to execute their duties without fear of reprisal.

2.2.2 ACOs and members of their immediate family must not have any financial or other direct interest in plants, plant products, or other regulated articles presented to the ACO for phytosanitary certification.

2.3 Consistency

ACOs must demonstrate consistent actions for similar situations and be able to provide appropriate justification for deviations. NPPOs should strive to ensure consistency among all ACOs, and should carry out internal audits as specified in the NPPO's quality manual.

2.4 Proficiency Verification

ACOs must demonstrate proficiency in verifying that all aspects of the phytosanitary certification process have been conducted (see appendix 1) in order for the commodity to comply with the requirements of the importing country.

2.4.1 Level of Training

Training in this context refers to formal courses and on the job training either endorsed, or developed and delivered by the NPPO to increase the technical competency of ACOs with respect to the organization and the systems it uses for accomplishing its objectives.

The ACO must be adequately trained to meet the proficiency requirements defined in Appendix 1.

The minimum level of training must provide the ACO with a working understanding of the organization, its delivery system, and the specific components of plant protection work leading to the issuance of a phytosanitary certificate that are not generally available through another source. Additional training may be provided to develop specialized expertise, such as treatment procedures, the identification of pests, pest detection survey procedures, laboratory testing procedures, etc. Examples of these additional courses are listed in Appendix 3.

2.4.2 Level of Experience

A minimum of one year's experience in plant protection regulatory activities working with or under the supervision of an ACO is required. The NPPO must ensure that those in pursuit of accreditation as an ACO obtain the experience appropriate to the certification activity for which they will be accredited. This experience must occur immediately prior to becoming an ACO.

Officials that do not perform certification within a year of completing the basic training requirement, or ACOs that have not performed certification for more than two years are required to gain 60 days of practical work experience with or under the supervision of an ACO and complete a refresher course.

2.4.3 Level of Education

The level of education required by individuals accredited to sign phytosanitary certificates will be established by the NPPO. Appendix 2 gives examples of recommended courses.

2.5 Examination

Each candidate for accreditation as an ACO must receive a passing grade upon examination as determined by the NPPO. This examination must be developed and administered by the NPPO and must test the ability of the ACO to meet NPPO requirements. Standardized tests and grading schemes should be utilized.

Examinations may include written or practical tests of technical knowledge or ability. Retesting earlier than the three year period may be required due to substantial changes to rules, policies, or programs. Confirmation that additional training was carried out must be provided to the NPPO, and must be made available upon the request to other NPPOs.

Examinations will be conducted following completion of requisite training.

2.6 Renewal of ACO Accreditation

ACO accreditation shall be renewed at least every three years when one of the following requirements are met:

- The performance review of the ACO, as specified in the quality management system of the NPPO, has been satisfactory in the period preceding the certification renewal; and
- The ACO has received timely, and recorded, re-training or update of changes in the certification policies and programs of the NPPO, or
- The ACO has successfully completed a re-certification examination.

Renewal of the ACO's accreditation will be marked by the issuance of a new certificate of authorization by the NPPO.

Appendix 1

PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACO ACCREDITATION

ACOs must demonstrate knowledge of, and adherence to all NPPO established phytosanitary procedures relating to phytosanitary certification. This appendix outlines the generic phytosanitary certification process and proficiency requirements which must be demonstrated by the ACO.

Accredited Personnel Must Demonstrate Proficiency in:

- The theory and principles of plant protection
- Legislation and regulations that authorize phytosanitary certification
- Identification of plant components (plant, plant part, plant product, etc.) for export
- Identification of information and processes necessary to sign a phytosanitary certificate
- Verification that phytosanitary procedures have been carried out to ensure the commodity complies with the phytosanitary regulations of the importing country
- Completion and distribution of phytosanitary certificate or related forms
- Appropriate procedures for dealing with violations

General Phytosanitary Certification Process

| 1. Request for Certification | |
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| Steps: | Demonstrate proficiency in: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Obtain adequate detail concerning the product e.g. plants, plant products, other regulated articles· Forward request to appropriate authority in the NPPO· Record critical information, e.g. origin, destination, commodity· Location of commodity· Maintain adequate records | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· verifying that critical information is obtained· identifying information required and notifying appropriate parties in a clear manner· maintaining adequate records |

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| 2. Identify Requirements | |
| Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Determine requirements of importing country · Determine need for additional information (eg. survey results) · If no requirements exist, inquire to importing country according to established protocols (as per NPPO procedures) | Demonstrate proficiency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · accessing and verifying information · identifying and interpreting requirements in adherence to NPPO established phytosanitary procedures as found in manuals, bilateral agreements, import permits, etc · following appropriate procedures to determine requirements · maintaining and distributing adequate records, and providing clear instructions to appropriate staff. |
| 3. Communicate required phytosanitary measures | |
| Examples: samples, tests, treatments, inspection, pest identification, pest free areas | |
| Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Advise laboratories, producers, inspectors, etc. of required phytosanitary measures. · Identify requirements as defined by the importing country or as negotiated in a bilateral agreement. | Demonstrate proficiency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · communicating information to appropriate parties, properly explaining to others that a specific phytosanitary procedure is needed · maintaining and distributing adequate records, and providing clear instructions to appropriate staff |

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| 4. Verify that appropriate phytosanitary measures have been taken, or conduct such measures | |
| Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · determine that proper measures were taken · determine that the measures were done according to approved procedure by the authorized entity (eg. accredited inspectors or laboratories, NPPO laboratory, public entity) · conduct the proper measures | Demonstrate proficiency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · identifying/interpreting requirements of national workplans and/or national regulations and verifying that information in records meet requirements · accurately comparing completed procedures against the requirement · accessing and determining authorized entity · performing prescribed procedures if responsible for conducting phytosanitary procedures · using or verifying the use of appropriate forms |
| 5. Process Certificates | |
| Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensure certificate is properly completed · Sign Certificate · Supply copies and distribute · Document/reference supporting material | Demonstrate proficiency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · following the NPPO documented phytosanitary procedures · maintaining adequate records · taking corrective action where appropriate phytosanitary procedure is not followed · Auditing certificates previously signed · Recognizing and using appropriate forms |

Examples of required resource information for Phytosanitary Certification

1. Documents and/or reference material

- Phytosanitary notes (updates to summaries)
- Permits
- Export summaries and summary databases
- Export certification manuals
- Relevant/State/Provincial/Agency model certificates
- Phytosanitary Regulations
- Official memoranda or policy statements that describe procedures for sampling, inspection, treatment, etc.
- Treatment manuals or equivalent information
- Import manuals or equivalent information
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and relevant regional and international

phytosanitary standards.

2. Information

- Origin of the commodity/consignment
- Destination of the commodity/consignment
- Import requirements (restrictions on pests, contaminants, packaging; requirements for treatments, sampling, inspections; restrictions/agreements on growing season, time of harvest, growing location, etc.)
- Inspection procedures
- Sampling procedures
- Treatment procedures
- Identification of pests, contaminants or conditions requiring quarantine action
- Special procedures

3. Measures

- Inspection
- Sampling
- Treatment
- Planting/harvesting schedules
- Special procedures
- Testing

4. Forms

- Phytosanitary certificates
- Phytosanitary certificate for re-export
- Export certification for processed plant products
- Field inspection results or certificates
- Diagnostic laboratory results or certificates
- Laboratory submission forms

Facilities and Equipment

- Adequate space and light
- Comfortable environment
- Adequate to perform specified tasks

Appendix 2

EXAMPLES OF COURSES TO MEET EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Plant Pathology
- Weed Sciences
- Botany
- Plant Physiology
- Entomology
- Horticulture
- Crop Science
- Pest Control
- Forestry
- General Biology
- Plant Taxonomy
- Plant Ecology
- Plant Identification

Appendix 3

TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR ACOs

- These courses are suggested for a NPPO training curriculum:
- Overview of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Sciences.
- International Agreements and Standards (IPPC, WTO, etc.)
- Phytosanitary regulations
- Phytosanitary legislation
- Pest risk analysis
- Risk assessment
- Risk management
- Quarantine treatments
- Fumigation
- Irradiation
- Cold/heat treatments

Quarantine Pest Identification:

- Sampling methods and examination techniques
- Fruit fly identification and management
- Lepidoptera identification
- Stored grain insects identification
- Mollusc identification
- Virus identification and recognition of virus symptoms
- Demonstrated ability to handle/prepare specimens and ability to identify specimens
- Weed seed sampling and identification
- Bacteria, fungi, and nematode taxonomy

Specific Commodity Training (this may be specified by the country)

- Integrated Pest Management of specific crops
- Cut flower inspection and treatment
- Seed/grain inspection and treatment
- Fruits and vegetables inspection and treatment