



NAPPO

North American Plant Protection Organization

Organización Norteamericana de Protección a las Plantas

NAPPO Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPM)

RSPM 8

The Authorization of Individuals to Issue 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 2018. This standard was last reviewed in 2013. 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 28, 2013, and is effective immediately.

Approved by:

 _____ Greg Wolff Executive Committee Member Canada	 _____ Rebecca A. Bech Executive Committee Member United States
 _____ Javier Trujillo Arriaga Executive Committee Member Mexico	

Implementation

Implementation Plans (IP) are not required for this standard.

Amendment Record

Amendments to this Standard will be dated and filed with the NAPPO Secretariat.

Distribution

This standard is distributed by the NAPPO Secretariat to the Industry Advisory Group (IAG) and Sustaining Associate Members (SAM), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat, and to other 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

- IPPC. 1997. *International Plant Protection Convention*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 1. 2006. *Phytosanitary principles for the protection of plants and the application of phytosanitary measures in international trade*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 5. (Updated annually). *Glossary of phytosanitary terms*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 7. 2011. *Phytosanitary certification system*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- ISPM 12. 2011. *Phytosanitary certificates*. Rome, IPPC, FAO.
- RSPM 5. (Updated annually). *NAPPO glossary of phytosanitary terms*. Ottawa, NAPPO.

Definitions, Abbreviations, and Acronyms

Definitions of phytosanitary terms used in the present standard can be found in NAPPO RSPM 5 and in ISPM 5.

Outline of Requirements

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

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

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

1. General Requirements for Authorization

Authorization, 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 standards for the authorization of personnel and entities associated with phytosanitary certification to be fundamental to the international harmonization of phytosanitary measures and systems.

1.1 International obligations

As members of the International Plant Protection Convention, the NAPPO member countries shall follow the obligations under the IPPC as they relate to authorization of public officers to issue phytosanitary certificates, including in section Article V.2(a):

“The issuance of phytosanitary certificates shall be carried out by public officers who are technically qualified and duly authorized by the official national plant protection organization to act on its behalf”.

This article was clarified at the FAO Conference in 1997 during adoption of the 1997 revision of the IPPC: “It is understood that ... ‘public officers who are technically qualified and duly authorized by the national plant protection organization’ include officers from the national plant protection organization”. “Public” in this context means employed by a level of government, not by a private company. “Include officers from the national plant protection organization” means that the officer may be directly employed by the NPPO, but does not have to be directly employed by the NPPO.

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 or private sector industries requiring phytosanitary certification, to ensure the proper execution of the required procedures.

1.3 Maintenance of authorization

The NPPO should demonstrate the ability to verify that authorized individuals continue to meet the standard through the application of audit mechanisms.

1.3.1 NPPO authorization system documentation should be available to other NPPOs.

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

1.4 Records

The NPPO should develop a quality manual, based on ISO 9000 series, for the authorization of ACOs and should maintain records. Records should 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 authorization.

2. Specific Requirements - Requirements for an Authorized Certification Official (ACO)

2.1 Authority to issue phytosanitary certificates

ACOs should be authorized by the NPPO to issue phytosanitary certificates, and should maintain documentation of this authorization. The ACO is accountable for ensuring that NPPO procedures are followed to support the issuance of the phytosanitary certificate. The ACO's decision to issue a phytosanitary certificate, or not, should 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 should refuse to issue phytosanitary certificates, without interference, when the phytosanitary requirements of importing countries have not been met.

2.2.2 ACOs should demonstrate fairness, and be independent from external pressures (political, commercial, financial, etc.) in the execution of their official responsibilities. The ACO should be able to execute their duties without fear of reprisal.

2.2.3 ACOs and members of their immediate family should 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 should demonstrate consistent actions for similar situations and provide appropriate explanation of any deviation. 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 Verification of competence

ACOs should demonstrate competence in verifying that all aspects of the phytosanitary certification process have been conducted (see Annex 1) in order to comply with the phytosanitary 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 ACOs should be adequately trained to meet the competence requirements defined in Annex 1.

The minimum level of training should provide the ACOs 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 2.

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 should ensure that those in pursuit of authorization as an ACO obtain the experience appropriate to the certification activity for which they will be authorized. This experience should occur prior to becoming an ACO.

ACOs that do not perform certification within a year of completing the basic training requirement, or that have not performed certification for more than two years cannot issue phytosanitary certificates. They are required to gain 60 days of practical work experience with or under the supervision of an ACO and successfully complete training in order to issue phytosanitary certificates.

2.4.3 Level of education

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

2.5 Examination

Each candidate for authorization as an ACO should receive a passing grade upon examination as determined by the NPPO. This examination should be developed and administered by the NPPO and should test the ability of the ACO to meet NPPO requirements. Tests and grading schemes standardized by the NPPO 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 should be provided to the NPPO, and should be made available upon request of other NPPOs.

Examinations will be conducted following completion of requisite training.

2.6 Renewal of ACO authorization

ACO authorization should be renewed at least every three years when:

- The competence 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 re-training or updates on 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 authorization will be marked by the issuance of a new certificate of authorization by the NPPO.

This annex was adopted by the NAPPO Executive Committee on October 28, 2013.
The annex is a prescriptive part of the standard.”

Annex 1: Competency Requirements for ACO Authorization

ACOs should demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to all NPPO established phytosanitary procedures relating to phytosanitary certification. This annex outlines the generic phytosanitary certification process and competence requirements which should be demonstrated by the ACO.

Authorized personnel should demonstrate competence in:

- The theory and principles of plant protection
- Legislation and regulations that authorize phytosanitary certification
- Identification of plant, plant part, plant product, etc. for export
- Verification that phytosanitary procedures have been carried out and the commodity complies with the phytosanitary requirements of the importing country
- Completion, issuance and distribution of phytosanitary certificate or related documentation
- Appropriate procedures for dealing with violations

General process for issuance of phytosanitary certificates

<p>1. Request for certification</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain adequate detail concerning the commodity e.g. plants, plant products, other regulated articles • Forward request to appropriate authority in the NPPO • Record critical information, e.g. origin, destination, commodity • Identify location of the commodity • Maintain adequate records 	<p>Demonstrate competence in:</p> <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
<p>2. Identify requirements</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine requirements of importing country • Determine need for supporting information (e.g. survey results) • If import requirements are not available or unclear, confirm with the importing country according to established NPPO protocols 	<p>Demonstrate competence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessing and verifying information • identifying and interpreting requirements as found in manuals, bilateral agreements, import permits, etc, • 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. 	Demonstrate competence 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, providing clear instructions to appropriate staff
4. Verify that appropriate phytosanitary measures have been taken	
Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine that the measures were completed according to approved procedure by the authorized entity (e.g. authorized inspectors or laboratories, NPPO laboratory, public entity) 	Demonstrate competence in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurately comparing completed procedures against the requirement verifying that documentation requirements have been met verifying the validity of the entity's authorization to perform prescribed procedures if responsible for conducting phytosanitary procedures using or verifying the use of appropriate forms
5. Issuance of phytosanitary certificates	
Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure certificate is properly completed Issue the Certificate Supply copies and distribute Document/reference supporting material 	Demonstrate competence 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 issued. Recognizing and using appropriate forms

Examples of resource information that may be used to support issuance of phytosanitary certificates are found in Appendix 1.

This appendix was adopted by the NAPPO Executive Committee on October 28, 2013.
The appendix is for reference purposes only and is not a prescriptive part of the standard.

Appendix 1: Examples of Required Resource Information for Phytosanitary Certification

Documents or reference material

- Foreign phytosanitary import requirement updates
- Permits
- Export summaries and summary databases
- Export certification manuals
- 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.
- Bilateral work plans

This appendix was adopted by the NAPPO Executive Committee on October 28, 2013.
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Appendix 2: Examples of Courses to Meet Formal Educational Requirements*

- Plant Pathology
- Weed Sciences
- Botany
- Plant Physiology
- Entomology
- Horticulture
- Crop Science
- Pest Control
- Forestry
- General Biology
- Plant Taxonomy
- Plant Ecology
- Plant Identification
- Nematology
- Mycology
- Virology
- Malacology
- Acarology

*: This list is not exhaustive

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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, NAFTA, NAPPO, etc.)
- Phytosanitary regulations
- Phytosanitary legislation
- Pest risk analysis
- Risk assessment
- Risk management
- Quarantine treatments
- Fumigation
- Irradiation
- Cold/heat treatments

Pest identification:

- Sampling methods and examination techniques
- Demonstrated ability to handle/prepare specimens and to identify them, e.g.:
 - General taxonomy of pests
 - Fruit fly identification and management
 - Lepidoptera identification
 - Stored grain insects identification
 - Mollusk identification
 - Weed seed sampling and identification
 - Virus identification and recognition of virus symptoms

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

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Appendix 4: Auditing Checklist

Country: _____ Audit date: _____

Criteria	Section of RSPM	Complies	Does not Comply	Comments
1. Infrastructure and Resources: Have the NPPOs provided sufficient resources and an adequate work environment to ensure the proper execution of the required procedures?	1.2			
2. Maintenance of Authorization: Verify that authorized individuals continue to meet the standard through the application of audit mechanisms.	1.3			
3. Is NPPO documentation available to other NPPOs?	1.3.1			
4. Has the NPPO identified criteria for granting & revoking authorization?	1.3.2			
5. Records: Has the NPPO developed a Quality Manual?	1.4			

<p>6. Specific Requirements for an ACO: ACOs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be authorized by the NPPO; maintain documentation of authorization; follow procedures of the NPPO and base decisions on the requirements of the program; • be objective and independent; • be consistent 	<p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p>			
<p>7. Verification of competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of training • Level of experience • Level of education 	<p>2.4</p> <p>2.4.1 Annex 1 Appx 3</p> <p>2.4.2</p> <p>2.4.3 Appx 2</p>			
<p>8. Examination & Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACO should receive a passing grade upon examination as determined by the NPPO. • The examination: should be developed and administered by the NPPO; test the ability of the ACO to meet NPPO requirements; may include written or practical tests 	<p>2.5</p>			

9. Renewal of ACO Authorization: Is ACO authorization renewed at least every 3 years according to requirements?	2.6			
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