

Breadcrumb

1. [Home](#)
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

# Hand Carry Conditions for Soil

Last Modified:

The following conditions apply to all authorized soil hand-carry events.

## At Least 20 Days Prior to Each Hand-Carry Event

At least **20 days prior** to each hand-carry event, the permit holder or designee must notify the PPQ Permit Compliance Officer or designee by email ( [BlackWhiteGreenYellowlabelrequest@usda.gov](mailto:BlackWhiteGreenYellowlabelrequest@usda.gov)) or telephone (866-524-5421) to provide the following information below:

1. Permit number
2. Permit holder's name
3. Designated hand carrier's name
4. Origin of permitted article
5. Date of return to U.S. port
6. Port of entry to United States
7. Airline and flight number, flight arrival time
8. Land Border: Vehicle make/model/license, 3- hour window arrival time
9. Detailed description of the transport method to be hand-carried  
"A detailed description of the packaging method for the specimens....i.e. vials with cork lids wrapped in bubble wrap, in Ziploc bags, packed in a hard sided hand carry cooler sealed with duct tape. These details will facilitate Customs and Border Protection's inspection at the port of entry."

10. Detailed description of the specific material to be hand-carried
11. Specify the amount/article
12. Contact information for designated hand-carrier

The Compliance Officer or designee will notify an official of CBP Agricultural Programs and Trade Liaison (APTL) to document and facilitate the entry of the soil.

Visit [TSA's website](#) prior to United States arrival if connecting a domestic flight with hand-carried specimens.

TSA Contact Center:

Telephone (866-289-9673)

Email: [TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov)

Passengers can request special assistance with the screening process via the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Contact Center. Requests received via the Contact Center will be assigned to the airport you're traveling to or through, and a local TSA Official may contact you for additional information. Although special handling may be requested when traveling with fragile or sensitive items, TSA must conduct sufficient screening to ensure all property does not present a security threat.

## **CBP Inspection Process**

Inspection by CBP Officers must confirm that all hand carried articles are securely packaged as per the permit conditions. In the event that a problem is detected, the CBP officer may seize the package and require its movement to the nearest PPQ Inspection Station for processing, clearance or destruction. The permit holder will be responsible for all costs incidental to such forwarding.

## **After Inspection and Arrival at the Facility**

After CBP confirmation and clearance through the first port of entry into the United States, hand-carried soil must be transported directly to the containment facility authorized in the permit.

Upon arrival at the facility, the PPQ Compliance Officer or designee must be notified within 24 hours of the first business day. Notification may be faxed or emailed.

Fax Number: (301-734-5392)

Email: [BlackWhiteGreenYellowlabelrequest@usda.gov](mailto:BlackWhiteGreenYellowlabelrequest@usda.gov)

Notification must be by an independent third party (e.g. containment facility director, departmental chair, campus biosafety officer, etc.). The notification must include the permit number, date of arrival, the origin of the soil, and quantity. Failure to notify the PPQ compliance officer or designee may result in loss of hand-carry privileges. A PPQ inspector may also visit the facility to confirm the arrival of the package and its contents.

**Only person(s) whose name(s) is/are listed in the issued permit is/are authorized to hand-carry.**

## **Additional Soil Hand-Carry Considerations**

The following considerations apply:

1. A new permit or an amendment to an existing permit authorizing hand-carry will only be issued to persons transporting soil samples to facilities currently approved to receive and contain them, or following an inspection of a newly proposed receiving facility by PPQ personnel and a determination that the facility is physically and operationally adequate to contain the permitted articles.
2. The hand-carrier must declare the regulated material/organism at the port of entry. The hand-carrier must present acceptable personal identification documents to CBP upon request. The hand-carrier must also present a copy and/or permit number of the valid PPQ Permit that authorizes the hand-carry.
3. Applications must specifically request hand-carry event, and identify all individuals the applicant seeks to have authorized with the hand-carry of soil. Applications must include current address, telephone number, fax number, and email addresses of individuals not associated with the receiving facility who the permit holder seeks to have authorized to hand-carry the soil.
4. An authorization of hand-carry of soil is not transferable and cannot be assigned to other individuals or organizations not identified in the permit. The amendment options are a Permit Unit function.
5. Requests for hand-carry of soil have been authorized based on factors similar to the following: risk of the soil to United States agriculture and the environment, country of origin of the shipment, need to transport under cryogenics, national

security, DOD/State Department governmental agency special needs, timeliness associated with specific scientific procedures, and sometimes for samples of negligible or low risk. All soil presents some degree of risk: therefore, Permit Unit remains flexible to serve stakeholders and to protect US agriculture taking most recent bio-security information available to guide decision making.

6. An authorization for hand-carry of soil shall be denied for good cause when the desired soil samples are deemed to pose exceptional risk, when the facility's containment capabilities are likely to be exceeded, or when there is substantial risk of diversion of regulated articles from reaching containment. Other factors used in the determination include applicant history in complying with the terms and conditions of prior permits and information provided by the applicant supporting the need for a hand-carry event.
7. An authorization for hand-carry includes only the regulated article, soil, as described and identified in the permit. Presence of unauthorized articles (regulated and non-regulated) in any packages on an individual authorized to hand-carry is a permit violation. Presence of unauthorized samples at the receiving containment facility at any time is also evidence of a permit violation. Regulatory breakdowns involving permits will be reported to IES/SITC and investigated to the fullest extent of Plant Health Quarantine regulations, 7CFR330. Violators will be posted on the CITS database and infractions, depending on severity, will cause greater scrutiny of future applications by these individuals and companies.
8. Applicants with "hand carry" approval on their PPQ 525 permits will be required to comply with a 20 day prior notification procedure for each "hand carry event" authorized and coordinated by Riverdale/Permit Unit Compliance Officers or designee and communicated to CBP Inspectors in the Ports of Entry. Hand carried soil must be moved directly to the Approved Containment Facility named on the accompanying permit. Any redirection of samples must have prior approval of HQ Compliance Officer or designee or an official of CBP Agricultural Programs and Trade Liaison (APTL).
9. Sub part a. Air Transportation: The hand carry event applies to carry-on luggage and soil samples are NOT allowed in checked baggage. The regulated material must be within reach/possession of the designated carrier at all times during travel. The permit holder and their hand carry designee are responsible for secure packaging criteria and all efforts to insure sanitary/phytosanitary integrity in transit. Any rules/requirements/stipulation/laws of industry,

government agency, or other entities of authority to the movement of samples may take precedence over PPQ permit conditions. For example if the commercial transporter limits personal articles to 10 lbs (or possibly not at all) then the Permit Unit cannot leverage or expect the commercial carrier to accommodate its needs and alternatives will have to be organized. Any incidence of this nature would require reporting to the Riverdale Compliance Officer or designee immediately (i.e. within 24 hours) of return to US and clearly communicate the location and condition of regulated articles.

Sub part b. Border Crossing-Self Transport: The permit holder and their hand carry designee are responsible for secure packaging criteria and all efforts to insure sanitary/phytosanitary integrity in transit. Any rules/requirements/stipulation/laws of industry, government agency, or other entities of authority to the transportation of samples may take precedence over PPQ permit conditions. For example unforeseeable circumstances which may render DOT or DHS-CBP to prohibit or suspend land border self transport movement of soil in lieu of a security threat. In such a case or any other circumstance, Permit Services cannot leverage or expect the entity to accommodate its needs and alternatives will have to be organized. Any incidence of this nature would require reporting to the Riverdale Compliance Officer (or designee) immediately (i.e. within 24 hours) of return to US and clearly communicate the location and condition of regulated articles.

**All stakeholders are encouraged to participate in eAuthentication and take advantage of direct access to the [eFile system](#).**

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