

IMPORT CONDITIONS FOR REGULATED ARTICLES (Plant Health Ordinance 2012)

Regulated Article: Fruits and Vegetables

Scientific Name:

Country/ies: All Countries

Date Revised: **January 14, 2014**

GENERAL INFORMATION ON IMPORTATION

The information contained here covers the Plant Health Services Division (PHSD) import conditions. Importers must satisfy all import conditions that are extant at the time the commodity arrives at the port of entry in the Turks and Caicos Islands. It is the importer's responsibility to verify the accuracy and completeness of all import conditions before they attempt to import regulated articles. ¹ **Regulated Articles** may only be imported into the Turks and Caicos Islands through a port of entry.

No regulated article may be imported into the Islands unless:

1. *A plant import permit has been issued for that importation and*
2. *The regulated article meets the animal import conditions of the permit and the regulated articles is accompanied by any other documentation required by or under the Plant Health Ordinance 2012 or any other written law to accompany imports.*

There are penalties (Plant Health Ordinance 2012, Section 34, subsection 3) for persons who import a regulated article in contravention of 1. and 2. above.

Importers must give the PHSD an arrival notification of the intended importation of all imported Regulated Articles. If there is on board a vessel or aircraft arriving in the Turks and Caicos Islands any regulated article, the captain or owner of the vessel or aircraft on or before coming into a port of entry must declare to the PHSD, the presence of the regulated article on board the vessel or aircraft.

Importers must ensure that all regulated articles, intended for import, meet and comply with all requirements from any other regulatory body that may have responsibility for such import, for example, The Customs Department, Department of Environment and Maritime Affairs and the Department of Environmental Health. Importers should note that this list is may not be exhaustive.

All imported regulated articles will be subjected to an inspection by a Plant Inspector from the Inspection Unit for Plant and Animal Health at the port of entry.

CONDITIONS OF ADMINISTRATION

A. For persons wishing to import regulated articles into the Turks and Caicos Islands, they must:

1. Complete all relevant sections of the relevant **application form** and return it to the Department via email, fax or mail:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PLANT HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION
BUTTERFIELD SQUARE, 16 PARADE AVENUE
PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS
Email: agriculture@gov.tc
Telephone: 1.649.946.5801
Telefax: 1.649.941.7587

2. Be issued with an **import permit** (issued in accordance with Plant Health Ordinance 2012) in respect of the plant or associated articles to be imported;
3. Comply, in full, with all the **import requirements** for the issuance of an import permit. Failure to do so will result in the plant and/or associated articles being refused entry, held in quarantine or destroyed **within 24 hours based upon the risks posed to the Turks and Caicos Islands.**

Give **The Inspection Unit for Plant and Animal Health** at least 48 hours' notice of confirmed arrival date, time, airline/vessel number and the designated port of entry. All relevant documents (the original import permit and the original Phytosanitary Certificate/s) must accompany all consignments of plants and associated articles which must be submitted at the port of entry in order to facilitate biosecurity inspection and clearance. In some instances, especially where seeds for propagation and/ or soil are imported, a soil analysis certificate and/ or a seed purity certificate must be produced. **Failure to do so may result in delays in biosecurity clearance being approved.**

In the event that during the course of transporting the regulated article to the Turks and Caicos Islands, it was trans-shipped via another country and repackaged, a phytosanitary certificate must be obtained from the Plant Protection and Quarantine Office of that country stating that the regulated article/s did not leave the quarantine area, noting the period of time in quarantine and were not exposed to any plant pest of quarantine significance.

B. All import permit fees for regulated articles are waived until further notice.

C. It is your responsibility to contact the Plant Health Services Division, Department of Agriculture, to confirm that the import conditions below are current since plant pest status in various countries is dynamic.

SANITARY CERTIFICATION

Fruits and Vegetables for export to the Turks and Caicos Islands must have the following qualities and/ or characteristics:

1. Fruits and Vegetables must be properly packaged in suitably labeled containers, which protect the products from external or internal damage.

- a) Each container must consist of products of similar varietal characteristics which are mature but not overripe, well formed, clean, well coloured, well-trimmed and which are free from decay, anthracnose, and freezing injury and are free from damage caused by bruises, cuts or other skin breaks, pulled stems, russetting or similar discoloration, scars or scab, sunburn, sunscald or spray burn, cercospora spot, other diseases, insects, or mechanical or other means.
 - b) Fruits and Vegetables shall be packed in accordance with good commercial practice and the package shall be at least fairly tight. The weight of the smallest fruit or whole vegetable in any container shall be not less than 75 percent of the weight of the largest fruit in the container. Size of the product may be specified by count.
 - c) The labels shall have the following information: i. Name of product, ii. Number of product, iii. Source/Origin of product.
2. Fruits and vegetables must be thoroughly washed and sanitized to remove all soils, debris, weeds, and organisms. The Plant Protection Officer will deny the entry of fruits and vegetables with visible evidence of contamination or presence of foreign matter.
 3. Fruits and Vegetables transported via vessel/aircraft must be packed in clean containers, which must be suitably covered and stacked on pallets or some structure that is at least 6 inches above the floor.
 4. Storage of fruits and vegetables directly on the floor, engine room, or chemical storage room is strictly prohibited.
 5. Storage of fruits and vegetables in dwelling areas of vessels is prohibited'
 6. Fruits and vegetables must not be stored directly in the sun. The products must be properly covered and maintained at a cool temperature to minimize damage and to increase shelf life.
 7. Imported fruits and vegetables must be declared free of any injurious plant pest and diseases on a Phytosanitary Certificate issued by the agriculture authority of the Exporting Country.
 8. Imported fruits and vegetables are subject to inspection by a Plant Protection Officer at the port of entry.

Exceptions:

- Personal/Domestic quantities of fruits and vegetables do not require an Import Permit. However, a Phytosanitary Certificate is required, and declaration of the articles at the port is mandatory. Failure to declare any quantity of a regulated article is an offense, which is punishable by law.
- Personal/Domestic Quantity of fruits and vegetables means less than or equal to a total count of 25 fruits and / or vegetables of any species or variety OR 25 pounds of one or mixture of articles.
- It is highly recommended that potential importers of both personal or commercial quantities of regulated articles contact Plant Health Services Division for advice before doing so since import restrictions on that article may be in place for certain countries at that period of importation.