

MAINE SEED POTATO IMPORT REQUIREMENTS

Anyone who grows, sells, purchases, ships, or receives seed potatoes for seed, table, or processing potato production in Maine must comply with the state's seed potato import requirements. These requirements help protect Maine farms and the potato industry from serious pests and diseases. Before importing seed potatoes importers must:

1. Check geographic quarantine restrictions.
2. Obtain an import permit before shipment.
3. Submit complete supporting documents.
4. Meet testing requirement for nuclear materials.
5. Provide advanced notice and arrange an inspection.
6. Hold the shipment until it is inspected.

1. Check Geographic Quarantine Restrictions

Certain states, provinces, and regions are restricted because of regulated plant pests. For example, seed potatoes from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, and designated areas of California, Nevada, Utah, and Virginia are prohibited due to Columbia root-knot nematode. Seed potato imports from Colorado are currently suspended because of concerns related to Columbia root-knot nematode while the Department completes the required amendment to CMR 01-001, Chapter 30. Seed potatoes from designated areas of New York are restricted because of golden nematode. Seed potatoes from Prince Edward Island are prohibited because of potato wart disease.

These geographic quarantine restrictions do not apply to plantlets or nuclear seed produced under controlled laboratory and in a soilless pasteurized potting mix or from an approved hydroponic greenhouse production system. However, these materials still require an import permit and must meet all applicable documentation, inspection, and disease-testing requirements.

Importers should contact the Seed Certification Office before purchasing or arranging shipments from any restricted state, province, or region.

Important: An import permit does not override an applicable quarantine restriction.

2. Obtain an Import Permit Before Shipment

All seed potatoes imported for planting in Maine, including seed from other states and Canadian provinces, require an import permit.

The person receiving the seed potatoes is responsible for obtaining the permit before the seed enters Maine.

Import permit applications are available from:

Seed Certification Office, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
744 Main Street, Suite 9, Presque Isle, ME 04769 Tel.: 207-764-2038

A permit will be issued only after the Department determines that the seed potatoes meet all applicable Maine requirements.

Important: Do not purchase, ship, or receive seed potatoes for planting in Maine until the required import permit has been issued.

3. Submit Complete Supporting Documents

Documents required to evaluate an import permit application include:

1. A North American Certified Seed Potato Health Certificate (NAHC)
2. Current crop-year post-harvest test results for PVY and PLRV
3. Bacterial ring rot (BRR) test results
4. Potato cyst nematode documentation, when applicable
5. Required additional declarations in NAHC for seed imported from Canada

The NAHC must be complete and include:

1. Seed source and complete pedigree
2. Variety, certification number, class, and generation
3. Summer field inspection results for leafroll, mosaic, varietal mixture, and blackleg
4. Combined summer field inspection results for verticillium, fusarium, and early blight
5. Post-harvest winter test and/or laboratory-test results
6. Confirmation that the farm or farming operation where the seed was produced has been free from BRR during the previous five growing seasons
7. Confirmation that the seed lot was found free from BRR and late blight during the current growing and packing season
8. Confirmation that the seed was produced in an area free from applicable regulated pests, including golden nematode, Columbia root-knot nematode, and potato wart.
9. Confirmation that the seed lot is eligible for recertification in its state or province of origin

For seed imported from Canada, the NAHC issued by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) must include all applicable additional declarations, including BRR test and potato cyst nematode status.

Important: Missing, incomplete, or inconsistent information may delay the review or prevent issuance of an import permit. Importers should carefully review all documents before applying.

4. Meet Testing Requirements for Nuclear Materials

Plantlets, micro-tubers, mini-tubers, and other nuclear seed material imported into Maine must meet the applicable testing requirements under CMR 01-001, Chapter 252: Maine Seed Potato Certification Rule.

Importers must provide documentation demonstrating that the nuclear material has been tested, as applicable, for: Bacterial ring rot, Blackleg, Potato leafroll virus (PLRV), Potato virus A (PVA), Potato virus S (PVS), Potato virus X (PVX), Potato virus Y (PVY), Necrotic strains of potato virus Y (PVY-N), Potato mop-top virus (PMTV), and Potato spindle tuber viroid (PSTVd).

Testing documentation should clearly identify: The laboratory that performed the testing, testing method, sample or seed lot tested, date of testing, and test results.

Important: Importers should confirm the documentation and testing requirements with the Seed Certification Office before shipping nuclear material to Maine.

5. Provide Advance Notice and Arrange an Inspection

After the application is approved, the Department will issue an import permit. The importer must notify the Seed Certification Office or the area Certified Seed Specialist at least seven days before the expected arrival date. To schedule the required inspection, the importer should provide the following information to the area inspection staff:

1. The expected delivery date and time
2. The import permit number
3. Shipment and seed-lot information

4. The delivery and inspection location
5. Contact information for the person receiving the shipment

Important: Import inspection is mandatory. Any imported seed potato lot that does not undergo the required inspection is ineligible for seed crops, processing, or table-stock production in Maine.

6. Hold the Shipment Until It is Inspected

All imported seed potato lots (including nuclear seeds) and shipments must be on hold and must not be delivered, distributed, sold, or planted until inspected and released by the Department's Certified Seed Inspection Staff.

During the inspection, staff may:

1. Review of the import permit and accompanying documents
2. Confirm the identity and condition of the shipment
3. Inspect the seed potatoes
4. Collect a representative sample for evaluation or testing. A sample collected by a grower or seed dealer does not satisfy this sampling requirement.
5. Collect additional samples when necessary

Consequences of noncompliance:

Any seed potato lot that does not undergo the required import inspection is subject to removal from the State or destruction at the owner's expense. Violations may also result in applicable civil penalties. Anyone importing seed potatoes into Maine should review the following rules.

1. CMR 01-001, Chapter 30: Quarantine Regulations (Potato)
2. CMR 01-001, Chapter 252: Maine Seed Potato Certification Rule
3. CMR 01-001, Chapter 255: Imported Seed Potatoes
4. CMR 01-001, Chapter 259: Minimum Standards for Planting Potatoes

Note: Chapters 30 and 255 are currently under revision.

Important: Import inspection is mandatory in Maine. Only a seed inspector is authorized to collect official samples. Noncompliance may result in removal or destruction of the seed lot at the owner's expense, as well as applicable civil penalties.

Questions?

For questions about import permits, quarantine restrictions, documentation, inspections, or testing requirements, please contact:

Seed Certification Office
Division of Animal and Plant Health
Tel.: 207-764-2038

OR

Megan Patterson
Director, Animal and Plant Health Division
Tel.: 207-592-0911

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