

Official Use of Methyl Bromide

Methyl bromide was recognised as an ozone-depleting substance under the Montreal Protocol and control measures for the chemical were included in 1992. The control measures required developed countries (including New Zealand) to phase out the production and consumption of methyl bromide by 1 January 2005 and 1 January 2015 for developing countries. Three categories of methyl bromide use are exempted from phase-out under the control measures: use as a chemical feedstock, uses that the Parties to the Montreal Protocol deem 'critical' subsequent to complete phase-out, and use for quarantine and pre-shipment (QPS).

New Zealand is required to provide the Ozone Secretariat statistical data on the annual amount of methyl bromide used for QPS purposes and implement procedures to monitor the uses of methyl bromide for QPS purposes by commodity and quantity.

Definition of Quarantine and Pre-Shipment

Pre-Shipment

- a. Any treatments applied, no later than 21 days before export, to meet:
 - i. The official requirements of the importing country; or
 - ii. The existing official requirements of the exporting country - being the official requirement performed or authorised by a national plant, animal, environmental, health, or stored product authority; but
- b. Does not include quarantine applications

Quarantine: any treatments to prevent the introduction, establishment and/or spread of quarantine pests (including diseases), or to ensure their official control, where:

- a. Official control is that performed by, or authorised by, a national plant, animal or environmental protection or health authority.
- b. Quarantine pests are pests of potential importance to the areas endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled.

An important aspect of these definitions is that they both relate to *official* actions.

Contractual or commercial requirements alone are not sufficient reason to allow exemption from phase-out under the QPS exemption.

Examples that May Fall under Quarantine Use

Official treatment in country of origin

A methyl bromide treatment required by official phytosanitary requirements of an importing country against a quarantine pest known to infest a particular commodity.

- **Example:** *Treatment of packed commodities subject to infestation by the khapra beetle (such as rice, spices, or materials packed in straw and/or wooden crates) for shipment from a country where the khapra beetle is known to be established to a country free from the pest.*
- **Reasoning:** *The khapra beetle is a quarantine pest in a number of importing countries. Typically methyl bromide is specified for its control.*
- **Example:** *Methyl bromide treatment in New Zealand of logs to control bark beetles. The logs are destined for India where the insects are not established.*
- **Reasoning:** *Bark beetles are a quarantine pest for India.*
- **Example:** *Methyl bromide fumigation of wood packaging material to ISPM No. 15 for containerised cargo from New Zealand to the USA.*
- **Reasoning:** *Methyl bromide is one of two treatment options approved in ISPM No. 15 for the treatment of wood packaging material to help control the spread of quarantine pests, such as Asian longhorn beetle, in the USA.*

Official treatment on arrival

Official treatment of an imported consignment where a quarantine pest is detected.

- **Example:** *Methyl bromide treatment of a container of copra meal from a pacific island found to be infested with crazy ants on arrival in New Zealand.*
- **Reasoning:** *The crazy ant is a quarantine pest for New Zealand and methyl bromide is specified as a control measure.*

Official treatment within a country

Official treatment of a commodity transported within a country from an area where a quarantine pest is present to an area where it is not present or not widely distributed, and under official control.

- **Example:** *Methyl bromide treatment of fresh fruit, e.g. citrus, shipped into Western Australia from Queensland as a precaution against Queensland fruit fly (*Bactrocera tryoni*), which is a pest established in Queensland, Australia.*
- **Reasoning:** *the fruit fly is not present in Western Australia and is under official control as a quarantine pest.*

Eradication of a quarantine pest from an area

Treatment of an established quarantine pest with a view to its control and eventual eradication from a country.

- **Example:** Methyl bromide treatment of subterranean termites in houses and in other structures.
- **Reasoning:** Subterranean termites are quarantine pests in New Zealand and subject to official control.

Examples that May Not Fall within the QPS Exemption

- *Pre-shipment treatments carried out at greater than 21 days prior to export.*
- *Treatments carried out for contractual reasons, not officially required or authorised.*
- *Domestic furniture infested with borer*

Non-QPS Uses

Methyl bromide has also been used as a general fumigant to control pests in industries like strawberry growing or for grain silos. However as a member the Montreal Protocol the import of methyl bromide for non-QPS purposes was prohibited as from 1 January 2005 and New Zealand applied to the *Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol for Critical-Use Exemptions* (CUEs) to import methyl bromide for a limited time for the strawberry industry only which ends in 2007.

You are urged to reduce the use of methyl bromide and use non-ozone-depleting alternatives wherever possible including recapture.

A brochure produced jointly by the secretariats of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the International Plant Protection Convention is available @:

<http://www.unep.ch/ozone/Publications/UNEP-Ozone-Secretariat-MP-Brochure.pdf>

Also Ministry of Economic Development:

http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentPage_12349.aspx

Also Ministry for the Environment:

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/ozone/depleting-substances/methyl-bromide.html>

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