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Legal use of methyl bromide



Methyl bromide is an ozone depleting gas and a controlled substance. In Australia it can only be used as a fumigant for quarantine and pre-shipment purposes, unless the Australian Government has given permission for another use. Heavy penalties apply for any unauthorised use of methyl bromide.

You can protect yourself and the environment by using methyl bromide correctly and fulfilling your legal obligations.

Approved quarantine and pre-shipment uses

Quarantine use—methyl bromide can be authorised by a government authority to fumigate imports into the country. For example:

- ✓ fumigating an imported consignment of goods infested with a pest at the port of entry (wooden products, household items, returned equipment, flowers).
- ✓ fumigating an imported consignment of goods that may contain a pest and is not accompanied by an acceptable treatment certificate.
- ✓ fumigating a commodity or consignment being shipped interstate where the receiving state or territory government has mandated the use of methyl bromide to control or eradicate pest species (branched broomrape, nematodes).

Pre-shipment use—methyl bromide can be used to fumigate a product or commodity before exporting, where it is required by the importing country to ensure it is free from pests. For example:

- ✓ fumigating a commodity being exported from Australia to meet incoming phytosanitary requirements (wheat, cottonseed, logs).

Illegal use of methyl bromide

You cannot use methyl bromide:

- ☒ without a direction from a quarantine authority or from a foreign government.
- ☒ for a soil or structural fumigation without approval from the Australian Government.
- ☒ solely to meet contractual or commercial requirements.

Supplier checklist

When selling methyl bromide you need to:

- ☒ Check the buyer will only be using methyl bromide for:
 - » quarantine use on imports or
 - » pre-shipment use on exports.
 - ☒ Make sure the buyer signs a declaration to confirm these purposes.
 - ☒ Keep a copy of this record for at least five years.
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- ☒ Do not sell to a buyer that will be using methyl bromide for a purpose other than quarantine and pre-shipment use.
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Buyer checklist

If you buy methyl bromide you need to:

- ☒ Make sure it will only be used for a quarantine and pre-shipment use.
 - ☒ Sign a declaration at the time of purchase confirming you are using methyl bromide for these purposes only.
 - ☒ Keep a record of each fumigation, including the reference number, for at least five years.
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- ☒ You cannot use methyl bromide for any other purpose other than quarantine and pre-shipment use without the approval of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.
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Further information

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

HOW DOES METHYL BROMIDE DEplete THE OZONE?



METHYL BROMIDE is a bromine-containing halocarbon used as a fumigant in Australia and the rest of the world.

It is one of the substances determined to be a **main cause of ozone loss**.



METHYL BROMIDE IS A GAS. When used as a fumigant, its molecules are released into the air, gather in the atmosphere and stratosphere and eventually decompose and release bromine atoms.

Bromine atoms contribute to a disruption to the delicate chemical balance that maintains our ozone layer, **causing it to be destroyed faster than it is created**.



Scientists suggest that emissions of methyl bromide by humans was responsible for up to **10% of global ozone depletion** around the turn of his century.



This leads to depletion of the ozone layer which allows more ultra-violet radiation to reach the earth and cause human cancers and cataracts.

