



Changes to khapra beetle treatments for imports to Australia information sessions: Q&A

Questions from both sessions (15 & 20 May 2025)

1. Do dehydrated powdered plant products for human consumption that are not classified as high-risk require methyl bromide fumigation? If not, what type of fumigation should be done? Should the fumigation be conducted on the packaged goods or the empty container?

If the powdered plant products are not high-risk plant products, khapra beetle treatment is not required for the goods. However, the container may still need treatment if it also carries high-risk plant products or is being delivered to a rural khapra risk postcode in Australia.

If the powdered plant products are on the high-risk list, treatment is not required if they are packaged in bags of 25kg or less. This is because the goods meet the following exemption criteria: *'Goods that are commercially milled or ground to a powder, meal or flakes and packaged in bags less than or equal to 25kg.'* However, if they are in larger bags, treatment is required.

See the [full list of high-risk plant products and exemptions](#).

2. The new treatment certificate has two temperature columns. If the ambient temperature is the same for both, can we enter the same value in both columns?

The two temperatures are referring to related, but separate aspects. The treatment schedule is what is required by the department. Fumigation details refer to the treatment applied. For example, for khapra beetle the schedule is 80g/m³ for 48 hours at 21°C. If the minimum temperature is actually 18°C, then the fumigation details should say 88g/m³ for 48hrs at 18°C.

3. If the temperature during treatment is higher than the minimum (e.g. 21°C), can that temperature be entered in both columns on the certificate?

The treatment schedule for khapra beetle is always set at 21°C, as that is the required minimum. If the actual temperature during treatment is higher (e.g. 25°C), then state 21°C in the treatment schedule and 25°C in the treatment details column.

4. On the new treatment certificate, should the client name refer to the exporter or the importer?

The client name should be the person or company that arranged or requested the treatment. This could be the exporter, freight forwarder, importer, or another party.

5. Can both the exporter's and importer's names be included on the treatment certificate?

Yes.

6. Can grains be fumigated in perforated bulk bags before they are packed into laminated plastic pouches?

Yes, so long as the fumigation is compliant with the requirements of the methodology and the goods are exported within 21 days of treatment.

7. Can laminate (impermeable) pouches be loaded into a treated container after packing?

Yes, but only if certain conditions are met.

For high-risk goods, both the goods and the container must be treated. This can be done in two ways:

- Separately: The goods are treated **before** packing into impermeable pouches, and the container is treated on its own.
- Together: The goods are loaded into the container, and the entire container is treated, but only if the packaging is suitable for effective fumigation (i.e. permeable).

If both the goods and the container have already been treated properly, there is no need to treat them again after loading.

8. Some countries have banned the use of methyl bromide for fumigation. Are alternative fumigants like aluminium phosphide accepted?

The department has approved several alternative treatments to methyl bromide for managing khapra beetle risks in high-risk plant products. These include:

- Heat treatment
- Controlled atmosphere treatment
 - Altered pressure
 - Atmospheric pressure

Alternative treatments to methyl bromide for managing khapra beetle risks in sea containers include:

- Heat treatment
- Insecticide treatment.

While aluminium phosphide is not currently listed among the approved alternatives for khapra beetle, the department continues to explore and assess new treatment options. Submissions of relevant scientific research or proposals for [alternative treatments](#) are welcomed.

9. For powdered plant products for human consumption, what type of fumigation and certificate is required for empty container only, commodity and packaging only and, loaded container with the goods inside?

Australia's khapra beetle requirements have 2 components, high-risk plant products and sea containers. The required fumigation and certificate depend on the type of goods and where the container will be unpacked.

- Powdered plant products on high-risk list, in bags over 25kg: Both the goods and the container must be treated. This can be done separately or together (as a loaded container).
- Powdered plant products on high-risk list, in bags under 25 kg, or powdered plant products **not** on high-risk list: No treatment is needed, unless the container is being unpacked in a rural khapra risk postcode.

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- Any goods unpacked in a rural khapra risk postcode: The container must be treated. Goods only need treatment if they are high-risk.

Please refer to [BICON](#) (Biosecurity Import Conditions system) for relevant import conditions.

10. What fumigation certificates are required for different treatment scenarios, such as empty containers, or loaded containers?

If both the goods and the container require treatment, you have two options:

- Treat separately: The plant products and the container can be treated individually, with a separate certificate issued for each treatment.
- Treat together: If the plant products are packaged appropriately to allow effective fumigation, the goods can be loaded into the container and treated as a single unit. In this case, only one certificate is required for the combined treatment.

11. Is methyl bromide fumigation effective against khapra beetle eggs?

Yes, Australia's approved methyl bromide fumigation rates are effective against all life stages of the khapra beetle, including eggs.

12. How effective is fumigation in powdered products (i.e. flour) compared to whole grains, and what measures are needed to ensure 100% pest mortality?

Powdered plant products in packages weighing less than 25kg are not classified as high-risk under Australia's khapra beetle measures and do not require fumigation. Products in packages over 25kg do require treatment. The treatment provider should consider absorption requirements of the product being fumigated. All treatments require concentration monitoring to ensure sufficient concentrations are maintained during the exposure period.

13. How long is an offshore treatment provider's registration valid for?

AusTreat approvals are valid for three years from the date of registration, unless revoked earlier.

AFAS approvals remain valid indefinitely, unless the department is notified of changes by the local government authority, non-compliance is identified, or the provider voluntarily withdraws from the scheme.

14. Can you provide the slides for the presentation?

Yes, the [presentation slides](#) are available on our website.

15. The new treatment certificate doesn't have a specific option for fumigation using a sheeted container. If the treatment is carried out using a sheeted enclosure, which option should we select on the certificate?

If fumigation is done using a sheeted enclosure, select the "sheeted enclosure" option on the treatment certificate. Also, make sure to tick the box indicating that the container is part of the treatment, so it's correctly recorded as treated.

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16. According to the website, treatment certificate version 2.0 is acceptable until 30 June. Can we continue using it up to that date, and from when is Version 3.0 required?

Yes, Version 2.0 of the treatment certificate is acceptable until 30 June 2025, provided that the actual treatment is conducted in line with the Version 3.0 requirements.

From 1 July 2025, only Version 3.0 certificates will be accepted. Treatment providers should ensure they understand the updated requirements and transition to the new certificate format by then.

17. The new requirements apply from 28 May 2025. Is this based on the shipped-on board date?

The 28 May 2025 implementation date is based on the date the phytosanitary certificate is issued, not the shipped-on board date.

This means that any phytosanitary certificate issued on or after 28 May 2025 must comply with the updated requirements.

18. What is the correct process to follow for a part consignment, such as when only two pallets of a khapra high risk commodity are being shipped?

If the products are classified as high risk, both the goods and the container will require treatment.

19. The new treatment certificate includes 3 Threshold Limit Value (TLV) readings. Do all 3 need to be below 5 ppm?

No, not all 3 readings are required to be below 5 ppm. If the first TLV reading is below 5 ppm, no further readings are needed. The second and third readings are only required if the first reading is above 5 ppm, to confirm that the fumigant concentration has dropped to a safe level before ventilation is complete.

20. Can an unsheeted container be fumigated?

For containers subject to khapra measures, sea container fumigations must be done with the container doors open and under a gas-tight fumigation sheet.

This setup ensures that the fumigant can circulate effectively and reach all areas inside and outside the container.

21. If cargo is fumigated in bulk packaging before being repacked into smaller packages and loaded into a container, can it be fumigated again with methyl bromide after packing?

Yes, cargo that has been fumigated in permeable bulk packaging, can be fumigated after being repacked into smaller packages and loaded into a container, for the purposes of fumigating the container itself.

Since the cargo has already been effectively fumigated, a second fumigation is not required for the goods. Therefore, the goods can be in any type of packaging when loaded into the container, as they have already been treated.

Our [infographic](#) on khapra beetle methyl bromide treatments outlines scenarios for treating goods and containers.

22. When methyl bromide is applied at 80 g/m³ in a sheeted bulk lot or container, and the monitoring meter shows “over range” within 30 minutes to 2 hours despite continuous fan operation, what action should be taken?

We’re aware that some concentration monitoring devices have higher range limits which display an ‘over range’ message once that threshold has been reached. If you have taken steps to ensure the gas is evenly distributed throughout the enclosure and the device is still displaying this message, we are comfortable with you recording ‘over range’ in the start point concentration readings section of the record of fumigation and beginning the exposure period.

23. Are wood paper bags considered gas permeable? Is there a list of approved gas-permeable bag types that the department can provide or share?

Wood paper bags are generally considered gas permeable, however their suitability depends on the material. If the bags are coated, waxed, laminated, or lined, they may impede methyl bromide penetration and must be slashed, removed, or perforated to meet the standards in Section 3.2 of the Methyl Bromide Fumigation Methodology. The department does not provide a list of approved gas-permeable bags, but the [Guide to Packaging Suitability for Performing QPS Treatments](#) offers examples and visual references to help assess compliance. Final determination should be made on a case-by-case basis by the fumigator in charge.

An [infographic](#) is also available outlining suitable and unsuitable packaging options.

24. If containers can be fumigated overseas with goods inside, why isn’t the same allowed in Australia for untreated consignments? Why must they be exported, fumigated offshore, and then re-imported?

The requirement to fumigate high risk goods and containers offshore isn’t due to concerns about the fumigation process or its effectiveness in Australia, but rather to manage the biosecurity risk posed by khapra beetle. If an untreated container arrives in Australia and is moved before fumigation, beetles or eggs hidden in areas such as under the container could be dislodged. This poses a serious threat to Australia, particularly in rural or sensitive areas. Requiring fumigation offshore helps ensure the risk is managed before the container arrives in Australia.

25. For used machinery imported from a khapra-identified country, is fumigation required if it’s going to a rural area? Can it be fumigated in Australia, or must it be unpacked in a metropolitan area only?

Currently, if used machinery is imported from a khapra target-risk country and is being unpacked in a rural khapra-risk postcode of Australia, offshore fumigation is required. This includes machinery that isn’t carrying high-risk plant products. This requirement is based on a risk assessment conducted by the department, which found that without offshore risk management measures, the likelihood of khapra beetle entry, establishment, and spread would not meet Australia’s appropriate level of protection.

However, the department is actively reviewing this policy. We are considering the possibility of permitting onshore treatment for containers that are not carrying high-risk plant products, are imported from a khapra target-risk country and, are destined for rural unpack locations. This review will take time, as it involves careful consideration of biosecurity risks and operational feasibility.

In the meantime, the current requirement remains in place: unpack in a metropolitan area or ensure offshore treatment is completed before arrival.

26. What if the product is organic and cannot be treated with methyl bromide?

Both heat and controlled atmosphere treatments are approved alternative treatments for managing khapra beetle risk in organic products.

Please refer to [BICON](#) (Biosecurity Import Conditions system) for specific treatment requirements. We are actively reviewing additional alternative treatment options and welcome input from industry.

27. Are the new phytosanitary certificate wordings required based on the date the goods leave the exporting country, or the date they arrive in Australia?

The new statements are required for consignments accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued on or after 28 May 2025.

This requirement is based on the date of issue of the phytosanitary certificate, not the date the goods are shipped or arrive in Australia.

28. Does the department have an official definition or link explaining what qualifies as “permeable packaging” that we can share with importers, exporters, and foreign forwarders?

A detailed [guide on packaging suitability](#) is available on our website, along with an [infographic](#) highlighting suitable and unsuitable packaging options.

29. We often see a “hold pending pest ID” status but rarely receive the identification result, unless the goods are fresh cut flowers. Why is that?

This is a known issue and one that has been raised more broadly by industry. While pest identification (ID) holds are common, the results are not always routinely communicated, especially for non-perishable goods. The department is working to improve this process through the development of new ICT systems, which will enhance visibility and communication of pest identification outcomes. However, these improvements will take time to implement.

In the meantime, you are encouraged to follow up directly with the department to request the pest identification result for your consignment. We also recommend checking the Biosecurity Industry Portal. Under the “Industry Reporting” section, go to the “Cargo Status” tab. There, you may find comments that include the insect identification for your consignment.

30. What happens if a fumigation monitoring reading drops below the standard concentration but stays above the minimum concentration for a top-up?

Always go by the lowest reading. If the concentration is below the standard but still above the minimum required for a top-up, a top-up can be done. If the concentration is below both the standard and the minimum, the fumigation has failed and must be restarted.

Note: This applies to final readings. If a reading during fumigation falls below the standard, the fumigation has failed.

31. In AFAS countries, there’s currently an exemption allowing certificates from unregistered fumigators if the treatment is endorsed on the phytosanitary certificate. Do the new changes (e.g. NPPO supervision) apply in these cases?

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The changes only apply to treatment providers with a status of “Suspended”, “Unacceptable”, “Under Review” or “Withdrawn”. Unregistered providers with no assigned status, regardless of location including AFAS countries, are not affected. The department will continue to monitor compliance with import conditions.

32. Could you please clarify 10.1 of the fumigation methodology. Does topping up with methyl bromide during the exposure period require all concentration readings to be at or above the standard concentration?

There are two scenarios for topping up with methyl bromide: during the exposure period and at the end of the exposure period.

During the exposure period: Topping up is allowed only if all concentration readings are at or above the standard. If any reading is below the standard, the fumigation has failed.

At the end of the exposure period: Topping up is allowed if the concentration is below the standard but still above the minimum threshold for a top-up. In this case, the exposure period must be extended and new readings taken after 4 hours. If the concentration is below the minimum threshold, the fumigation has failed.

33. What happens if a treatment provider is suspended while a container is in transit? For example, the treatment was completed while the provider was still approved, but they were suspended before the consignment arrived in Australia. Will the goods still be accepted, or will they need to be re-exported?

If a treatment provider is suspended while a container is in transit, we will assess the risk on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, alternative onshore measures may be permitted. For example, allowing the container to be unpacked at a metropolitan location to reduce risk. Factors such as the reason for suspension, the date the phytosanitary certificate was issued, and the type of packaging used may also be considered when determining the appropriate onshore outcome.

34. What is the duration of the transitional period starting from 28 May?

The transitional period will run for a minimum of 10 weeks, during which and we will be monitoring compliance during this period. It may be extended if necessary.

35. Have there been any changes to the required declarations on fumigation certificates?

Yes, there has been a change in the declarations on fumigation certificates between version 2 and version 3 of the methodology, so it's important to ensure you're using the correct version.

Note that the changes related to khapra declarations apply to phytosanitary certificates, not fumigation certificates.

36. Does khapra beetle treatment also meet the treatment requirements for Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB)?

Yes. A single treatment can be used to manage both khapra beetle and BMSB risks, provided that the consignment is packaged correctly, and the minimum treatment parameters for both Khapra and BMSB measures are fully met in accordance with the relevant import conditions.