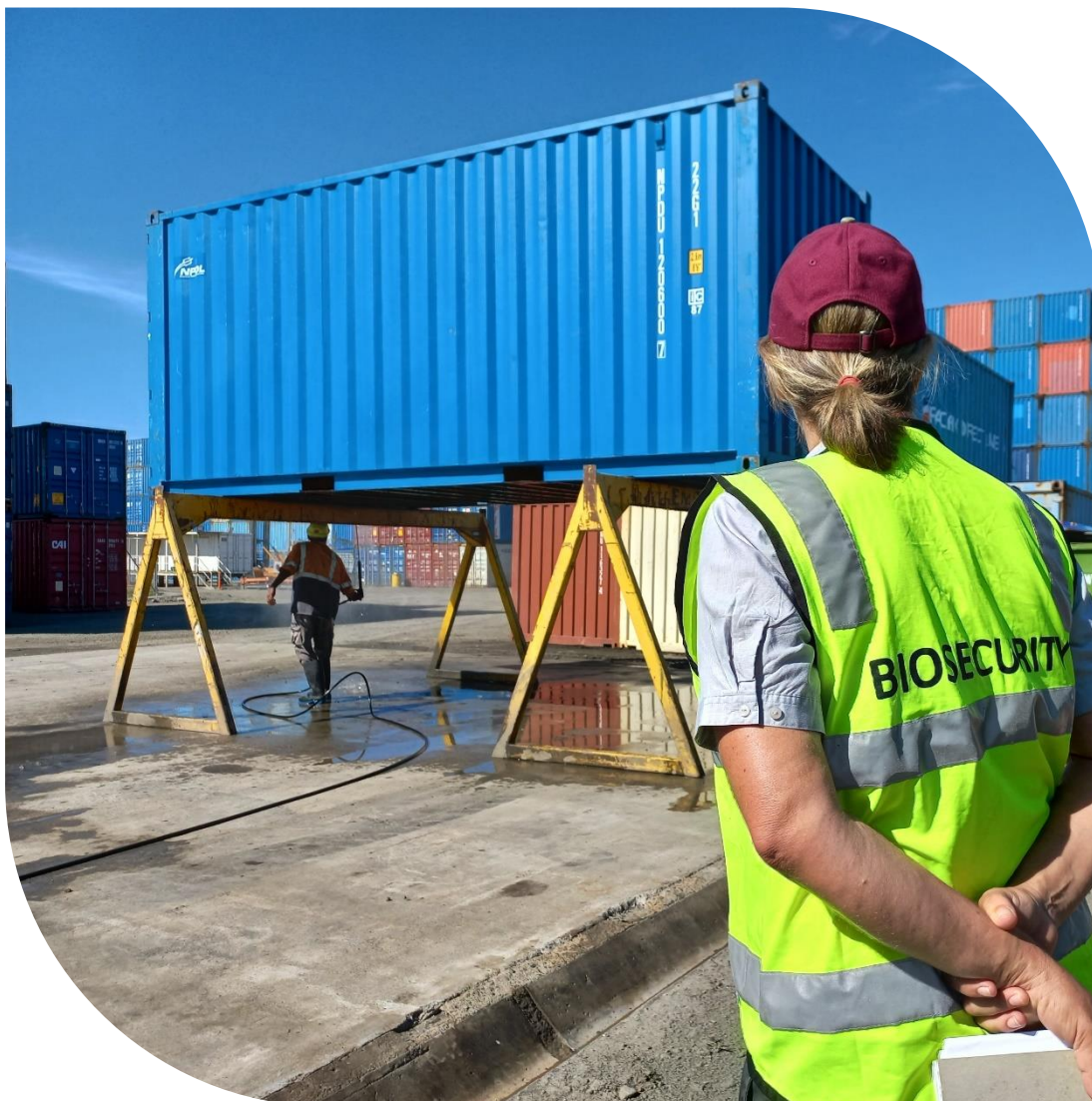




Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Sea Container Hygiene System Assessment and Management Policy

Biosecurity Operations Division – April 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the governance arrangements, administration, roles and responsibilities and actions applicable to the management of containers under the Sea Container Hygiene System (SCHS).

1 Overview

The SCHS supports voluntary arrangements between the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) and industry entities undertaking offshore management of biosecurity risks associated with sea containers. The SCHS provides a higher level of confidence that containers shipped from recognised facilities and load ports arrive in Australia free from biosecurity risk concerns.

Under the SCHS, containers will be risk managed (cleaned, treated and inspected) externally (and internally, if empty) as detailed in a department recognised Quality Manual (QM) or Code of Practice (COP). This provides opportunity for reduced intervention by the department on arrival and more effective allocation of inspection resources to managing biosecurity risk.

The SCHS Assessment and Management Policy (the SCHS policy) applies to containers that have been risk managed at a recognised SCHS facility and exported to Australia.

The SCHS policy specifies the methods for determining the appropriate on-arrival inspection rate, roles and responsibilities of participating parties and the use of biosecurity risk analysis in applying appropriate actions relating to the SCHS. The SCHS policy cannot and is not intended to limit the exercise of powers or the performance of duties or functions under the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#).

Arrangements under the SCHS may be reviewed at the department's discretion and will be subject to risk reviews as determined by the department. As such, SCHS arrangements may require additional measures to be implemented to incorporate management strategies that address emerging pests.

2 System Objectives

Australia's biosecurity system aims to protect Australia against pests and diseases likely to harm our country's natural environment, agricultural systems, and economy. A strong biosecurity system is critical to safeguard our international reputation for high-quality produce which helps to maintain and expand overseas markets, and our response to emerging threats.

Biosecurity is a critical part of the government's efforts to prevent, respond to and recover from pests and diseases that threaten the economy and environment. The department works to ensure continued market access for our products and to maintain our high standards for emergency response.

Biosecurity has played a critical role in reducing risk and shaping our nation to become one of the few countries in the world to remain free from the world's most severe pests and diseases.

The department will continue to strengthen our partnerships with industry to mitigate biosecurity risks offshore and streamline the entry of goods into Australia, reducing the burden of regulatory processes. Managing biosecurity risks offshore is more cost effective than dealing with an incursion or an established pest or weed. Our ongoing commitment to biosecurity gives us confidence that we can continue to keep pest and disease threats out of Australia and respond to those that reach Australia swiftly and effectively. Australia works across the whole biosecurity continuum with offshore, at the border and onshore measures which focus on assessing and managing potential biosecurity threats.

From a biosecurity perspective, the SCHS provides an increased level of confidence in the integrity of offshore measures and encourages industry to identify and manage biosecurity risks associated with the movement of sea containers. The SCHS provides opportunities for entities to reduce biosecurity risks and associated costs by implementing quality assurance procedures that can significantly reduce biosecurity contamination on containers resulting in benefits for industry and exporters.

Industry can benefit from reduced costs for onshore biosecurity activities including inspection, treatment and storage costs.

3 System Intervention Methodology

The SCHS is a performance-based scheme. The rate of onshore intervention will be determined by the department based on the ongoing assessment of biosecurity risk of containers arriving into Australia from approved facilities. Performance is monitored by verification inspection results against established biosecurity risk material contamination thresholds and adherence to QM and COP requirements, confirmed through internal audits provided by the SCHS entity, departmental audits or as otherwise determined by the department.

Where an entity operates on behalf of multiple shipping lines, the department may randomly select containers for inspection from each shipping line to meet verification intervention rates.

3.1 Contamination Categories and Thresholds

The department has established biosecurity risk material tolerance thresholds for (a) instances of contamination based around specific pests and (b) general contamination associated with sea containers managed through the SCHS. The applicable thresholds, relative to container verification inspections are as follows:

- 5 % or greater of SCHS containers with 'general' contaminants from SCHS facilities
- 0.50 % or greater of SCHS containers with actionable ants by SCHS facilities
- 0.02 % or greater of SCHS containers with actionable snail detections from SCHS facilities.

SCHS entities should manage hygiene practices and instances of contamination to be below these threshold tolerances.

Contamination detections associated with either the goods or internal surfaces of full containers will NOT count against the SCHS facility.

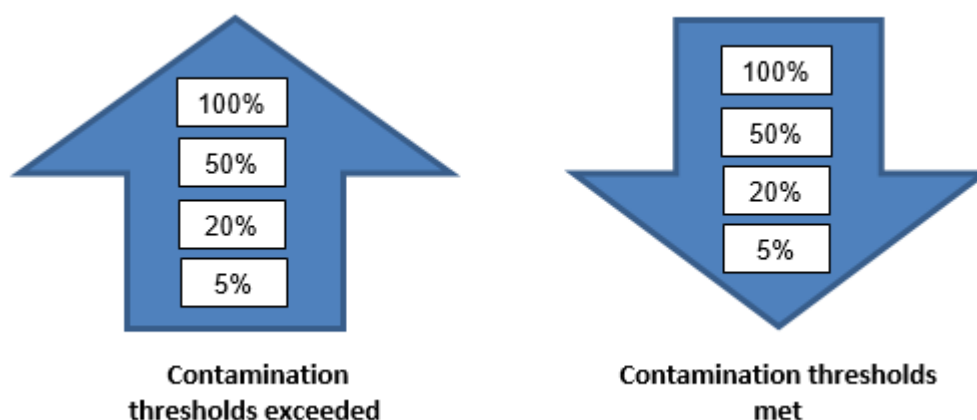
3.2 Quarterly Intervention Assessment

Verification inspection results are considered each calendar quarter to determine the on-arrival intervention rate for the next quarter.

If contamination thresholds over a quarterly period are exceeded for any of the categories, the on-arrival intervention rate for the SCHS facility will increase to the next highest increment for the following quarter. Where a significant biosecurity risk with the categories is apparent or where biosecurity risk factors are determined to have changed; the department may apply an assurance period (see Section 5.3) or a higher ongoing inspection rate at its discretion.

If the contamination thresholds are not exceeded for a quarterly period, the on-arrival inspection rate for the SCHS facility will decrease to the next lowest increment for the following quarter.

These intervention rates are adjusted on a quarterly basis to reflect the level of assessed biosecurity risk against the contamination thresholds.



Where an entity undertakes additional departmental approved treatments to address specific pests (e.g. Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, Khapra beetle), non-compliance for these treatments will be managed separately under that specific scheme and is not considered under the SCHS compliance model.

New SCHS facilities must demonstrate management of biosecurity risk against the contamination thresholds for a full quarter to be considered for reduced intervention rates, which will be applied incrementally as per above. Refer to [Appendix 3: Quarterly Review Process](#).

Inactivity of SCHS Facility

If a SCHS facility has reached the 5% intervention rate and there have been nil SCHS containers received into Australia for a consecutive six-month period, the inspection rate will be increased to 20% for the following quarter. The intervention rate of 20% will remain until a sufficient number of containers relative to the scale of operations have been received for a quarterly intervention assessment. This will provide the department with confidence that the facility is continuing to manage contamination risks as outlined in the SCHS requirements. The SCHS facility will continue to be subject to internal and departmental audit requirements to maintain recognition.

3.3 Reactive intervention in event of specific pest interceptions

In addition to quarterly intervention assessment verification intervention rates may be varied in the event of specific pest interceptions. Detections of actionable snails, actionable ants or other significant actionable pests as identified by the departments entomologist from the Operational Science and Surveillance section, will result in standard inspection rates being applied to containers for a set period or until the department is satisfied the biosecurity risk is being appropriately managed.

Actionable snails, actionable ants or other actionable pests: On interception of actionable snails, actionable ants or other actionable pests, all remaining voyage containers from the identified SCHS facility yet to leave the Australian discharge port, will be subject to 100 per cent inspection. In the event of highly mobile pest interceptions, in-contact cargo, may also be directed for inspection. On completion of the voyage, the interception level will revert to the level prior to the pest interception, for other actionable pests only.

Actionable snails and actionable ants: Interceptions of actionable snails or actionable ants on a voyage will further result in an immediate increase in the intervention rate for the identified affected SCHS facility of the contaminated container, to the heightened level of 100 per cent for a minimum period of 30 days (an assurance period), or until the department is satisfied the biosecurity risk is being appropriately managed.

If no further interceptions of actionable snails or actionable ants are detected during the assurance period (with an adequate sample size inspected as determined by the department), the SCHS facility intervention will be adjusted to the next highest increment to that it was operating at prior to the pest interception (refer to example below). Should further interceptions occur during the assurance period, the load port will remain at 100 per cent for the remainder of the quarter.

Example: Intervention level adjustments for a load port with an interception of actionable snails or actionable ants:

- Pre heightened intervention level: 5%
- Heightened intervention (**assurance**) period (30 days): 100%
- Post heightened intervention level: 20%

Note: On successful completion of the assurance period, if the previous operating rate was 50 per cent, it would **NOT** increase to 100 per cent but would **remain unchanged** at 50 per cent. However, any instances of contamination will be included in the quarterly assessment against the contamination thresholds.

The department will apply increased inspection rates at its discretion to assess and manage biosecurity risk. Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- new or emerging seasonal or other biosecurity threats identified as posing an unacceptable level of biosecurity risk, compromising the integrity of the system.

- non-reported changes to the recognised offshore operational processes and procedures (as documented in the entity's COP or QM).

Refer to [Appendix 2: Actionable Snail and Actionable Ant detection](#).

Seasonal or emerging pests managed under other department treatment schemes will not result in further intervention unless the pest detection can be directly linked to SCHS container hygiene non-conformance.

4 Reporting Requirements

SCHS entities must provide SCHS voyage notifications for containers that have been fully processed under the SCHS a minimum of 24 hours prior to vessel arrival at first point of entry in Australia. Failure to submit a SCHS notification for a voyage will result in all containers for that voyage being inspected at standard intervention rates.

The SCHS voyage notification template is provided when a facility is recognised. The template outlines the minimum information to be submitted to the department's Container National Coordination Centre. If required, a new template can be requested by emailing container.ncc@aff.gov.au.

To meet the prescribed reporting requirements within the [Biosecurity Regulations](#), the principal shipping agent for the vessel must also report discharge details for all containers and breakbulk cargo in the Department of Home Affairs' Australian Border Force (ABF) [Integrated Cargo System \(ICS\)](#). This information must be lodged no later than 48 hours before the vessel is estimated to arrive at its first port in Australian territory; or if the voyage is shorter than 48 hours, 12 hours before the vessel is estimated to arrive at its first port in Australian territory.

Inaccurate, late or incorrect SCHS notification may result in the department taking action including but not limited to those described in [Appendix 1: Actions for managing non-conformity with SCHS notification requirements](#).

5 Reporting of inspection results

Verification inspection results data, compiled by the department, is used to generate reports that aim to assist, monitor, manage and inform system biosecurity risk management.

Reports are provided to the entity's SCHS contacts. In the event the entity requires additional information, a formal request should be made to the department by emailing SCHSCargoPolicy@aff.gov.au. The report format may be subject to change based on the business and operational requirements of the department. All amendments will be advised to SCHS entities by the department prior to implementation.

5.1 Immediate alert reports

Immediate alerts are generated by the department to inform the facility of the interception of pests. The report includes details regarding the contaminated container, SCHS load port, type and quantity of pests detected, and application of any sanctions. Immediate alerts will be generated within 24 hours of species-level identification by a department entomologist, to support the SCHS facility at the load port to take prompt and effective corrective action as necessary.

Alert reports may also be generated to inform the entity of other operational or systemic issues allowing for the commencement of immediate review and corrective action.

5.2 Voyage reports

Voyage reports are created on completion of the container inspections at all Australian discharge ports, and submission of inspection results for the individual voyage. The report provides a breakdown of any contamination found and a progressive total for the current quarterly period. Voyage reports are generated within 10 working days of completion of verification inspections. Voyage reports are only produced for new facilities during their first quarter following department recognition or until a new facility achieves reduced intervention.

5.3 Quarterly reports

Quarterly reports are created on completion of a quarterly calendar period. This provides official notification of system performance for the quarter and informs adjustments to the applied intervention level for the new quarter. In addition, the quarterly report provides both the department and entity with a record summary of all threshold breaches and events of heightened intervention due to actionable pest interceptions during the quarter. In the event a heightened period of intervention overlaps the change in system quarters, inspection results may be carried over to the next quarterly report. Reports are generated within 10 working days of the end of the respective quarter.

5.3.1 Quarterly periods

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
January to March	April to June	July to September	October to December

6 Approved SCHS Label

Approved SCHS labels are stickers that are applied to the container door that are identifiable to biosecurity officers at the port of discharge. Label templates must be approved by the department prior to use. The labels provide verification that SCHS offshore standard operating procedures have been followed. Labels should indicate:

- port or facility cleaning provider
- date cleaning and treatment were completed, and
- staff responsible for undertaking cleaning and treatment activities.

The information on the stickers may be used for verification purposes by the department and for investigation of incidents of biosecurity risk detections by the SCHS entity. [A sample SCHS Label is provided at Appendix 4.](#)

7 System Auditing

SCHS facilities are subject to regular internal and external audit requirements to ensure they are functioning as per the recognised QM or COP. The audits allow for continuous system improvement by ports and facilities and provide the department assurance the system is maintaining an acceptable level of biosecurity risk mitigation.

Internal audits should be undertaken annually as a minimum. These audits may be conducted by a suitably experienced SCHS manager or supervisor for the facility or a third party auditor accredited and registered with an international auditing body.

A department led external audit should be undertaken bi-annually within the first year of operation as part of the SCHS. All subsequent years of SCHS operation will be subject to an annual external audit unless ongoing non-conformity or poor performance against biosecurity hygiene requirements indicates a breakdown of the system. The frequency of department audits is subject to change based on the level of assessed biosecurity risk and effective system performance.

Information regarding [SCHS offshore hygiene requirements](#) for SCHS establishment are available on the department website.

Note: The department may require the attendance of two biosecurity officers to complete an external site audit based on information found on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) website "[Smart traveller](#)" regarding safety and security issues of the specified country. Virtual/remote audits may be considered where travel restrictions exist.

7.1 External Audit

[Non-conformity](#) (minor, major or critical) identified during external audits are assessed against the matrix below to determine the outcomes of the audit i.e. Pass or Fail. In the event a non-conformity is noted during the audit resulting in the entity taking immediate corrective actions during the audit period, the auditing officer may use their discretion when applying follow up actions.

Follow up audits should be conducted within 3 months of a SCHS critical non-conformity, in addition to the completion of all associated corrective actions by the facility. When critical nonconformity of the SCHS processes indicates an increase in biosecurity risk associated with the facility, an external audit will usually be required.

If SCHS facilities fail to engage with the department to coordinate an audit when requested, a standard intervention period may be applied until the audit can be facilitated.

	MAJOR NON-CONFORMITY	CRITICAL NON-CONFORMITY
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		0	1	2	3	1 or more
MINOR NON-CONFORMITY	0	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
	1	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
	2	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL
	3	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL
	4	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL
	5	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL
	6	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL
	7	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL

Table 2: Audit and reporting risk matrix

7.1.1 SCHS Non-conformity Definitions

The table below describes the non-conformance types for internal and external audit purposes. Further administrative non-conformities are listed at [Appendix 1](#).

Non-conformance type	Description
Critical	<p>Any action, inaction or contravention of the SCHS requirements or approved COP that, in the opinion of the auditor, demonstrates a critical failure of the operation and places Australia's biosecurity system at risk.</p> <p>Critical non-conformances require immediate corrective action to be taken.</p> <p>This may include but is not limited to an identified breakdown of port or container cleaning and treatment processes resulting in significant risk of biosecurity risk material entering Australia.</p>
Major	<p>Any action, inaction or contravention of the SCHS requirements or approved COP that, in the opinion of the auditor, demonstrates a major failure in the operation of a specification or set of specifications that may place Australia's biosecurity system at risk.</p> <p>It may be a specific non-conformance or a system with multiple non-conformances having a cumulative effect.</p> <p>Major non-conformances may be created by escalation of outstanding issues from previous audits.</p> <p>Corrective actions and timeframes for closure will be agreed upon with the initiator of the audit at a close-out meeting. The effectiveness of corrective actions will be measured in subsequent audits.</p> <p>This may include but is not limited to failure to adhere to the approved pest management plan or chemical treatment procedures resulting in increased risk of biosecurity risk material entering Australia.</p>

Minor	<p>Any action, inaction or contravention of the SCHS requirements or approved COP that results in a situation that may compromise the integrity of systems, processes.</p> <p>A non-conformance that does not represent a major failure of an operation or system but that does require correction.</p> <p>Resolution will be monitored in subsequent audits.</p> <p>This may include but is not limited to failure to correctly apply or complete the SCHS sticker for treated containers, but all SCHS process have been completed. While this is non-conformance to agreed processes it does not result in an increased risk of biosecurity risk material entering Australia.</p>
Recommendation	<p>Recommendations may be included in the audit report where they may provide efficiencies for any parties to the audit. They are non-binding and do not affect subsequent audits.</p> <p>A recommendation to change existing specifications does not constitute a mandatory change to processes. Existing specifications must be complied with until any changes are approved by the department and implemented.</p>

Table 3: Non-conformity description table

7.1.2 Critical Non-conformity– Systemic Breakdown:

A system may be subject to an indefinite standard intervention period in the event of reduced biosecurity risk mitigation. All system requirements allow the department to effectively identify and manage biosecurity risk posed by imported sea containers. Should the department lose confidence in the integrity of the system, a standard intervention period may be enforced – either against a specific SCHS facility, or for the system as a whole. This may include but is not limited to an identified failure of port or container cleaning, treatment and storage processes resulting in critical non-conformity, or the reduced ability to demonstrate system reporting requirements.

7.1.3 Non-conformity at conclusion of external audit:

If a system facility fails the external audit, the intervention rate will immediately revert to the standard rate. The port or facility will be monitored at this intervention rate as directed by the department, pending the resolution of all corrective actions, deeming the port or facility ready for re-assessment.

The severity of system failures may require an additional follow up department audit. This will be actioned on advice from the SCHS facility of completion of all corrective actions rendering the port or facility ready for re-assessment. A follow up audit should be undertaken by the department within 60 days from notification of the completion of corrective actions.

Re-instatement of reduced intervention for a system will be considered by the department on demonstration of sufficient remedial action and on successful completion of an external audit of the port or facility. The department will assess data gathered during the standard intervention period in

addition to the level of assurance offered by the remedial actions provided to inform an appropriate intervention level on re-instatement of the system.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 SCHS Entity

- Advise the department of SCHS containers destined for Australian ports via the approved SCHS notifications at least 24 hours prior to voyage arrival at the first point of entry.
- Only submit SCHS notifications for containers that have been through all documented SCHS processes, including washing, barrier spraying, transport and storage in the designated storage area.
- Advise the department of any material change to operations or issues that may affect the integrity of the system.
- Ensure all Principal Agents (vessel operators, agents, shipping lines) are provided with a list of SCHS containers for each voyage.
- Maintain system operations in line with the agreed procedures detailed in the COP or QM and/or advice or instructions given by an independent biosecurity consultant or the department regarding any deviation from the COP or QM.
- Provide the department with all internal audit reports where potential non-conformities, corrective actions, or proposed changes to the SCHS facility are identified.
- Notify the department of any material change to SCHS operations, the approved COP or QM.
- Advise the department immediately of any major or critical self-detected non-conformity that has the potential to compromise the system.
- Advise the department within seven working days of any minor self-detected non-conformity.
- Advise the department in writing if operations at the facilities will not be undertaken to system requirements for any period of time.

8.2 Principal Agent

- Advise the department of any notifiable changes to containers including, discharge location, non-system containers, nested flat racks or issues that may affect the integrity of the system.
- Meet [Biosecurity Regulations](#) prescribed reporting timeframes.
- Arrange appropriate SCHS container segregation during stowage and salting for held containers as per the requirements of [Country Action List containers](#).

8.3 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

- Receive correspondence from SCHS Entity or Principal Agent, such as SCHS notification and any other documents relating to SCHS.
- Apply SCHS cancellations and provide to Principal Agent, SCHS entity and stevedores.
- Collate SCHS inspection data and determine intervention thresholds.
- Provide reports identified in section 6 of this policy to identified stakeholders.
- Conduct external audits and identify ways to ensure continuous improvement of SCHS processes.
- Address any ongoing issues with the SCHS Entity.
- If required, provide technical assistance or advice for SCHS related issues.

9 General rules

- SCHS cancellations will be undertaken by the department at no cost to shipping agent. Any further processing will be charged as an in-office service fee in accordance with the [Charging Guidelines](#).
- It is a requirement of the [Biosecurity Regulations](#) that all imported containers are reported to the department within the specified time frames. For further information regarding applicable penalties that are administered under the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#), please refer to section 120 of the Act.
- The [Biosecurity risk treatment guide](#) provides advice to users about department approved treatments that address biosecurity risks detected as contaminants on imported commodities.
- The SCHS policy does not limit the exercise of powers or the performance of duties or functions under the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#).
- Entities meeting the SCHS Assessment and Management Policy will be provided with a SCHS facility code, and a Letter of Recognition to acknowledge their commitment to managing biosecurity risks. The Letter of Recognition does not guarantee ongoing reduced intervention rates for the specified entity.
- The SCHS Assessment and Management Policy and Letters of Recognition are part of an administrative system and are not binding.
- Decision makers are not bound by the policy in determining what measures are necessary to manage biosecurity risks associated with sea containers.
 - Inaccurate notification of SCHS containers may result in an increase to standard intervention rates for the duration of a specified period as deemed appropriate by the department.
- Failure to comply with roles and responsibilities or provide requested information to the department may result in an increase to standard intervention as deemed appropriate to the department.

10 Glossary

Abbreviation or Word	Definition or Description
Actionable Ant	An ant or termite that has been assessed as posing an unacceptable level of biosecurity risk.
Actionable Snails	A snail that has been assessed as posing an unacceptable level of biosecurity risk.
Actionable insects	An insect, including but not limited to bees (and hives), bugs, wasps and beetles that have been assessed as posing an unacceptable level of biosecurity risk.
Approved SCHS label	The sticker applied to the container after the SCHS decontamination risk management process is complete.
Biosecurity categories	A Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry identified SCHS pest category, with a specified threshold level recommended to maintain system confidence.
Biosecurity risk	<p>The likelihood of a disease or pest or disease:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entering Australian territory or a part of Australian territory; or• Establishing itself or spreading in Australian territory; or a part of Australian territory, and <p>The potential for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The disease or pest to cause harm to human, animal or plant health.• The disease or pest to cause harm to the environment.• Economic consequences associated with the entry, establishment or spread of the disease or pest.
Biosecurity risk material (BRM)	<p>Material that has been assessed as posing an unacceptable level of biosecurity risk.</p> <p>This may include, but is not limited to live insects, seeds, soil, dirt, clay, animal material, and plant material such as straw, twigs, leaves, roots, bark, food refuse and other debris.</p>
Consignment	A consignment comprises any number of loaded and unloaded containers (all types) that arrive on the same date and unloaded off one conveyance with a single identifying voyage number.
Code of Practice (COP)	Detailed operational and Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S) procedures followed by SCHS Facility staff to complete the SCHS cleaning and treatment process. May also be referred to as Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or Operating Procedures.
Country Action List (CAL)	Countries identified by the department as having high levels of biosecurity risk, including but not limited to giant African snails, black spiny toads, exotic bees and ants, soil and plant material.
Designated Storage Area	A container storage area that has been assessed and recognised by the department, which may be utilised by various SCHS facilities when located at a port.

ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival.
General Contamination	Includes: soil, plant products, animal products, wood, packaging, non-actionable snails, non-actionable ants and any other pests.
Immediate Alert Reports	Reports generated by the department to inform the entity of other operational or systemic issues allowing for the commencement of immediate review and corrective action.
Incident	The detection of any biosecurity risk material, an act or omission, or an event that requires further action or intervention by the department to manage a potential biosecurity risk.
Pest	a species, strain or biotype of a plant or animal, or a disease agent, that has the potential to cause, either directly or indirectly, harm to human, animal or plant health, or the environment.
Principal Agent	An entity which acts as an agent of an importer for the purpose of reporting containers in accordance with s120 of the <i>Biosecurity Act</i> . This may include shipping lines, shipping agents or other brokers.
Quality Manual (QM)	Documented procedures and practices recognised by the department under SCHS that address system operational functions, including contingencies, assurance and objectives.
Quarterly Report	Report generated by the department on a quarterly basis which provides a summary of on-arrival inspection results, highlights assessment of biosecurity risks identified, and reports on cumulative contamination results.
Sea Container Hygiene System (SCHS)	SCHS is an offshore risk management policy that supports effective risk screening that assists in determining the allocation of inspection resources while managing biosecurity risk.
SCHS Entity	A person, partnership, organisation or business responsible for operating or managing the SCHS offshore process.
SCHS Facility	An offshore container processing facility or port recognised as meeting requirements for the SCHS.
Species level identification	The identification of a pest down to species level to determine the level of biosecurity risk associated with the pest. Species level identification may not be required to determine level of biosecurity risk. If an entity requires identification to species level, excess costs may be incurred by industry to engage the service of a third-party entomologists for the purpose of identification.
Verification	On arrival assessments and inspections, audits and monitoring that establish and document that the recognised SCHS Facility continues to address biosecurity risks.
Voyage Report	Report generated by the department which provides a summary of on-arrival inspection results, biosecurity risks identified and reports on cumulative contamination results.

11 Version History

Version Number	Version Date	Amendment Details
1	Oct 2010	First business rules which detail the roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders entering in the Department of Agriculture's SCHS.
2	Jun 2013	Rebranding (Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry) Changes to biosecurity categories (GAS to actionable snails)
3	Jun 2014	Rebranding (Department of Agriculture) Flowchart amendment Inclusion of the Vessel Notification Form
4	Jan 2017	Rebranding (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) Change to biosecurity categories and thresholds Amendments to intervention model and methodology Adjustments to reporting requirements information Inclusion of an appeals process Adjustments to reporting requirements information New inspection flow charts Inclusion of reporting risk matrix Inclusion of "Purpose" Adjustments to department issued reports Inclusion of SCHS suspension and re-instatement process
4.1	Nov 2017	Inclusion of reference to Biosecurity Act 2015 . Reporting requirements table updated Appeals section removed Inclusion minimum requirements third party auditors Removed New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries Adjustments to Roles and Responsibilities SCHS Notification timeframe amended
4.2	Mar 2018	Document title changed from SCHS Business Rules to SCHS Assessment and Management Policy Definitions updated Inclusion of Letter of Recognition Removal of reference to non-compliance for non-legislated requirements Reference to 100% increased intervention rates amended to standard inspection rates.
5	February 2022	Rebranding (Department Agriculture, Water and the Environment) SCHS Notification form updated Policy update on Internal auditing requirements Policy update on intervention rates for periods of inactivity by SCHS facilities. Policy update on management emerging and seasonal pests
5.1	July 2023	Rebranding to Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Minor updates to formatting, table and Appendix references. Removal of Vessel Notification Form
6	February 2025	Policy update to revise GAS threshold to all actionable snails. Policy clarification on who can conduct a follow up audit Roles and responsibilities updated for clarity

OFFICIAL
Sea Container Hygiene System

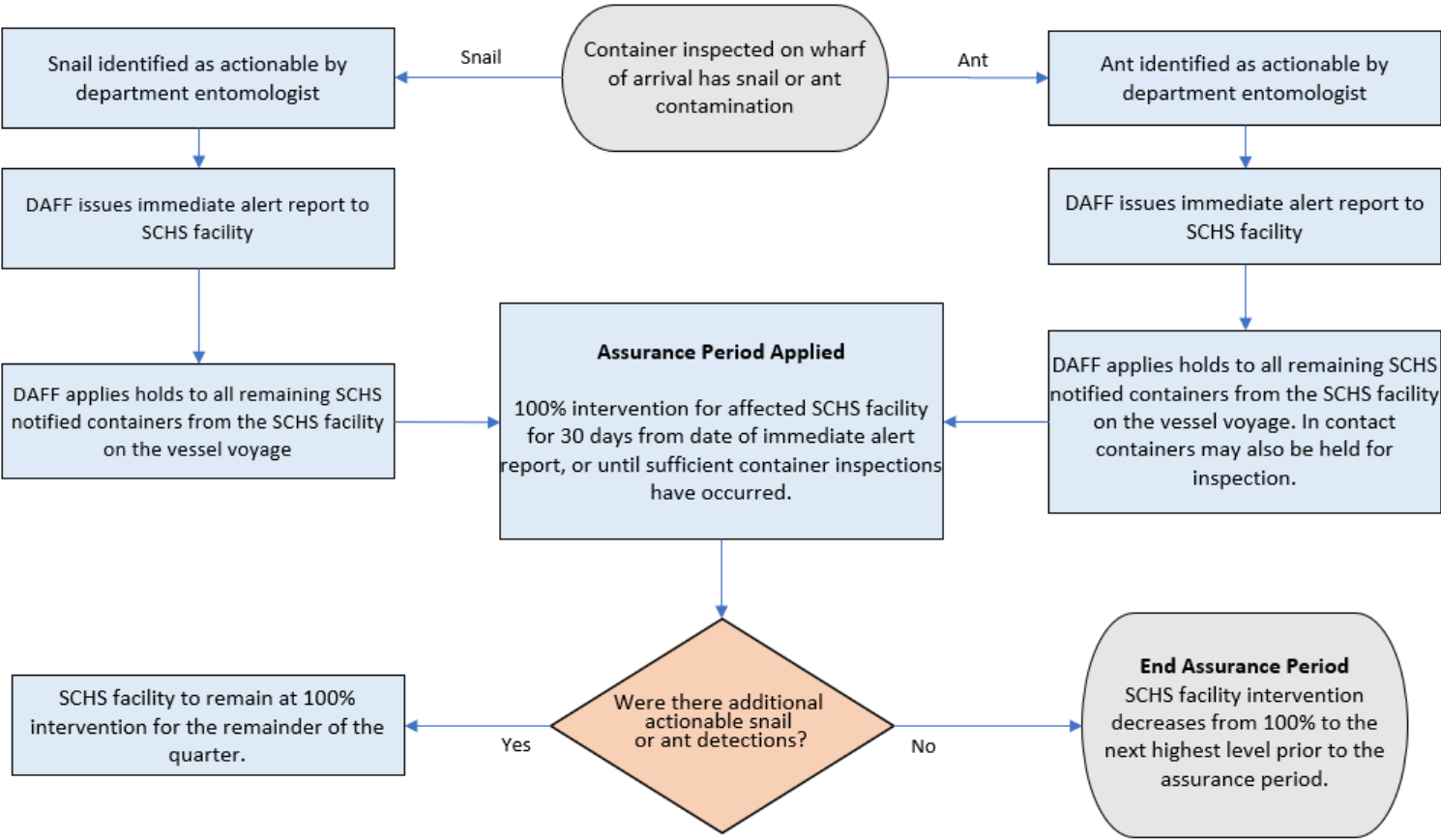
		Addition of nonconformity definitions Removal of reference to AQIS Entity Identifier (AEI)
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Appendix 1: Actions for managing non-conformity with SCHS notification requirements and roles and responsibilities.

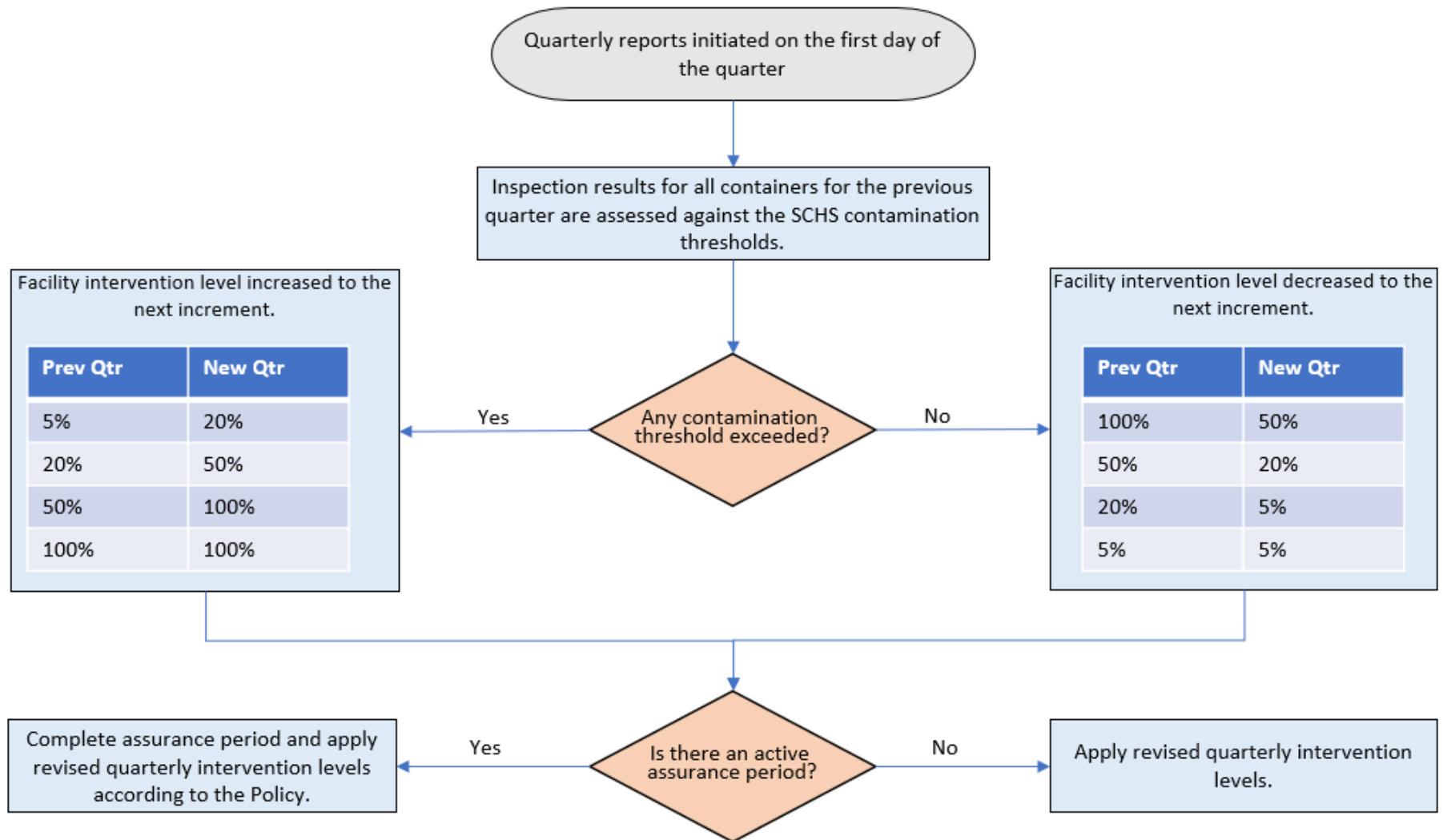
The table below details the non-conformity categories, incidents and action for managing non-conformity with SCHS notification requirements.

Non-Conformity Category	Reporting Incident	Action
Minor	Notification of SCHS containers received outside the minimum 24 hour period.	No SCHS cancellations will apply. Containers will be inspected at standard intervention rate.
	Notification of changes to the SCHS load port for SCHS containers prior to vessel arrival at first port.	If containers are reported within the SCHS notification timeframe, correct SCHS load port intervention rate will apply. Containers reported outside of the SCHS notification timeframe, will be inspected at standard intervention rate.
Major	Notification of changes to the SCHS load port for SCHS containers after vessel arrival at first port.	Containers reported outside of the SCHS notification timeframe, will be inspected at standard intervention rate.
	Corrections to the status from system to non-system containers notified after the SCHS 24 hour notification timeframe.	Containers will be inspected at standard intervention rates. Department to review the frequency and severity of non-conformity. The system may be placed on standard intervention rate for the duration of a specified time period pending acceptable remedial actions.
	Inaccurate or incomplete notification of SCHS containers.	Department to review the frequency and severity of non-conformity. The system may be placed on standard intervention rate for the duration of a specified time period pending acceptable remedial actions.
Critical	On-going late notification of SCHS containers classified as a major non-conformance.	Department to review the frequency and severity of non-conformity. The system may be placed on standard intervention rate for the duration of a specified time period pending acceptable remedial actions.
	Notifying containers as SCHS when loaded from non-system ports or facilities.	Department to review the frequency and severity of non-conformity. The department may apply standard intervention rate to the system based on compromised biosecurity integrity, requiring an internal audit review process and implementation of acceptable remedial actions.

Appendix 2: Actionable snail and actionable ant detection flowchart



Before Assurance	After Assurance
5%	20%
20%	50%
50%	50%

Appendix 3: Quarterly review process flowchart

Appendix 4: Sample SCHS Label

SEA CONTAINER HYGIENE SYSTEM			
COMPANY LOGO		SCHS FACILITY NAME, PORT, COUNTRY & CONTACT DETAILS.	
		Date	Checked by
Internal Wash	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>12/11/24</u>	<u>N.M</u>
External Wash	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>12/11/24</u>	<u>K.M</u>
Spray	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>12/11/24</u>	<u>G.P</u>