

Explanatory Notes for Import or Export of Ornamental Fish

ORNAMENTAL FISH

Ornamental fish refers to the ornamental varieties of marine, brackish water or fresh water fishes, crustacea, aquatic mollusca, turtles, marine sponges, trepang and any other form of aquatic life and the young and eggs thereof. It excludes fish and fish products intended for human consumption.

IMPORT, EXPORT AND TRANSHIPMENT

The Animals and Birds Act (ABA) and Animals and Birds (Live Fish) Rules require that an importer or exporter who imports/exports ornamental fish through Singapore must first be licensed by the AVS. Thereafter, every consignment of ornamental fish must be declared by the licensed-trader through TradeNet and approved by the AVS prior to importation or exportation. For transshipment through Singapore, the licensed trader would also need to apply for a TradeNet permit for every consignment.

Government-approved premises with facilities for quarantine and packing of ornamental fish according to the terms & conditions of licence to import or export ornamental fish are required prior to submission of licence application.

Local licensed exporters may also participate in the **AVS Quality Assurance Scheme (AQUAS)**. Under this scheme the exporters are able to obtain health certifications for their fish based on good management practice. It is not necessary to have every export consignment inspected by AVS under AQUAS.

PERMIT

An import or export permit (known as inward or outward TradeNet declaration permit or Cargo Clearance Permit, CCP) that is approved by AVS, is required to accompany every consignment of ornamental fish to be imported or exported. Application for this permit requires the applicant to be a licensed importer or exporter for ornamental fish. The licensed trader may apply for this permit by declaring the import/export through TradeNet system. This could be done directly through registration with Singapore Customs or through a cargo/forwarding agent. For details, please refer to website from Singapore Customs at <https://www.tradenet.gov.sg/tradenet/login.portal>

MEDISAVE CONTRIBUTION

With effect from 1 January 1994, all self-employed persons are required under Singapore legislation to contribute to Medisave. In addition, self-employed persons applying or renewing Government trade or vocation licences must be up-to-date in Medisave contributions. If you are self-employed, you must have paid up your Medisave contributions up to 31 December of the previous year. Your Medisave payment should be made to CPF Board at least 1 week before you submit the application for the licence. Please note that we are unable to process your application if you are not up-to-date in your Medisave contributions. Self-employed persons may check their Medisave liabilities online at <http://www.cpf.gov.sg>.

ACTIVATION OF UEN ACCOUNT

All Singapore-registered companies or businesses, including newly registered ones, will have a Unique Entity Number (UEN) issued by Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA). If the entity is not a business or local company, an UEN will be issued by the UEN Issuance Agency. For application of UEN, please visit the website www.uen.gov.sg for a list of UEN Issuance agencies. For more information entities can contact their UEN Issuance agency. After application, entities will have to register their UEN with Singapore Customs for the purposes of import and export. For further enquiries on registration of UEN with Singapore Customs, please call Singapore Customs at Tel: 1800-3552000.

LICENCE APPLICATION

1. Only Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents or Employment Pass Holders who are one of the following may apply for the above licence.
 - a) The manager of a business firm registered under the Business Registration Act;
 - b) The Director of a company registered under the Company Registration Act.
2. The applicant must apply for the licence through **E-Services** by completing the online application form and submitting the supporting documents listed below:
 - a) Floor plan of the packing premise designated for import or export activity of ornamental fish
 - b) A copy of account activation letter/notification from Singapore Customs as proof of UEN being activated for import & export activities. Prior to this, your company or business must be issued with an Unique Entity Number (UEN) from ACRA or UEN Issuance agency.
 - c) The completed application form for Inter-bank GIRO.
 - d) A copy of the tenancy/lease agreement of the premise (if applicable)
3. The applicant is required to have a government-approved premise with facilities for holding, quarantining, and packing of ornamental fish. Guidelines on requirements for packing premises are described in Part C of this Section.
4. The applicant must obtain approval from the relevant authority for the use of the premises intended for import, export or transshipment activities (conditioning, holding, packing and quarantine) for ornamental fish prior to the licence application.
5. The licence issued is on an annual basis and is subject to the packing premises passing the inspection carried out by AVS officers. The AVS reserves the right to cancel/revoke the licence if inspection fails.
6. The AVS has the discretion to accept or reject a licence application.
7. An applicant or licensee is required to have a GIRO account with AVS for the payment of the annual licence fee and permit fees for inward or outward TRADENET declarations. After approval of the licence, the applicant must submit a copy of the completed GIRO application form (obtainable from AVS website).

PACKING PREMISES

1. Packing premises refer to areas designated solely to import and export activities for ornamental fish, and include primarily the following areas:
 - a) Area(s) for holding and quarantining of fish
 - b) Packing area(s) for fish consignments
 - c) Storage area for storing packed consignment and packing boxes
 - d) General area for office, toilet, and general purpose use
2. A detailed FLOOR PLAN of the packing premises must be submitted together with the application.
3. The following must be clearly indicated in the FLOOR PLAN:
 - a) Dimensions of the packing premise;
 - b) Area for quarantining and holding fish (label as „Q“); Also indicate
 - i) No. of tanks
 - ii) Size of tanks
 - iii) Type of tanks
 - c) Area for packing fish (label as „P“)
 - d) Area for storage of packing water (label as „W“)
 - e) Water drainage system (label as „D“)
 - f) Potable water source, namely taps (label as „TP“)
 - g) Area for storage of packing materials (label as „S“)
 - h) All entrances and exits (label as „E“)
 - i) Footbaths, if any (label as „F“)
 - j) Toilets, if any (label as „T“)
 - k) Office area, if any (label as „O“)
4. The FLOOR PLAN should strictly show the fish packing premises only. Areas for other activities, such as retailing, should not be within the packing premises, and, where these areas exist, the FLOOR PLAN must show that the fish packing premises are separated from these other areas by partition physically.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

(A) GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. The licence is solely issued to the company for import or export of ornamental fish at the business or packing premises address as stated in the licence form. The licence will be revoked if the stated address ceases to be in operation or there is a change in address of packing premises.
2. The licensee shall not transfer or assign the benefits of his/her licence to any other person. AVS may revoke the licence if the holder of the licence ceases to be a shareholder, partner or employee of the company.
3. AVS may carry out inspection of the premises and reserves the right to sample or test the water and/or fish stocks within the premises as part of the inspection.
4. AVS may at any time, suspend or revoke the licence or restrict the operation authorized by the licence, where the holder or the company,
 - i. Is convicted or suspected of any offence under the Animals and Birds Act
 - ii. Contravenes or fails to comply with any statutory requirement relating to the licence
 - iii. Contravenes or fails to comply with any condition or requirement specified by the licence
5. Licensee must inform AVS in writing and submit the necessary supporting documents if changes are made with regard to the details of the premises (e.g. floor plan of the premises, etc) during the period in which the licence is valid, failing which the licence may be revoked.
5. AVS may impose import or export restrictions or conditions as and when it deems necessary.
6. AVS may amend existing licensing conditions and/or impose further conditions as and when it deems necessary.

(B) CONDITIONS RELATED TO IMPORT AND EXPORT

1. All ornamental fish imported/exported must be healthy and free from any clinical signs of disease at the time of import/export. Additional sanitary requirements may be imposed, as and when deemed necessary by the Authority.
2. The import/export of endangered species (eg. Hard corals, Asian arowanas, seahorses etc) listed in CITES and Schedules to the **Endangered Species (Import & Export) Act** is strictly prohibited without a CITES permit from AVS. A copy of the Act is available for purchase from the SNP Corporation Ltd (<http://www.snpcorp.com/webshop>) or the website of the Attorney-General's Chambers of Singapore, www.agc.gov.sg.
3. The import/export of **Piranhas** is strictly prohibited.
4. All import of genetically modified fish or transgenic fish requires a written approval from the AVS prior to import. Applicant may visit the GMAC website at www.gmac.sg for Guidelines on Release of Agriculture-related Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

5. All import and export of Asian arowanas (*Scleropages formosus*) must be carried out in accordance with the following procedures:
- i) Licensee is permitted to only import and export/re-export Asian arowana from CITES-registered captive-breeding operations.
 - ii) For export, every Asian arowana must be implanted with one microchip at the dorsal muscle before CITES permit application and according to the conditions of the AVS Dragon Fish Farm Registration Scheme.
 - iii) For export in which the Asian arowana have been pre-packed for inspection, there must be only one Asian arowana in each packing bag. The packing bags must be clear or allow easy viewing by AVS inspectors. Consignments that do not meet the conditions will not be inspected and not allowed for export.
 - iv) For import, there shall only be one Asian arowana in each packing bag. The packing bags must be clear or allow easy viewing by AVS inspectors.
 - v) Styrofoam boxes used to contain Asian arowana for export must be placed in paper carton boxes for sealing by the AVS. Consignments that do not meet AVS's requirements will not be allowed to be exported/re-exported.
 - vi) For import and export of Asian arowana, the fish must arrive or depart through Changi Airfreight Centre with inspection at CAPQ, unless approval has been sought for entry/exit through other port of entry/exit.
 - vii) All consignments of Asian arowana to be exported must be inspected and sealed by the AVS prior to departure from Singapore
6. Licensee is to ensure that the correct documentation accompanies the incoming or outgoing consignments
7. It is the responsibility of the licensee to obtain permits/health certifications prior to import or export for the country of origin or destination, and for any countries through which the consignment will travel.
8. The approved TRADENET declaration serves as the import/export/transshipment permit under the Animals and Birds (Ornamental Fish) Rules. As such, unless otherwise exempted, all TRADENET declarations for the import, export or transshipment of ornamental fish shall be submitted to AVS for approval **prior to the shipment date**.
9. Every inward/outward declaration submitted through the TRADENET system must state clearly the Common and Scientific names of every ornamental fish item, failing which the application will not be processed or will be rejected.
10. Inward/outward declarations submitted through the TRADENET system with incomplete or missing details of the shipment will not be processed or will be rejected.

11. In the case of inward/outward declarations that require AVS's endorsement or declarations under query by AVS or declarations with specimens that require CITES permit(s), freight forwarding agents/licensees must submit the supporting documents such as invoices/packing lists and **CITES** permits (if applicable) to OFS (immediately after sending the declarations through the **TRADENET**).
12. The invoices/packing lists must state clearly the HS Code, Product Code, Common names, Scientific names, Quantities, Country of origin, and Total value of the consignment.
13. All supporting documents faxed to OFS must be clear and legible. The **Unique Reference No., contact numbers (fax No.)** and **No. of Pages** must be indicated clearly at the top right hand corner of the documents, so as to facilitate processing of the TRADENET declarations.
14. Every inward/outward declaration submitted through the TRADENET system must include a declaration that "**All product items declared tally with that of the invoice/packing list**", failing which the application will not be processed or will be rejected. Enforcement action may be taken on licensees who make false TRADENET declarations.
15. The approval conditions imposed by AVS in the import/export permit shall be strictly complied with, failing which enforcement action may be taken.

(C) REQUIREMENTS FOR PACKING PREMISES

Purpose

1. Packing premises must be used solely for the purpose of import and export activities of ornamental fish (includes all finfish and/or shellfish).
2. The premises must be kept physically apart, i.e. by wall/partition, from areas used for other businesses, such as retailing of fish, pets, etc.

Packing premises facilities

3. The packing premises must have the following facilities:
 - (a) quarantine and holding area - a roofed area that houses fish tanks equipped with water and air supplies; quarantine tanks must be discretely separated from other tanks and/or activities;
 - (b) packing area - roofed-over area with packing facilities;
 - (c) water storage facilities for packing - roofed-over area;
 - (d) general area - normally comprising an office, toilet(s), and general purpose area(s) for storage of styrofoam boxes, etc.

Floors

4. Floors should be constructed of durable water resistant material suitably graded so as to allow easy and efficient cleaning and draining leaving no puddles of stagnant water.

Drains

5. Drains shall be of an adequate size and sufficiently graded to prevent stagnation and where they are connected directly to a sewer they shall be equipped with deep-seal traps.

Plastic bags/packing boxes

6. Only new plastic bags and packing boxes should be used for packing. These should be stored on raised platforms under roofed area, away from wet floors.

Pets

7. No animals and birds, other than ornamental fish, are allowed to be kept within the packing premises.

Toilets

8. Toilet(s), washing facilities and changing rooms of adequate size shall be provided for the convenience of the workers. The entrance of these places should not open directly into the packing area.

Cooking

9. Cooking of food should not be carried out in the packing premises.

Disposal of refuse and dead fish

10. Refuse and dead fish shall be collected in containers/plastic bags and disposed off daily.

Others

11. All other conditions e.g. on ventilation, lighting, fire safety, etc., pertaining to maintenance of office premises are to be complied with.

(D) CONDITIONS RELATED TO BIOSECURITY¹

1. Fishes should be accepted only from known, reliable, disease-free sources.
2. All newly imported fish shall be quarantined immediately at the quarantine facilities for a sufficiently long period to ensure the fish are healthy before sale.
3. All imported fish under quarantine shall be checked daily for their general health condition. Fish showing signs of distress, injury or disease should be treated accordingly. Drugs such as anaesthetics, antibiotics and other controlled medications shall only be used when necessary, and their usage shall be supervised by trained and experienced staff and in accordance with good husbandry practice. Prescription drugs shall only be used in accordance with the prescription.

¹ Biosecurity measures refer to measures/procedures undertaken to protect ornamental fish from contracting, carrying or spreading disease.

4. Footbaths with disinfectant shall be provided at entrance and exit of quarantine facilities. Concentration of the disinfectant should be checked regularly to ensure that it is effective for disinfection purpose.
5. The quarantine facilities shall be restricted to authorised personnel only and public access is prohibited.
6. Incoming water (other than tap water) to quarantine and holding facilities must be treated (e.g. Chlorination or ozonation) to remove pathogens and disease-carrying vectors.
7. Waste water from the packing premises shall be disinfected before discharge if it is not going directly into sewage pipes of sanitary facilities²
8. Disinfection tanks with effective disinfectant(s) (e.g. iodine and chlorine) shall be present at the quarantine facilities for use to treat nets, tanks and equipment in contact with imported fish under quarantine.
9. Records of suppliers and sales transactions shall be kept and be made available to the AVS on request.
10. Dead fish shall be kept in plastic bags and disposed off in containers on a daily basis.
11. Licensee must report any abnormal mortalities to the AVS.

(E) CONDITIONS RELATED TO EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATION

1. Applications for Fish export health certificates to accompany consignments, where required, must be made at least one working day prior to the date of collection.
2. Applications for Fish export health certificates that are to be collected on the same working day that AVS receives the application will be considered as “express service”. A surcharge that is equivalent to the existing rate of the certificate or service fee will be imposed.
3. A fee of \$9.45 per request shall be levied for every request by a licensee to amend the Fish Health Certificate after the certificate has been processed (i.e. printed) or collected.
4. Application for Fish Health Certificates with new or special requirements must be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance for AVS’s consideration.
5. Results of pre-export consignment inspection will be taken into consideration in the application of Fish Health Certificates. AVS reserves the right to conduct any other inspection(s) of the consignment or the packing premises if it so deems fit. In the event of suspicion or confirmation of disease, after certification, AVS reserves the right to withdraw or cancel the Health Certificate. Fees will be levied for the inspection.
6. The export health certificate is valid for only 10 days from date of issuance.

² Sanitary facilities includes bathrooms, toilets, facilities for washing and sanitary appliances, together with the associated pipe-work, whether above or below the ground, which connect, directly or otherwise, to a private sewage treatment plant or a public sewerage system.

(F) FEES

- i) The licence fee to import or export ornamental fish is S\$350 per annum.
- ii) The permit fee to import, export and tranship ornamental fish is S\$3.50 per permit.
- iii) The export health certificate fee is S\$16.80 per copy for normal service and is S\$33.60 per copy for express service.
- iv) Fish health inspection for the purposes of issuing export health certificate is S\$63/hour during office hours and S\$133/hour during non-office hours or on an urgent basis.
- v) Dragon fish pre-export inspection is chargeable at S\$38/hour during office hours and S\$80/hour during non-office hours or on an urgent basis.
- vi) A fee of S\$9.45 per service request will be levied for any amendment of export health certificate.
- vii) A fee of S\$9.45 per service request will be levied for any application for Certified true copy of export health certificate.

The above fees may be revised from time to time.

(G) RENEWAL OF LICENCE

The licence is renewable annually subject to inspection by AVS. Licensee must inform AVS in writing before expiry of the licence if you do not wish to renew the licence. The licence is non-transferable.