

Biosecurity - Reporting plant pests and diseases

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Management of the biosecurity risk

This procedure applies in all circumstances where any NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) staff within the Department of Industry, or Local Land Services (LLS) staff becomes aware of, or holds a reasonable suspicion of the presence of a notifiable or exotic plant pest or disease in NSW.

Many exotic plant pests and diseases are classed as prohibited matter under Schedule 2 to the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act). All plant pests and diseases that are listed as prohibited matter must be notified immediately on detection. Plant pests and diseases that are notifiable under Schedule 1 to the Biosecurity Regulation 2017 (the Regulation) must be reported within one business day of detection.

The State of NSW, as a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) is legally obligated to give formal notification to the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer (ACPPO) within 24 hours of becoming aware of a plant pest or disease biosecurity incident.

The aim is to limit the impacts of plant pests and diseases on the economy, environment and the community. Early detection and reporting is key to successfully eradicating an exotic plant pest or disease.

Scope

The Act promotes biosecurity as a shared responsibility between government, industry and communities. This procedure applies to NSW DPI and LLS.

Response to a suspect plant pest or disease will be required when:

- a report is made by a member of the public
- identified in a direct observation during a research project, regardless of funding source, location of research facilities or purpose of research
- observations in the field, regardless of land ownership, or
- identification of diagnostic samples received or collected by NSW DPI staff, including samples originating from other jurisdictions.

Biosecurity legislation summary

Plant pests and diseases that are classified as prohibited matter are listed in Schedule 2 to the Act. A person who owns or is caring for plants, or a person working in their professional capacity, has a duty to immediately [notify on the NSW DPI website](#) or using the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 or an authorised officer if they suspect, or are aware, that the plants are infested or infected with prohibited matter.

Pest and diseases of plants that are notifiable, but are not prohibited matter, are listed in Schedule 1 to the Regulation. A person who owns or is caring for plants, or a person working in their professional capacity, has a duty to [notify on the NSW DPI website](#) or using the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 an authorised officer within one working day if they suspect, or are aware, that the plants are infested or infected with a notifiable pest or disease of plants which is not prohibited matter.

A biosecurity event is defined in the Act and includes events where there is or likely to be an adverse effect related to the introduction, presence, spread or increase of a disease/ disease agent or pest into or within the State or any part of the State.

In the case of an outbreak of an exotic plant pest or disease that is listed as prohibited matter, the Secretary (or delegate) may issue an emergency order under section 44 of the Act. This would declare a biosecurity emergency and establish measures to respond to that biosecurity emergency.

The collection, use and disclosure of information in accordance with this procedure, including any internal or external discussion or distribution of information, must be in compliance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* or be exempted by the operation of section 387 of the Act.

Section 387 (2) of the Act provides authority for the disclosure of information about a person, without the consent of the person: to a public sector agency, or to any other person, but only if the disclosure is reasonably necessary for the purpose of exercising a biosecurity risk function.

Work health and safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on all agencies as a person conducting business or undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this procedure must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

All agencies must work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this procedure.

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Reporting Plant Pests and Diseases

1. Roles and responsibilities

1.1 NSW DPI:

- report suspect Emergency Plant Pests (EPP) to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline or directly to the NSW DPI Chief Plant Protection Officer (CPPO) within 24 hours
- provide technical expertise where necessary
- carry out diagnostics and report to NSW CPPO
- NSW CPPO to notify the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer (ACPPPO)
- NSW CPPO to lead NSW response if required.

1.2 LLS:

- report suspect EPP to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline or directly to the NSW CPPO within 24 hours
- provide technical expertise where necessary.

2. Notification arrangements for government, industry and community

- call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline to report all suspect exotic pests and diseases on **1800 084 881**. This number is monitored and has a message service when not answered. Clearly state:
 - name, contact phone number and location
 - the plant affected and a description of the damage on the plant, and
 - whether there is a pest present that may be causing the damage.
- alternatively [notify on the NSW DPI website](#)
- additional information regarding the report (such as photos, GPS coordinates, land ownership) should be emailed to biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

3. Testing for prohibited matter

Clause 8 of the Regulation prohibits a person from testing, or attempting to test for prohibited matter listed in Schedule 2 unless the following conditions are met:

- the test is carried out in, or is carried out elsewhere and is confirmed in, a laboratory that is accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia for such testing, or
- the test is carried out at a laboratory by a person for diagnostic purposes and the Secretary (or their delegate) has approved the laboratory, the person and the diagnostic technique to be used, or
- the test is carried out at a place other than a laboratory by a person for diagnostic purposes and the Secretary (or their delegate) has approved the person and the diagnostic technique to be used, or
- the test is carried out by a person for research or training purposes and the Secretary has approved the person and the research or training.

Depending on the circumstance the Secretary (or their delegate) can impose additional conditions on the testing for prohibited matter.

4. Reporting suspect EPP from diagnostic results

4.1 Initial diagnostic suspicion

An initial or preliminary diagnosis which leads to the reasonable suspicion of an emergency or exotic plant pest must be reported to the NSW CPPO immediately. These include those suspect symptoms observed in field situation and samples submitted as fee-for-service.

- Phone the NSW CPPO, who is also the Director Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity, on **0419 437 676** and leave a message if not answered
- email the NSW CPPO nsw.cppo@dpi.nsw.gov.au using the subject line “**Suspect EPP**”
- if the NSW CPPO has not acknowledged either the phone message or email after four hours, phone the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on **1800 084 881** and leave a message as detailed in the section 2 – General Reporting Process
- once an EPP is confirmed, notification is provided to ACPPO
- NSW CPPO takes the lead on all responses on EPP detected in NSW.

3.2 Ongoing diagnostic progress reporting

The NSW CPPO may at any time ask for a progress report on the diagnosis of a suspect EPP:

- the diagnostician must contact the NSW CPPO with the result of any confirmatory diagnosis by phone and followed up by email as soon as the results are available
- a full laboratory report is required for **every** suspect emergency or exotic plant pest sample submission. The report must be sent to the NSW CPPO at cppo.labresults@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- ongoing reporting of the progress of the diagnosis of a suspect EPP is also required to the NSW CPPO by email at nsw.cppo@dpi.nsw.gov.au when:
 - there is a change in diagnostic knowledge
 - there is a change in expected timeframe for completing diagnostics
 - test results are obtained or are inconclusive.

5. Sending and receiving samples from other jurisdictions

The NSW CPPO may permit the movement of suspect diagnostic samples and must remain informed of any movements that take place. A full laboratory report is required for **every** suspect emergency or exotic plant pest sample submission. The report must be emailed to the NSW CPPO at cppo.labresults@dpi.nsw.gov.au. The NSW CPPO may at any time ask for a progress report:

- requests for movement of diagnostic samples that could be a suspect EPP into or out of NSW should be emailed to the NSW CPPO at nsw.cppo@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- progress of sample movement is required to the NSW CPPO by email at nsw.cppo@dpi.nsw.gov.au, including the arrival or dispatch of the sample to/from any location.

The diagnostician must contact the NSW CPPO with the result of any confirmatory diagnosis by phone and followed up by email as soon as the results are available.

The NSW CPPO will formally notify the relevant jurisdiction of the outcome of the confirmatory diagnosis.

6. Confidentiality of reports and diagnostic results

- all information pertaining to a plant pest or disease reported in accordance with this procedure must be treated as confidential

- Section 387 (2) of the Act provides authority for the disclosure of information about a person, without the consent of the person:
 - to a public sector agency, or
 - to any person, but only if the disclosure is **reasonably necessary** for the purpose of exercising a biosecurity risk function
- diagnostic results must be disclosed only to the NSW CPPO
- the diagnostic result must not be distributed or disclosed regardless of the source of the sample (internal or external client) unless approved by the NSW CPPO. The NSW CPPO will authorise the disclosure of results or information for the diagnosis of an EPP
- in the event that a suspect EPP is reported by a member of the public, the submitter or client should not be provided the results by the diagnostic laboratory
- all staff working on the diagnosis should maintain strict confidentiality.

7. Definitions and acronyms

ACPPO	Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer
CPPO	Chief Plant Protection Officer
EPP	Emergency Plant Pest
EPPRD	Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Incident	the occurrence of a confirmed or reasonably held suspicion of an EPP
LLS	Local Land Services

8. Documentation

Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD), Plant Health Australia

Primefact 1402: Emergency Plant Pest reporting and what happens next (PUB15/141)

Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)

Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)

Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)

Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)

9. Records

Not applicable.

10. Revision History

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	01/07/2017	New procedure developed in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Manager Plant Biosecurity Prevention & Preparedness

1.1	16/06/2017	Amendments to section 6 to include requirements subject to Section 387 of the Act, the collection, use and disclosure of information. Amendment to authorisation date.	Senior Policy Officer Policy Legislation Performance & Consultation
1.2	21/01/21	Amendment to authorisation date.	A/Manager Plant Biosecurity

11. Contact

Manager Plant Biosecurity Prevention & Preparedness

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