

Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, Cap. 586 Guidelines on Import of Endangered Species

The import, export, re-export or possession of endangered species of animals and plants in Hong Kong, whether alive, dead, parts or derivatives, is subject to licensing control under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (the Ordinance), Cap. 586. The Ordinance is the local legislation that gives effect to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Convention aims to protect endangered species from over exploitation through international trade. The endangered species are scheduled in the Appendices to Schedule 1 to the Ordinance.

Licensing Requirement for Import of Scheduled Species

To import a scheduled species into Hong Kong, a valid CITES export permit issued by the CITES Management Authority* of the exporting place must first be obtained. A Licence to Import issued by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is also required for certain species. Each licence could cover one or more species but is valid for one shipment only. The shipment should not be arranged before the relevant Licence to Import has been issued. Applicant should also note the possession licence requirement and apply for the required Licence to Possess in advance.

- Appendix I species: A valid CITES export permit from the place of previous export and a Licence to Import issued by AFCD are required.
- Appendix II species: The Licence to Import is not required (except for live animals or plants of wild origin) subject to the production of a valid CITES export permit from the place of previous export.
- Appendix III species: The Licence to Import is not required subject to the production of a valid CITES export permit.
- Captive-bred animals and artificially propagated plants: also subject to the control of the Ordinance. Appendix I animals bred in captivity for commercial purposes from CITES registered farms and Appendix I plants artificially propagated for commercial purposes are treated as Appendix II specimens and therefore subject to the same control as Appendix II specimens.

Application for Licence to Import

To apply for a Licence to Import, the following documents must be submitted to AFCD, by fax, mail, e-form or in person:

- completed application form (AF243), which is available from AFCD website and headquarters
- photocopy of the relevant CITES export permit issued by the place of previous export

Normally 2 working days are required for processing an application for licence (5 working days for import of live specimens), but the issue of a licence is by no means automatic. The prescribed fee for a Licence to import live animals is \$460 and other specimens is \$170.

Inspection of Import Shipment

All import shipment of scheduled species, whether or not a Licence to Import is required, must be inspected by an authorized officer upon landing in Hong Kong. The importer should:

- make an appointment for an inspection with AFCD at least 2 working days in advance (telephone no.: 2116 0175 for shipments imported by air; 2673 4443 for shipments imported through border and 2150 6986 for other shipments)
- at the time of inspection, produce and surrender the Licence to Import (if required) and original CITES export permit to the authorized officer. Invoice, packing list and other relevant shipping documents should also be produced

Import shipment can be imported legally only after an authorized officer has inspected the specimens to compare it with the particulars on that CITES export permit and is satisfied that the particulars tally.

For Licence Application and Enquiries

Fax: 2376 3749

Hotline: 2150 6973

E-mail: hk_cites@afcd.gov.hk

Website: www.cites.org.hk

Address: 5/F., Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

WARNING

- Import of any specimen of scheduled species not in accordance with the requirement of the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance is an offence. The maximum penalty is a fine of HK\$5 million and imprisonment for 2 years upon conviction.
- Any breach of a licence condition is an offence. The licensee is liable on conviction to a fine of HK\$50,000 and the licence may be cancelled.
- The issue of an Import Licence under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance does not in any way exempt the licensee from the provisions of other legislations.

*Details of the CITES Management Authorities of CITES Parties are available at CITES website: www.cites.org.