

METHYL BROMIDE

Uses of methyl bromide

Methyl bromide is an ozone depleting substance (ODS). It is used in Australia as a fast acting fumigant in a wide range of situations:

- as a quarantine and pre-shipment (QPS) treatment for imports, exports and certain commodities transported interstate (current use is >300 tonne per annum)
- for non-QPS purposes that have been approved under critical use exemptions (current use is <40 tonne per annum), for:
 - soil fumigation in the production of strawberry runners
 - treatment of rice packaged in Australia for domestic use, and
 - as a feedstock in chemical reactions to create other chemicals (current use is <1 tonne per annum)

Phase out and control of methyl bromide in Australia

Since 1 January 2005, all uses of Methyl bromide, other than for certified quarantine and pre-shipment (QPS), approved feedstock applications, or approved under critical use exemptions, have been prohibited in Australia under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* (the Act).

- *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*

The Act implements Australia's obligations as a Party to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer 1989 (the Montreal Protocol). Under the Montreal Protocol, QPS and feedstock uses are still allowed, while non-QPS uses (i.e. those uses that do not fall within the within the definition of quarantine and pre-shipment (QPS) or the definition of feedstock) have been phased out, apart from a small number of exempted critical uses.

- *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer*

Methyl bromide can only be used for a non-QPS application if a critical use exemption has been approved by the parties to the Montreal Protocol. The National Critical Use Strategy was developed to provide strategic guidance for the phase out of methyl bromide for non-QPS uses.

- *National Critical Use Strategy*

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) is closely monitoring international trends in relation to the control of quarantine and pre-shipment use of methyl bromide. If you are an industry stakeholder or other interested party that would like to be part of this process, please contact us.

An important aspect of reducing methyl bromide use in Australia is to identify alternatives that are both technically and economically feasible.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry maintains the Methyl Bromide Alternatives Information System (MBAIS), which provides information on alternative treatments to methyl bromide fumigation.

- Methyl Bromide Alternatives Information System (MBAIS) (link is external)
- Compulsory record keeping and/or reporting requirements for buyers, sellers and all end users of methyl bromide, are established under the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995. Anyone selling or using methyl bromide must be aware of their obligations under these regulations. Further information on the specific provisions of the Regulations can be obtained by contacting the department.

Methyl bromide suppliers can be required on request by the department to present for examination any records relating to the sale or use of methyl bromide. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in penalties, and be taken into consideration when considering future permit applications.

- Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995 (link is external)

Import and export of methyl bromide

The manufacture, import and export of methyl bromide is controlled under the Act and associated regulations. A valid Controlled Substances Licence methyl bromide must be held by anyone intending to manufacture, import or export methyl bromide. Applicants for methyl bromide import licences must pay a non-refundable application fee. Licences are granted for a maximum two-year period.

All licences have a common expiry date, currently **31 December 2015**.

The licences set limits on the amounts of methyl bromide the licence holder is permitted to import each year, by type of methyl bromide use (i.e. QPS, non-QPS, or feedstock). The licences also specify certain conditions which the licence holder must comply with. These include the provision of quarterly import/export reports (including for nil imports and/or nil exports) and payment of an activity fee (import levy) on all imported or locally manufactured methyl bromide.

Source: <https://www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone/methyl-bromide>