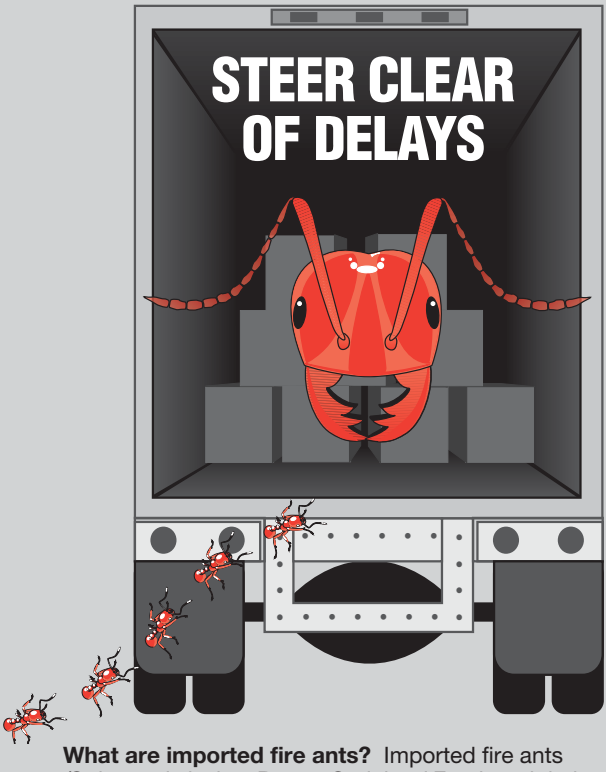
STEER CLEAR OF DELAYS



What are imported fire ants? Imported fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta* Buren, *S. richteri* Forel, and their hybrids) were accidentally introduced into the United States from South America during the early 1900s. They have become established across the South and in parts of California and other Western States. These pests pose serious threats to people, small animals, and agricultural equipment. Their stings cause painful blisters that may become infected.

Where are imported fire ants in the United States? Since arriving in Mobile, AL, imported fire ants have spread to 13 States and Puerto Rico. They now infest all or part of Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. They can also be found occasionally in isolated areas of other States, such as Arizona, Kentucky, and Virginia.

Truck drivers may find imported fire ants in their trucks, on cargo stored outside, or near loading docks. Fire ants build mound-shaped nests that could be found near packing areas and parking lots.

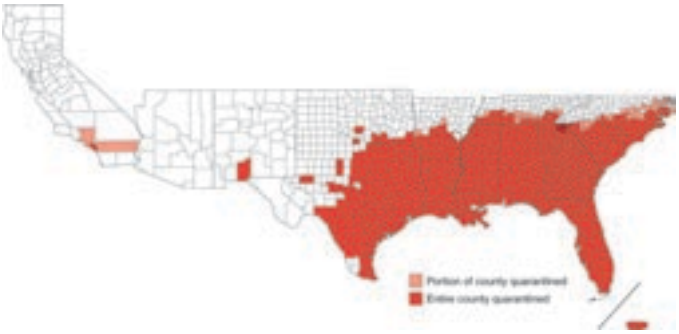
Will imported fire ants in truck cargo cause delays? Yes, the presence of these pests can slow down the interstate movement of trucks. Both Arizona and California have stopped hundreds of trucks infested with fire ants. Delays last anywhere from 24 to 48 hours while the trucks are cleaned.

How can a truck driver steer clear of delays?

- Inspect the truck before beginning the trip to ensure that there are no fire ants in the cargo.
- Don't pick up fire ants while loading materials. Shippers and terminal operators should use bait treatments around infested packing areas or parking lots to reduce the number of fire ants in these areas.
- Park on pavement whenever possible. Doing that discourages fire ants from climbing into trucks.
- Eliminate an infestation in or around your truck with a commercially available insecticide labeled for use on fire ants.

USDA **United States Department of Agriculture**
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Imported Fire Ant Quarantines



Conditions of Movement
Counties shaded in red are completely regulated; counties shaded in pink are partially regulated.

Generally Infested
Area restrictions are imposed on the movement of regulated articles from shaded areas into or through white areas.

These quarantines are subject to change. Please contact the local agricultural officer for updated information.

Articles requiring a certificate or permit

The following articles require a certitfcate or permit from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Plant Protection and Quarantine unit before they may be moved from infested areas to noninfested areas:

- Soil, either separately or with other materials, except soil samples shipped to approved laboratories.* Potting soil is exempt if commercially prepared, packaged, and shipped in original containers.
- Plants with roots and soil attached, except house plants maintained indoors and not for sale.
- Grass sod.
- Baled hay and straw that have been stored in contact with the soil.
- Used soil-moving equipment.
- Any other products, articles, or means of conveyance not included above when it is determined by an inspector that they present a hazard of spread of the imported fire ant.

** Information as to approved laboratories may be obtained from an inspector.*

If you are transporting regulated articles like these, you are not responsible for *getting* permits. If necessary paperwork is missing, contact the shipper immediately. Only the owner of the cargo can work with Plant Protection and Quarantine to get proper permits or certificates issued.

For answers to questions about the imported fire ant, visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/fireants/index.html>.

Program Aid No. 1752
This publication is a revision of the original version printed in August 1992 without a series or number.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Issued September 2003