



U.S. Quarantine Stations

U.S. Quarantine Stations are part of a comprehensive Quarantine System that serves to limit the introduction of infectious diseases into the United States and to prevent their spread.

Background

U.S. Quarantine Stations are located at 20 ports of entry and land-border crossings where international travelers arrive. They are staffed with quarantine medical and public health officers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These health officers decide whether ill persons can enter the United States and what measures should be taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

U.S. Quarantine Stations are located in:

- Anchorage
- Atlanta
- Boston
- Chicago
- Dallas
- Detroit
- El Paso
- Honolulu
- Houston
- Los Angeles
- Miami
- Minneapolis
- Newark
- New York
- Philadelphia
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- San Juan
- Seattle
- Washington, D.C.

Brief U.S. Quarantine History

The first quarantine station and hospital in America was built in 1799 at the port of Philadelphia after a yellow fever outbreak in 1793. In 1878, the National Quarantine Act was passed, shifting quarantine powers from state to federal government. In 1944, the Public Health Service Act formed the federal government's quarantine authority. In 1967, the CDC (then known as the National Communicable Disease Center) took over federal quarantine functions.

In the 1970s, infectious diseases were thought to be a thing of the past. At that time, CDC reduced the

number of quarantine stations from 55 to 8. However, two major events—the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and the SARS outbreak in 2003—caused concerns about bioterrorism and the worldwide spread of disease. As a result, during 2004–2007, CDC increased the number of U.S. Quarantine Stations from 8 to 20. CDC relies on the quarantine stations to protect U.S. borders in matters of public health. The U.S. Quarantine Stations are managed by CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (DGMQ).

Authority and scope

CDC has the legal authority to detain any person who may have an infectious disease that is specified by Executive Order to be quarantinable. These diseases are cholera, diphtheria, infectious tuberculosis, plague, smallpox, yellow fever, and viral hemorrhagic fevers. SARS was added in April 2003, and new types of flu (influenza) that could cause a pandemic were added in 2005. If necessary, CDC can deny ill persons with these diseases entry to the United States. CDC also can have them admitted to a hospital or confined to a home for a certain amount of time to prevent the spread of disease.

Daily activities

Medical and public health officers at U.S. Quarantine Stations perform these activities:

- Respond to reports of illnesses on airplanes, maritime vessels, and at land-border crossings
- Inspect animals, animal products, and human remains that pose a potential threat to human health
- Screen cargo and hand-carried items for potential vectors of human infectious diseases
- Distribute immunobiologics and investigational drugs
- Provide travelers with essential health information

Continued...

Daily Activities, *cont.*

- Monitor health and collect any medical information of new immigrants, refugees, asylees, and parolees
- Alert local health departments in the areas where refugees and immigrants resettle about any health issues that need follow up
- Respond to mass migration emergencies
- Plan and prepare for emergency response
- Build partnerships for disease surveillance and control

Partners in protection

Some of CDC's important Quarantine System partners who support the work of the U.S. Quarantine Stations include

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: Animal Plant and Health Inspection Services
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Transportation Security Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Port officials
- Airlines
- Cruise lines
- Customs brokers and forwarders
- Emergency Medical Services
- Local and state public health departments
- State public health laboratories
- State and territorial epidemiologists
- Hospitals
- Health-care providers
- Canadian/Mexican border authorities
- World Health Organization
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Overseas panel physicians
- International Organization for Migration
- Foreign governments
- Courts
- News media



Miami Quarantine Public Health Officers at work with Customs and Border Protection Officers to protect the health of the United States

Future directions

DGMQ is working with federal and industry partners to increase our country's ability to respond to public health threats by:

- Developing plans for rapid deployment of local and regional public health staff to support DGMQ staff at borders and ports of entry to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases during a public health emergency
- Conducting exercises with partners to ensure port and community preparedness to mitigate any new, evolving infectious disease that could become a pandemic
- Planning community emergency public health and bioterrorism responses that cross jurisdictions
- Conducting an assessment of training and communication needs among key Quarantine System partners
- Developing training, education, and communication materials for key Quarantine System partners to support preparedness and response to public health threats

For more information

Visit CDC website: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq