

This guide illustrates the key steps for importation of the College of American Pathologists (CAP) Proficiency Testing (PT)/External Quality Assurance (EQA) program shipments. Links to tools and information to contact personnel are shown to aid in your preparation and completion of the importation process.

The specific steps and requirements may vary based on your location. The CAP created this guide to provide a general understanding, but we are here to help you along the way.

**For assistance with any questions or issues, contact the CAP at:**

- **Email:** [contactcenter@cap.org](mailto:contactcenter@cap.org)
- **Phone:** +1 847-832-7000, option 1

Please include your CAP number and institution name for faster response.

In some locations, the CAP has distributors to help you with your program selection, ordering, and importation.

Please visit our [contact by location webpage](#) to find if there is a distributor that can further assist you with the process.



## 1 Select Programs

Select program(s) to enroll in from the [CAP catalog](#) or within the [online store](#).

Use the annual [Shipping Calendar](#) to view the scheduled program ship dates. Allow enough time for the permit process to get all shipments for a given program (may need to start Step 2 earlier).

Review the [Ordering Supplement](#) for the following information:

- General Permit Requirements
- Shipping Terms & Conditions
- Shipping & Handling Fees
- Limited Stability programs

A formal quotation (proforma) can be requested by indicating “proforma” when completing the order form (see Step 2).



## 2 Identify Clearance Needs and Submit Order

Identify importation and documentation requirements for clearance and the time needed to complete the permit process by contacting your local government agency. These requirements can vary and are subject to change.

- See Step 5 for supporting information from the CAP.

When ready to order, fill out the [Order Form for International Laboratories](#).

- The “Ship To” contact on the order form will be the primary individual who receives the shipping [Pre-Alert](#) email which is sent prior to the date of export. This person is responsible for managing importation of program shipments.

Submit your completed order form to the CAP [via email](#).

- The “Ship To” contact may receive a communication from the CAP to submit a permit for a particular program. Please respond promptly to the CAP to avoid a delay.



## 3 Create Online Accounts

Upon confirmation of your submitted order, an email with a PIN, your assigned CAP number, and instructions for getting the laboratory setup online is sent to the Laboratory Director identified on your order form.

Create your individual user account by visiting the [CAP website](#) and then click “login” at the top of this page.

- This needs to be done for any individual(s) that would need access to the laboratory’s account.

Enroll/register the laboratory in the CAP web portal, known as [e-LAB Solutions Suite \(ELSS\)](#), using the instructions provided to the Laboratory Director.

- This will establish the laboratory’s account and allow future submission of results.
- The first person to register the laboratory using the PIN becomes the Site Administrator and grants permission to other individuals to access the laboratory account.

For additional assistance with ELSS, reference the [Quick Guide](#) including instructions on how to obtain your personalized shipping calendar.



## 4 Establish an Account with the Carrier

United Parcel Service (UPS) is the CAP's primary carrier for the delivery of PT programs.

To ensure the highest quality product is being delivered, we recommend using the CAP's carrier account for the shipping and handling of CAP PT/EQA programs.

To collect required duties/taxes/fees directly from the importer on behalf of the government of import, establish an account with the carrier.

- Your laboratory (or buying agent) is responsible for the payment of any additional service fees charged by the carrier.
- The CAP's shipping and handling fee does not cover fees imposed by the government of import.



## 5 Prepare and Submit all Customs Clearance Documents

Gather and prepare all required documents. Some supporting resources include:

- **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)** for CAP programs are available. These may be required for customs clearance.
- **Commercial Invoice** (provided with the **Pre-Alert**) for shipment information and PT program details.
- The CAP's general **Intent of Use letter** may be included in the document submission to assist with explaining what the shipment contains to customs officials.

Submit all required documents to your government agency in advance of released shipments to avoid delays.

- Complete prior to the scheduled shipment date per the Shipping Calendar or before the date of export listed in the Pre-Alert message.

Respond immediately to carrier and/or customs inquiries to ensure delivery. Customs cannot clear shipments missing important documentation.



## 6 Monitor Expected Shipments

**Log into** your e-LAB Solutions Suite account routinely to view the PT Shipping Calendar.

- If your laboratory will be closed for any reason, please **notify the CAP** at least 6 weeks prior to the closure date.

Look for the Pre-Alert email to know a program is being prepared to ship. Additional recipients for the Pre-Alert can be added upon request.

- The Pre-Alert is usually emailed up to 10 days in advance of the date of export (ship date).
- The date of export is listed as MMDDYY.

Monitor incoming shipments using the tracking number on the Commercial Invoice once your shipment has left the packager's location (the date of export).



## 7 Receive Shipments

Inspect the contents immediately upon arrival to confirm materials arrived in suitable condition for testing.

- Review the enclosed Kit Instructions for kit contents, storage, stability, and other information.
- The temperature stated on the Kit Instructions are for storage upon arrival, not the temperature the program should arrive in.
- Kit Instructions and Results Form are also available in ELSS after date of export.

**Contact the CAP** immediately about shipment issues or shipment delays for your laboratory.