

ICS Outage Report – 15 April 2009

EDI Processing and CI Unavailable

Wednesday 15 April 2009

At 1:26 PM EDI inbound and outbound processing and CI access was affected by a hardware failure in the external Communications Infrastructure. The system was switched over to the backup external communication link but a routing problem at the Telco prevented this from operating.

Service was restored at 5:16 pm after the routing problem at the Telco was remedied. Processing of backlogged messages was completed at 5:53pm. During this period of catch up the system was actively managed to ensure it was completed in as timely manner as possible.

Industry was notified of the incident through the Cargo Support website (ICS Updates), the Customs Interactive Announcements Page and an email to the outage notification group.

These occurred as follows:

ICS Updates - The first message was posted at 15:11pm and advised users that ICS Customs Interactive users may currently be experiencing difficulties logging on to the ICS. The ICS status was changed to Red.

An update was posted at 15.50pm and advised that ICS Customs Interactive Users were currently unable to log on to the ICS. Users were also advised that Internet EDI messaging was also affected.

A final update was posted at 17.39pm and advised that ICS interactive was now available to all users and that EDI messaging has resumed processing. Users were further advised that delays could be expected as the ICS processes the backlog. It was expected that this delay would be cleared in the next few hours. The ICS status was changed to Amber.

The CI Announcements Page was updated with the same information at similar times and an email was also sent to the "outage notification" group advising of the incident and when the incident was resolved.

Technical Details

A hardware failure in the router at the Telco exchange failed which caused both SMTP (EDI Messaging) and http (Interactive Application) to be unable to reach the Customs Connect Facility. In effect the internet was not functioning from a cargo perspective.

The Internet connection was failed over to the secondary Telco connection. The secondary connection was not advertising the route for connection to CCF. After this route advertising problem was corrected the secondary service started to function correctly and service was restored.

The hardware failure in the primary connection was repaired at 6:30 pm and service seamlessly resumed via the primary connection.

In spite of the root causes of this failure being beyond the control of customs there are some actions' being taken by Customs to reduce the impact of a repeat of this failure. It is proposed that there be a regular test of the secondary connection. Additionally there will be an audit requested from the service providers to detail the routes that are being advertised by them.

Impact

EDI Message processing and Customs Interactive were unavailable between 1:26pm and 5:16pm. During the period of the outage no messages were lost by Customs. Customs are unable to quantify if there were any messages lost in the external environment.

However, based on problem calls placed at the Service Desk it would appear that there were no issues with lost messages.

Direct Connect Customers were unaffected as were Customs ICS Users.

During the incident CI&SC received around 450 extra incoming calls. At 3.50pm a message was activated at the start of the IVR, prior to the Welcome message. This advised clients that Customs were experiencing issues and directed them to check the website rather than holding on to speak with an officer. The IVR call statistics show that this message was successful in reducing the in calls flowing through to an officer and therefore increasing wait times. The message was removed at 6:00pm.

During the outage, BCP was invoked for Exports. CI&SC received 85 requests to process contingency requests.