



Australian Customs Cargo Advice

Number 09/04

Sea Cargo Inspection and Examination Arrangements (Replacing ACCA 2008/12)

This Australian Customs Cargo Advice (ACCA) outlines the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service's (Customs and Border Protection's) arrangements for the inspection and examination of sea cargo. It replaces Australian Customs Cargo Advice 2008/12.

This ACCA should be read in conjunction with:

- ACCA 08/11 - Improving Certainty of Consolidated Status in the Integrated Cargo System, and
- ACCA 09/05 - Sea Cargo Status - Service Levels

Background

Customs and Border Protection is charged with the responsibility to provide effective border protection for the Australian community that also supports legitimate trade and travel and ensures collection of border related revenue and trade statistics.

The overall increase in the importance of national security issues since 2001 has required Customs and Border Protection to respond to an increasingly diverse range of border risks. Customs and Border Protection is expected to prevent the importation and exportation of an increasingly wide range of drugs, explosives, chemical and biological agents, drug precursors, goods which breach intellectual property laws, and goods that do not meet accepted health or safety standards.

Customs and Border Protection's inspection and examination of containers provide a capability for the detection and treatment of a broad range of border and security risks. These arrangements play an important role in the protection of Australia's borders and have had direct and indirect benefits for the Australian community and industry. The community has benefited from very significant detections of illicit drugs, revenue evasion, weapons and other prohibited imports and exports.

A comprehensive cargo inspection regime provides protection to legitimate industry through the detection and deterrence of non-compliant importations and exportations. Importantly, these strategies also serve to assure foreign governments and trading partners of the security and integrity of trade with Australia.

Customs and Border Protection operates Container Examination Facilities near Australia's largest container terminals in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Fremantle, and smaller Cargo Examination Facilities in Adelaide, Bell Bay, Townsville, Newcastle and Darwin.

The Container Examination Facilities each have a container x-ray and other x-ray machines and the Cargo Examination Facilities are equipped with smaller x-ray units to examine cargo as it is unpacked from containers.

All of these CEFs have a wide range of other technologies to assist in the examination of cargo.

In addition to Container Examination Facility and Cargo Examination Facility operations, cargo is also subject to examination by Customs and Border Protection at other ports around Australia.

Volume of Cargo Selected for Customs and Border Protection Intervention

In the 2009/10 financial year, Customs and Border Protection's target is to inspect 101,500 twenty foot equivalent units (TEU) and examine 14,000 TEU nationally.

Selection of Cargo for Customs and Border Protection Intervention

All sea cargo entering Australia is risk assessed, and where appropriate, Customs and Border Protection conducts further intervention on the cargo. All high risk cargo is inspected.

ACCA 09/05 - Sea Cargo Status - Service Levels outlines the information that Customs and Border Protection requires before it can finalise the risk assessment for sea cargo, the timeframes it aims to complete the risk assessment within once all required information is available, and the services offered when those timeframes cannot be met. It also provides information on ways in which industry can assist Customs and Border Protection to minimise our impact on the sea cargo supply chain.

Importers and exporters need to ensure they make provision in their reporting and logistics arrangements for the possibility of Customs and Border Protection selecting their cargo for intervention.

Costs and Charges

Section 186 of the Customs Act 1901 provides Customs and Border Protection with the power to examine any goods subject to its control. It has been determined that section 186 applies to the CEF logistics arrangements. The cost of presenting cargo for examination at the CEF is being recovered through the Import Processing Charge.

As advised in Australian Customs Notice 2006/21 the current Import Processing Charges for sea cargo are:

Item	Current charge
Electronic Import Declarations for goods imported by sea	\$50.00 (GST exempt)
Documentary Import Declarations for goods imported by sea	\$65.75 (GST exempt)

Damages

Section 34 of the Customs Act provides that:

Customs shall not be liable for any loss or damage occasioned to any goods subject to the control of Customs except by the neglect or wilful act of some officer.

While Customs and Border Protection exercises appropriate care for all cargo, importers and exporters should ensure that they arrange for the appropriate packing and insurance of their goods. The policy in regard to damages can be downloaded from Customs and Border Protection internet site at <http://www.customs.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/CEFdamagesPolicy.pdf>

Contacting Customs and Border Protection

All queries about matters addressed in this ACCA should be directed to the Customs Information and Support Centre (CI&SC) by:

- telephone on 1300 558 099
- facsimile on (02) 8337 6713
- email at cargosupport@customs.gov.au

Customs and Border Protection will not provide information about specific consignments unless there are special circumstances, for example time-critical or hazardous consignments.

Making a complaint or offering a compliment

Customs and Border Protection recognises the public's right to comment on our services and is interested in what any person has to say.

To comment on any aspect of our service, anyone can;

- Speak to a Customs and Border Protection officer
- Complete a reply paid comment sheet, available at Customs and Border Protection offices
- Write to the Complaints and Compliments Network, free of charge
Complaints and Compliments
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service
GPO 9834
In your capital city
- Contact the Complaints and Compliments Network on 1800 228 227 or via email at comments@customs.gov.au

When making a complaint related to sea cargo, all available shipping and cargo information should be included.

Complaints will be fully investigated and Customs and Border Protection will aim to respond to the complainant within 15 business days of receiving the complaint.

Jaclyne Fisher
National Director
Cargo Division
November 2009