



Australian Customs Cargo Advice

Number 27/06

Integrated Cargo System - Business Continuity Plan

Customs has reviewed its Integrated Cargo System (ICS) Business Continuity Plans in relation to both Imports and Exports. The review was undertaken in consultation with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) and industry representatives from all affected sectors.

Scope of the review

To identify and reflect industry business practicalities, while maintaining Customs and AQIS requirements for meeting border protection and revenue responsibilities, in an agreed business continuity plan.

What has changed?

The new ICS Business Continuity Plan (BCP) combines the existing Imports and Exports plans into one document. Major features of the plan include:

Flexible business rules

- Flexible business rules that remove dependencies between the various contingency transaction types. Key benefits include:
 - The ability to move import cargo under bond without reference to the cargo report. This will ensure that cargo is moved away from ports and airports to Customs licensed premises in the early stages of ICS unavailability;
 - Industry is able to clear cargo at the Import Declaration level without reference to the corresponding cargo reports where it meets certain criteria. This meets industry needs in the early stages of ICS unavailability where cargo is due to be collected but final status is not available;
 - Industry is able to lodge cargo reports for processing without reference to the master cargo reports; and
 - Processing of export cargo declarations and consolidations is a priority in the first stages of ICS unavailability to ensure that cargo can meet carrier timeframes.

Electronic lodgement of contingency data

- Industry will be able to lodge contingency data in electronic file format through email. Electronic lodgement and return of cargo status to the reporting party and associated cargo establishments will provide an effective and quick response on contingency management that will meet industry timeframes.
- Lodgement of electronic data is performed by:
 - Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) users – Software developers have been encouraged to provide EDI contingency functionality to EDI systems. This functionality will allow industry to download contingency data by transaction type (cargo reports, import declarations etc) to the prescribed format required by Customs. These contingency files are then emailed to Customs for processing; or

- EDI or Customs Interactive (CI) users – Download the transaction specific file from the Customs website and input data into the fields identified. These contingency files are then emailed to Customs for processing.
- Paper based transactions can still be lodged when necessary. Industry can lodge these transactions at Customs counters. Customs requires significantly more time to process these transactions compared to electronic lodgements as described above.

Other changes

- Customs has centralised contingency management to the Customs Information and Support Centre (CI&SC) in Sydney;
- Customs has automated internal procedures for processing electronic contingency data which will provide consistency and assist with quick responses to industry; and
- The provision of an “Urgent Customs Clearance” contingency management service. This service applies where the ICS is available, but for numerous reasons including industry system problems, contingencies may be required.

When will the new plan become operational?

The new plan will become operational on Monday 11 December 2006.

Testing of the new contingency procedures

Customs and industry have tested and passed the procedures for lodging electronic contingency data.

Individual companies or brokers are encouraged to test the new procedures for lodging electronic contingency transactions. This will confirm the ease of transacting in this manner over paper-based transactions and allow industry to familiarise themselves with the procedures before it is required during ICS unavailability.

Arrangements for testing should be made through the Customs Information and Support Centre (CI&SC) on the contact details supplied below.

Where to find more information

Customs Website

Customs maintains information about the new ICS Business Continuity Plan on its website. This includes:

- The endorsed version of the plan;
- Electronic transactions specific files pre-formatted for industry to download and use for lodging contingency data;
- A “Help Attachment” which provides a step-by-step guide, by transaction type, of how to lodge electronic contingency data. This includes file naming and email subject line protocols;
- Contingency forms for lodging paper-based transactions; and
- A “Help Attachment” which provides a step-by-step guide for lodging paper-based transactions.

This information can be accessed through <http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=5524>

Customs Information and Support Centre (CI & SC)

The Customs Information and Support Centre are able to provide more detail or answer any questions regarding the new ICS BCP.

The CI&SC can be contacted in the following ways:

- Email to cargosupport@customs.gov.au.

Simple matters will receive a response by e-mail. More complex matters, including issues that require the assistance of a BCP ICS expert will be dealt with by phone. Please include a contact number.

- Call Cargo Support on 1300 558 099

Depending on the nature of the question, your details may be taken, and an ICS BCP expert will contact you.

Australian Customs Service
Cargo & Trade Division
CANBERRA
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