



For Immediate Release  
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## United States - Canada Free and Secure Trade Program the FAST Program

In recognition of our shared objective to enhance the security and safety of Americans and Canadians, while enhancing the economic prosperity of both countries, the United States and Canada have agreed to align, to the maximum extent possible, our customs commercial programs along their shared border.

By adopting a common approach to risk management, partnering with those in the trade community who have a history of compliance and are committed to the integrity of their supply chain management processes, using compatible and advanced technology, the United States and Canada are working together to interdict threats to public security and safety, while keeping their shared border open to the free flow of low risk, legitimate trade. This joint effort is called the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program.

The FAST program will feature:

- Increased integrity in supply chain management processes by offering expedited clearance processes to those carriers and importers who have enrolled in the U.S. Customs - Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) or Canada's Partners in Protection (PIP) - similar programs that call for clients' use of business processes that minimize exposure to criminal elements.
- Streamlined, and, where appropriate, integrated registration processes for drivers, carriers, and importers minimizing administrative requirements while ensuring that only low-risk trade chain participants with sound and secure business practices are extended the privileges of the FAST program;
- Expedited clearance of low risk transborder shipments by reducing the information required to meet customs requirements, dedicating lanes at major crossings to FAST participants, using common technology and focusing limited physical examinations on matters related to public security and safety.
- Integrated and advanced technology such as transponders used by both U.S. and Canada, facilitating the clearance of low risk shipments and mitigating the costs of participation to clients.
- Dedicated compliance account managers who will build and maintain client partnerships and monitor clients' compliance with program requirements.

For low risk goods being imported from Canada into the United States by a pre-authorized importer, a pre-authorized carrier, and a registered driver, the pre-authorized carrier will provide the United States Customs Service, in advance of the arrival of the shipment at the border, with an electronic transmission of limited data. When the shipment arrives at the border, it will be processed through a dedicated lane where the driver will present his registration card and, using bar code or transponder technology, identify the shipment.

For low risk goods being imported from the United States into Canada by a pre-authorized importer, a pre-authorized carrier, and a registered driver when the shipment arrives at the border it will be processed through a dedicated lane where the driver will present his registration card and, using bar code or transponder technology, identify the pre-authorized carrier and pre-authorized importer.

Whether low risk goods are moving into the U.S. or Canada, they will be expeditiously cleared through dedicated lanes using compatible technology.

Of course, goods cleared using the FAST program will remain subject to physical examinations. However, given

the low-risk nature of the goods, and that the driver, carrier, and importer are known partners with the U.S. and Canadian Customs administrations who have invested in security-enhancing business practices, these goods will be examined at a significantly lower rate than other imported goods.

### **Participants in the FAST Program**

The benefits of the FAST program will be available to only those drivers, carriers, and importers who have been pre-authorized by the United States and Canada.

Drivers authorized to use the FAST program will have a demonstrated history of complying with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

Carriers authorized to use the FAST program will have a demonstrated history of complying with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, made an investment in security-enhancing business practices as required by the U.S. C-TPAT and/or Canadian PIP program(s), and, in the case of carriers seeking FAST clearance into Canada, will have the necessary business processes required of a customs self-assessment regime.

Importers authorized to use the FAST program will have a demonstrated history of complying with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, made an investment in security-enhancing business practices as required by the U.S. C-TPAT and/or Canadian PIP program(s), and, in the case of importers seeking FAST clearance into Canada, will have the necessary business processes required of a customs self-assessment regime.

### **Benefits of the FAST Program**

Greater speed and certainty in the clearance of transborder shipments, reduced costs of compliance with customs requirements and a strong and ongoing partnership with the U.S. and Canadian Customs administrations are among the key benefits of the FAST program to the trade community.

Specifically, these benefits will be achieved by:

- Reducing the information required for customs clearance;
- Eliminating the need for importers to participate in the transmission of data for each transaction;
- Dedicating lanes for FAST clearances;
- Using compatible technology and electronic data protocols;
- Reducing the rate of border examinations;
- Conducting trade compliance verification away from the border to the greatest extent possible; and,
- Establishing compliance account managers who will be dedicated to building and maintaining client partnerships, and monitoring authorized clients' compliance.

### **CURRENT STATUS OF FAST**

Both the U.S. and Canada have already established procedures for accepting FAST applications from importers. Beginning today, the U.S. and Canada are jointly registering carriers for the FAST program.

### **Next Steps for FAST**

By October 2002, a joint registration process will be available to drivers. Beginning in December 2002, the U.S. and Canada will jointly offer pre-authorized drivers, carriers, and importers expedited customs clearance processes at the following major crossings:

- Detroit, Michigan / Windsor, Ontario
- Buffalo, New York / Fort Erie, Ontario
- Buffalo, New York / Queenston, Ontario
- Port Huron, Michigan / Sarnia, Ontario
- Champlain, New York / Lacolle, Quebec

- Blaine, Washington / Douglas, British Columbia

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