

Department of Homeland Security Announces Cargo Security Initiative

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The Department of Homeland Security today released final rules which will allow U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to collect cargo information necessary to identify high-risk shipments which could threaten the safety and security of the United States. The final rules for cargo security address the timeline of presentation for electronic advance manifest information.

"We need to take advantage of every opportunity to make our country safe from terrorists and terrorist weapons," said Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. "Advance information is a cornerstone in our efforts to secure our nation's borders and ensure the flow of trade. The security measures resulting from these rules are necessary to achieve these twin goals."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection will process advance cargo information into an automated targeting system linked to various law enforcement and commercial databases. This initial step will enable CBP to efficiently identify shipments that pose a potential risk. Previously most non-maritime inbound shipments entered into the U.S. without being screened by an automated targeting system. As a result, most cargo shipments could not be assessed for risk prior to arrival. The Trade Act provides the Department of Homeland Security with the authority to eliminate antiquated, paper-driven processes for cargo crossing our borders.

"When we are able to obtain better information prior to a shipment's arrival, we will be able to do a more effective job in combating terrorism," said Asa Hutchinson, Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security. "These rules will do just that."

"This takes us beyond the maritime 24-Hour Rule to incorporate advance electronic information for all cargo shipments to the U.S., pertaining to commercial trucking, air freight and rail. It is a bold but necessary move to better secure our borders against the terrorist threat without delaying the flow of legitimate trade," said CBP Commissioner Robert C. Bonner.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection received significant input from the trade community and the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA). CBP carefully considered and in many cases adopted the trades' recommendations. CBP will work closely with the trade community to phase in these rules over the coming months.

The following are the timelines for all modes of transportation:

Inbound:

- Air & Courier - 4 hours prior to arrival in U.S., or "wheels up" from certain nearby areas
- Rail - 2 hours prior to arrival at a U.S. port of entry
- Vessel - 24 hours prior to lading at foreign port
- Truck - Free And Secure Trade (FAST): 30 minutes prior to arrival in U.S.; non-FAST: 1 hour prior to arrival in the U.S.

Outbound:

- Air & Courier - 2 hours prior to scheduled departure from the U.S.
- Rail - 2 hours prior to the arrival of the train at the border
- Vessel - 24 hours prior to departure from U.S. port where cargo is laden
- Truck - 1 hour prior to the arrival of the truck at the border

Video-on-demand of Secretary Ridge and Commissioner Bonner's press conference will be available on the United States Customs and Border Protection website, www.cbp.gov along with a summary of the final rules.