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To Our Valued Customers

DID YOU KNOW? TELL YOUR VENDORS! C-TPAT Container Seals

As a participant in the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) program, we have an obligation to ensure all our business partners are aware of C-TPAT regulation regarding container seals.

The requirement for Container Seals on Maritime Cargo was published in the Federal Register on August 7, 2008 and became effective on October 15, 2008. The statute requires all containers to be sealed with a seal meeting the International Organization for Standardization Publicly Available Specification 17712 (ISO/PAS 17712), Freight Containers-Mechanical Seals. This specification addresses seal strength and durability so as to prevent accidental breakage, early deterioration, detect tampering, as well as advises each seal be clearly and legibly marked with a unique identification number. All containers (maritime) in transit to the United States must be sealed with an ISO/PAS 17712 mechanical seal no later than October 15, 2008. These seals are keyless, single use bolt locks and easy to lock.



The statutory requirement applies to loaded containers, including freight remaining on board, arriving by vessel at U.S. ports of entry. Exceptions, however, include tanks, non-standard containers (such as open top containers), and those containers incapable of being affixed with such a seal. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will ensure compliance with this new requirement as part of normal seaport container inspection activities and does not envision new activities aimed at seal verification.

Vessel carriers are reminded, pursuant to 19 CFR 4.7(b)(2) and 4.7a(c)(4)(xiv), to transmit via the Vessel Automated Manifest System all seal numbers to CBP 24 hours before cargo is laden aboard a vessel at a foreign port. In addition, enforcement action in accordance with 18 CFR Section 4.7 concerning Advance Filing of Cargo Declaration Requirements for failure to transmit accurate information, remains in effect.

Vessel carriers are advised that CBP will begin the phasing in of penalty assessments for violation of the container sealing requirements. CBP will consider 6 U.S.C. to be Violated if a loaded container that is subject to the sealing requirements arrives by vessel at a port of entry in the United States on or after October 15, 2008, either with no seal, or with a seal that fails to meet the ISO/PAS 17712 standard. CBP may assess a civil penalty against the party responsible for the violation of 6 U.S.C. 944 under §19 U.S.C. Section 1595a(b) for the attempted introduction of merchandise into the United States contrary to law.

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