



QUICK GUIDE TO IMPORTS

FREIGHT FORWARDERS

Freight Forwarders arrange for the carriage of sea and air cargo to Australia on behalf of importers. Their principal role in dealing with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs and Border Protection) is to report the cargo and request permission for its movement within Australia while it is still under Customs and Border Protection control.

Freight Forwarders intending to arrange the carriage of cargo from overseas should familiarise themselves with the processes and their obligations to communicate information about cargo to Customs and Border Protection.

Customs and Border Protection legislation specifies that all imported cargo must be electronically reported in the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) in a timely and accurate manner. This is to allow Customs and Border Protection to complete a risk assessment before the cargo arrives in Australia. Additionally, if uncleared cargo needs to be moved within Australia, it must be done so in accordance with Customs and Border Protection legislation.

REPORTING OPTIONS

There are several options available to Freight Forwarders to communicate cargo information to the ICS. These are as follows:

- report via a bureau
- report via the online ICS Customs Interactive facility
- report via electronic messaging using in house software or a commercially available package.

REGISTRATION

If a Freight Forwarder chooses to report via a bureau, the bureau will generally take care of any administrative requirements. It should be noted that clients using a bureau are still legally responsible for the data reported in the ICS. Clients can communicate directly with Customs and Border Protection using a digital certificate/s and registering in the ICS prior to submitting

any electronic reports. Clients who choose to report via the Customs Interactive facility should be aware that this facility best suits low volume reporters.

Comprehensive supporting documentation is available to clients who choose to develop their own reporting software.

CARGO REPORTS

Cargo Reports provide details of the cargo, its journey and entities involved. Cargo Reports link to other ICS messages and are critical to the process of assessing risk and clearing cargo. The risk assessment process takes time and in some cases may require further investigation which could impact on the delivery of the cargo. Both Customs and Border Protection and Biosecurity Service Group (Australian Quarantine Inspection Service) are responsible for the risk management of all imported cargo and the interception of high risk and prohibited items.

UNDERBOND MOVEMENTS

In addition to reporting cargo, Freight Forwarders may be responsible for moving cargo from the place of discharge to another location for deconsolidation, delivery or to satisfy Customs and Border Protection requirements. These moves are reported in the ICS electronically via an Underbond Movement Request. Requirements for underbond movements are mandated by legislation.

CUSTOMS INTERACTIVE (CI) FACILITY

The ICS offers a comprehensive search and diagnostic facility where users can view and amend their reports. Detail about the status of your cargo is available to monitor its progress towards release. In addition, vessel arrival information is available to all clients. Freight Forwarders may also utilise the Customs Interactive facility as a contingency in case of outages.

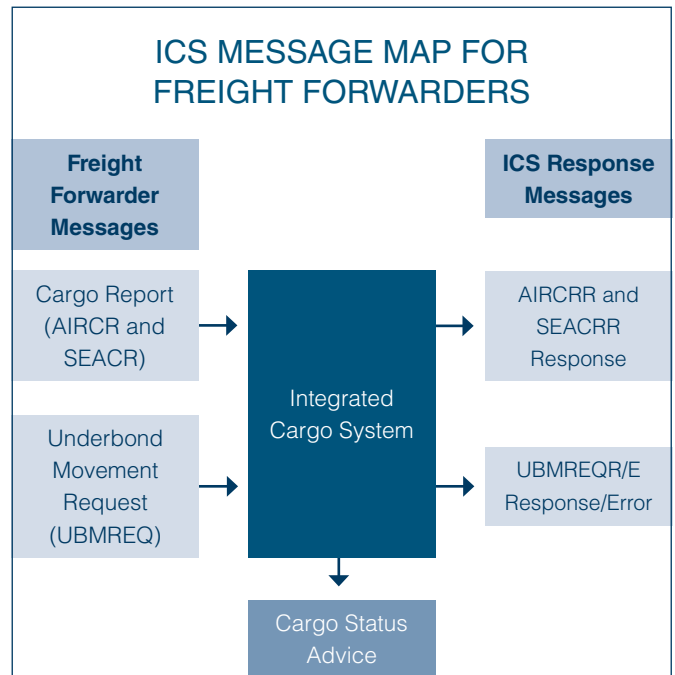
COMPLIANCE

Customs and Border Protection’s Compliance Assurance Branch monitors the timeliness and accuracy of Cargo Reports to ensure compliance with the legislated reporting timeframes. Freight Forwarders should familiarise themselves with the requirements relevant to their operations as they vary depending on transport type and the duration of the journey.

The Compliance Assurance Branch undertakes regular checks to ensure accuracy of Cargo Reports against the physical cargo and commercial documents. These documents must be retained and available for inspection for at least five years.

Regional Compliance officers are available to help clients to comply with Customs and Border Protection requirements. Compliance officers are also on hand to undertake onsite visits and provide a range of educational and other helpful material.

Penalties apply where instances of non-compliance with Customs and Border Protection requirements are detected.



BASIC STEPS TO CLEARING CARGO

