



Container Seals on U.S.-bound Maritime Cargo Required

U.S. Customs and Borders Protection (CBP) has posted a notification that all loaded U.S.-bound maritime containers must have seals that meet the ISO/PAS 17712 standards for unique numbering, strength, durability and resistance to tampering. The requirements are in effect for all containers arriving by vessel at a port of entry in the U.S. on or after October 15, 2008. Requirements for the special seals were established by the 9/11 Act.

In the notice posted in the U.S. Federal Register, CBP also said carriers must use the Vessel Automated Manifest System to supply Customs with all seal numbers at least 24 hours before U.S.-bound cargo is loaded at a foreign port, as part of the manifest transmission.

CBP has indicated their recognition that there are types of containers that cannot be readily secured by the use of a freight seal meeting the ISO/PAS 17712 standards. These include tanks, non-standard containers (such as open tops and custom built containers). These types will be exempt from the seal requirements.

Penalties for Failure to Comply

For those containers arriving on or after October 15, 2008 without the required seal type, CBP may assess a civil penalty against the party responsible for the violation of attempting to introduce the merchandise into the U.S. CBP will phase in penalty assessments for violation of the container sealing requirements, but have not indicated a time frame for the phase in period, nor the amount of possible penalties.

U.S. Importers are encouraged to notify overseas suppliers of the requirement to ensure compliance at time of exportation from the originating country. At Argents, our overseas suppliers and agents have been notified of the requirements to ensure the cargo we handle on your behalf is handled properly.

Argents Can Assist You

Shipment planning in an uncertain trade environment can be difficult. At Argents Express Group, we will be happy to discuss how to securely move your goods in compliance with the myriad rules, regulations, and security requirements to avoid problems and penalties. To discuss your concerns or questions, please contact our **Director of Compliance, Cindy Allen**, at callen@argents.com or **734-326-9499**.