

**CUSTOMS-TRADE PARTNERSHIP AGAINST TERRORISM (C-TPAT)  
SECURITY CRITERIA FOR IMPORTERS  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Since October 2004, CBP and the trade community have work collaboratively to develop minimum-security criteria for importers either already enrolled in the C-TPAT program, or wishing to join this voluntary, incentives-based supply chain security program. These new minimum-security criteria help solidify membership expectations, and more clearly define and establish the baseline level of security measures, which must be employed by member importers. These security criteria are effective as of March 25, 2005.

**FOR NEW IMPORTERS WISHING TO JOIN C-TPAT:** Importers wishing to join the C-TPAT program on or after March 25, 2005, will need to meet or exceed the security criteria before they will be 'certified' and eligible for benefits. Applications for new membership will only be accepted electronically, via the C-TPAT web-based online application for importers, [http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial\\_enforcement/ctpat/importers/application\\_importer.xml](http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial_enforcement/ctpat/importers/application_importer.xml), with the submission of a completed, comprehensive security profile that will also be required at time of application.

**FOR EXISTING C-TPAT MEMBER IMPORTERS:** For importers who are already a member of the C-TPAT program, having completed and received the memorandum of agreement signed by CBP, a gradual, phased implementation approach will be followed which provides existing members more time to address the security measures outlined in the criteria. The components outlined in the security criteria document have been segmented into three distinct phases, each with their own timeline.

- **PHASE 1 – HARDENING OF THE PHYSICAL SUPPLY CHAIN:** Under the first phase, existing member importers will have 60 days from the March 25 effective date to address the following three security criteria:
  1. **Container Security** (seals, inspections, storage).
  2. **Physical Security** (fencing, lighting, parking, building structure, locking devices and key controls, lighting, alarm systems, video surveillance cameras).
  3. **Physical Access Controls** (employees, visitors, deliveries, challenging and removing unauthorized persons).
  
- **PHASE 2 – INTERNAL SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:** Within 120 days of the March 25 effective date, existing member importers will review and enhance the more internal or procedural security elements:
  1. **Personnel Security** (pre-employment verifications, background checks, personnel termination procedures).

2. **Procedural Security** (documentation processing, manifest procedures, shipping and receiving, cargo discrepancies).
3. **Information Technology Security** (password protection, accountability).
4. **Security Training and Threat Awareness.**

- **PHASE 3 – BUSINESS PARTNER REQUIREMENTS:** During the final phase, existing member importers will be afforded 180 days from the March 25 effective date to address the Business Partner Requirement elements. Importers must have written and verifiable processes for the selection of business partners including manufacturers, product suppliers, and vendors, and documentation substantiating that business partners throughout their supply chain are meeting C-TPAT security criteria, or equivalent supply chain security program criteria administered by a foreign Customs administration.

**CERTIFICATIONS:** Existing C-TPAT member importers will not be required to provide a written certification that the security criteria have been met, nor will previously submitted and accepted security profiles need to be resubmitted. It will be understood that importers must meet or exceed these baseline security criteria by the end of each implementation phase. CBP will continue to use validations to gauge whether or not importers have adopted these security criteria. Those importers found to be deficient may have benefits suspended, or removed from the program entirely.

To assist in the implementation of these security criteria, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document has been provided, and the trade is encouraged to submit questions to the C-TPAT Industry Partnership email address at [Industry.Partnership@dhs.gov](mailto:Industry.Partnership@dhs.gov). Periodic updates to the FAQs will be provided.

In closing, as a voluntary, incentive based supply chain security program, the new C-TPAT security criteria for importers are risk based, flexible, and designed to help CBP achieve its twin goals of security and facilitation. CBP will continue to work with members who demonstrate a commitment towards strengthening their entire supply chain and benefits will be provided accordingly.