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Printed:

Fri Mar 17 18:35:42 EST 2006

Frequently Asked Questions

Minimum Security Criteria for Sea Carriers

03/14/2006

Q: Why is CBP revising the security guidelines for C-TPAT sea carriers?

A: For C-TPAT to ensure its continued viability, effectiveness and relevance the program must continue to evolve – as the terrorist threat and the nature of global trade evolves. The impetus for strengthening the existing security guidelines is to provide more detail to the membership on the expectations of the program, and to assist CBP in defining a more consistent baseline for minimal program requirements and better-defined C-TPAT benefits.

Q: What basis did CBP use in developing the new security criteria?

A: The new security criteria are based on the processes, procedures and best practices collected from the thousands of security profiles that CBP has reviewed and approved, and the more than 400 validations that have been completed and documented.

Q: Has the C-TPAT membership participated in developing the new security criteria?

A: A. Yes. The first draft of the new security criteria was disseminated in December of 2005 to C-TPAT members, and trade associations for review and comment. In January 2006, feedback was received from our members and trade associations, and the C-TPAT office reviewed the input. Several modifications and changes were made based on this input and the process was finalized in February 2006.

Q: Is CBP moving towards making C-TPAT a regulatory program?

A: No. C-TPAT will continue to evolve as a voluntary government / private sector partnership. As C-TPAT evolves, the program will continue to work in partnership with the stakeholders of the international supply chain and cooperatively develop improved systems of security and efficiency.

Q: The new C-TPAT security criteria contain mandatory elements that may potentially place a greater burden of responsibility on the sea carrier. Doesn't this constitute a major policy shift within C-TPAT – from voluntary to mandatory requirements?

A: No. C-TPAT remains a voluntary partnership. However, once a company commits to the C-TPAT program, there are specific program requirements that must be adhered to by the company to qualify for C-TPAT benefits.

Q: Will C-TPAT continue to allow for the customization of company's security profiles based on their business model?

A: Yes. C-TPAT recognizes the complexities of international supply chains and will continue to insist that companies customize their security profile submissions to best reflect their security processes.

Q: How will the new security criteria be implemented?

A: All of the areas in the security criteria will be implemented in a single phase, 90 days from March 1, 2006. The implementation plan is on the CBP.gov web site.