



Small Business Development Centers

Helping businesses start, grow, and prosper.



Guide to Importing

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1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection is responsible for clearing more than 11 million cargo containers that arrive on ships and are offloaded at U.S. Seaports each year. Considering this extremely large volume of cargo, the inspectors must follow established procedures to process these goods in a timely manner. Not having the correct documentation, or not following prescribed guidelines may result in your shipment sitting at a port, or sent back to its original shipping location costing you thousands of dollars in lost materials and delayed manufacturing time. With this in mind, it is imperative that the small business owner understand the prescribed rules and regulations for importing cargo into the U.S. and maintain accurate and timely documentation.



*More than 11 million
cargo containers arrive
in the U.S. each year.*

The Pennsylvania SBDC Guide to Importing will assist you in better understanding these rules and regulations and will provide a basic overview on importing materials into the United States while providing a broad outline concerning federal importing regulations and requirements. This document should not be construed as “all inclusive” for all federal importing rules. Because of the need to update and change rules and regulations, the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers encourage any entrepreneur considering importing goods or services into the U.S. to speak with their local Customs and Border Protection office for additional guidance.

The U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection provided the majority of information contained herein. Additional sources of information are contained in the Resources Guide located at the end of this document.

Information contained in this guide is for informational purposes only. While every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of information, The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers do not endorse or verify the accuracy of information contained herein. Any comments concerning the information contained within this guide should be directed to the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTING GOODS AND SERVICES INTO THE U.S.

Only the owner, purchaser, or a licensed customs broker [representing the owner or purchaser] can legally bring cargo into the United States. These individuals can arrange their own customs clearance for imported goods that are used for either personal or business use. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection does not require a license or permit to import cargo into the U.S., although other government agencies may require permits, licenses, or other certifications depending on the cargo being imported. It is your responsibility to check with all federal agencies having jurisdiction over imported goods to ensure the necessary licenses are obtained. This is where the SBDC international consultant can be invaluable, but you must engage them early on in the process. For more information please visit http://www.its.treas.gov/right_to_entry.html.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection entry forms will require an importer number. Customs forms are available through U.S. Customs and Border Protection at <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/forms/>. If your business is registered with the Internal Revenue Service, the importer number will be the IRS Tax Identification Number. If you do not have a Tax Identification Number from the Internal Revenue Service, your social security number will suffice. Other information to take into consideration is:

- ✚ The importer must declare the duty value of goods. The final assessment is fixed by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The transaction value, or the price actually paid or payable by the buyer to the seller of the imported goods, is primarily used. Other factors may add to the duty value of the goods, including packing costs, selling commissions, royalty or licensing fees. If the transaction value is not able to be determined, identical or similar goods transaction values are utilized.
- ✚ Properly classifying imported goods is the responsibility of the importer. The United States International Trade Commission issues the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. More information and the current schedule can be found online at <http://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/index.htm> which prescribes the classification of merchandise by the type of product.
- ✚ The importer must pay the estimated duties and processing fees if applicable. U.S. Customs and Border Protection make the final determination of the correct duty tax as determined by the goods' classification number. The most commonly assigned duty rate is *ad valorem*, which is a percentage applied to the value of the imported goods. The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) also gives several duty rates for each item including general rates, special rates, compound rates, and column 2 rates.
- ✚ The importer must ensure that their imported goods meet the admissibility requirements. These include proper marking, safety standards and advanced attainment of proper permits if required.
- ✚ If formal entry is required, the importer may have to post a surety bond.

3. The Formal Entry Process

A formal entry is required for commercial shipments valued at over \$2000 and/or supported by a surety bond. A surety bond is like an insurance policy that is payable to U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the event that the importer does not comply with import regulations. Surety Bonds may be secured through a surety, which is an insurance company that has been authorized to write Customs bonds by the Treasury Department. A complete listing of the Treasury's Listing of Approved Sureties (Department Circular 570) can be found at <http://www.fms.treas.gov/c570/c570.html#certified>. If a customs broker is employed for entry, the broker may permit the use of his bond to provide the required coverage.



A complete listing of the Treasury's Listing of Approved Sureties (Department Circular 570) can be found at: <http://www.fms.treas.gov/c570/c570.html#certified>.

A formal entry is also required for certain product types of any value including textiles, certain types of footwear, and other types of goods subject to quota/visa restrictions. Personal shipments over \$2000 in value also require a formal entry.

- Goods may enter the U.S. for consumption, warehousing at the port of arrival, be transported in-bond to another port of entry and enter there under the same conditions as at the port of arrival, or be covered by a temporary importation bond.
- Imported goods must arrive within the port of entry, be authorized for delivery by Customs, and estimated duties paid before they may legally enter the U.S. for commerce. This is normally done by the importer or importer's agent acting on behalf of the importer and filing the appropriate documentation. This process can be expedited by presenting the documents prior to the goods' arrival. Entry however, will not take place until the imported goods arrive within the confines of the port of entry.
- If the proper documentation is not provided within 15 calendar days of the goods' arrival, they are sent to a general order warehouse with storage costs to be incurred by the importer. If the goods remain unclaimed at the end of the six months, the merchandise is sold at auction.

- The U.S. Customs and Border Protection is not responsible for, and does not notify the importer of the arrival of a shipment. The carrier of the goods usually makes notification of the arrival. You should make prior arrangements with the carrier so that the importer is notified immediately of the cargo's arrival to avoid any delays in obtaining the goods.

If the importer is unable to be at the port of entry to prepare and file the entry documentation, then a customs broker may act as an agent for the importer. Brokers are licensed by the Customs Service and charge a fee for their services. A list of customs brokers can be obtained from the local Customs office or found in the yellow pages of the local telephone directory.

The Duties and Responsibilities of Customs Brokers

Customs house brokers are licensed, private sector service providers who coordinate the activities of all parties involved in the import transaction. The mission of a customs broker is to facilitate imports while protecting U.S. tax revenues. Licensed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, customs brokers must possess thorough knowledge of Customs regulations and tariff schedules. In addition, they must keep abreast of amendments and changes made to laws and administrative regulations.

Many brokers will assist with assigning the best routes and modes of transportation for your cargo. Additionally, customs brokers may be in contact with foreign government agencies to determine special licensing or permits. Other benefits of using a customs broker include:

- ✓ Brokers usually receive discounted shipping rates.
- ✓ Brokers have access to the Automated Commercial System (ACS) to facilitate customs clearance.
- ✓ Brokers are import experts which can reduce or eliminate costly errors.
- ✓ Brokers may use their bond to cover goods.
- ✓ Brokers' fees are usually nominal.

Customs house services are highly competitive. It is best to get several quotes before making a selection. It is important to look for a broker that is using the Automated Broker Interface (ABI) with the Automated Commercial System (ACS) to transact business. This will allow the broker to facilitate transactions and check the status of a client's shipment.

The U. S. Customs and Border Protection provides stringent guidelines concerning the responsibilities of a customs broker. Their fees can vary so if you do not have a broker it is best to shop around and talk with other importers to find a reputable firm.

Each broker must keep current in correct, orderly, and itemized manner records of accounts reflecting all his financial transactions as a broker. He must keep and maintain on file copies of all his correspondence and other records relating to his customs business. The broker must comply with the provisions set forth by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection when maintaining records that reflect on his transactions as a broker. Additionally, each broker must designate a knowledgeable company employee to be the contact for Customs for broker-wide customs business and financial recordkeeping requirements.

The customs broker's records must be retained by a broker in accordance with the provisions set forth by U.S. Customs and Border Protection within the broker district that covers the Customs port to which they relate unless the broker chooses to consolidate records at one or more other locations, and provide advance notice of that consolidation to Customs. It is best to check with your broker to find out where the records of your shipment are kept in the event you need copies for future reference. Other than powers of attorney, the broker must retain records for at least 5 years after the date of entry. Powers of attorney must be retained until revoked, and revoked powers of attorney and letters of revocation must be retained for 5 years after the date of revocation or for 5 years after the date the client ceases to be an "active client" whichever period is later. When merchandise is withdrawn from a bonded warehouse, records relating to the withdrawal must be retained for 5 years from the date of withdrawal of the last merchandise withdrawn under the entry.

The records maintained by the broker pertaining to the business of the clients serviced by the broker are to be considered confidential, and the broker must not disclose their contents or any information connected with the records to any persons other than those clients, their surety on a particular entry, and the Field Director, Regulatory Audit Division, the special agent in charge, the port director, or other duly accredited officers or agents of the United States, except on subpoena by a court of competent jurisdiction. During the period of retention, the broker must maintain the records in such a manner that they may readily be examined. Records required to be made or maintained must be made available upon reasonable notice for inspection, copying, reproduction or other official use by U.S. Customs and Border regulatory auditors or special agents or other authorized Customs officers within the prescribed period of retention or within any longer period of time during which they remain in the possession of the broker.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection mandates that every individual broker operating as a sole proprietor or licensed member of a partnership that is a broker and every licensed officer of an association or corporation that is a broker must exercise responsible supervision and control over the transaction of the brokerage firm. Each broker must submit, in writing, to the director of each port at which the broker intends to transact customs business, a list of the names of persons currently employed by the broker at that port. The list of employees must be submitted upon issuance of a permit for an additional district or upon the opening of an office at a port within a district for which the broker already has a permit, and before the broker begins to transact customs business as a broker at the port. For each employee, the broker also must provide the social security number, date and place of birth, current home address, last prior home address, and, if the employee has been employed by the broker for less than 3 years, the name of his prior employer.

a. Entry for Consumption

A "consumption entry" is the filing with Customs in proper form of an "entry summary for consumption" on imported goods, and payment of estimated duties, taxes, and fees, if any, resulting in the release of the goods by Customs. When the release is unconditional, the importer may dispose of the goods. Entry for consumption is used for imported goods going directly into U.S. commerce without any time or use restrictions placed on

them. Merchandise being used for commerce requires two parts: (1) filing the documents necessary to determine whether the merchandise may be released from Customs custody and (2) filing the documents that contain information for duty assessment and statistical purposes. These processes may be accomplished electronically via the Automated Broker Interface (ABI) program of the Automated Commercial Systems (ACS). Entry documents must be filed with the U.S. Customs officer at the port of entry within 15 calendar days of the goods' arrival. These documents necessary for entry include:

- ✓ Entry Manifest (Customs Form 7533) or Application and Special Permit for the Immediate Delivery (Customs Form 3461)
- ✓ Evidence of right to make entry: bill of lading/airway bill/carriers certificate to prove ownership
- ✓ Commercial invoice or pro forma invoice obtained from the seller to show value and describe the items
- ✓ Packing lists, if appropriate
- ✓ Evidence of a surety bond to cover any potential duties, etc.
- ✓ Other documents necessary to determine admissibility

Importers of perishable items may apply for immediate delivery using the Special Entry Permit Form 3461.

b. Entry for Bonded Warehouse

An importer might want to import goods and defer the payment of import duties to a later date. The procedure that is used is *a bonded warehouse entry*. An importer can obtain authorization from the U.S. Customs Service to place imported goods in a warehouse to be withdrawn for use or consumption at a later date. Importers can apply for authorization from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to have a bonded warehouse on their own premises, or they can use the services of a public warehouse that has received such authorization. The goods can be warehoused for up to five years. No customs duties are owed during the initial time of entry if warehoused. When the time arrives to withdraw the goods from the warehouse, duties will be required to be paid on the value of the goods at the time of withdrawal rather than the time of entry into the bonded warehouse. If the goods are withdrawn for exportation or for transportation for exportation payment of duty is not required. A bond must be obtained to prevent the loss of duties in case the goods are accidentally or intentionally released into U.S. commerce. Under the supervision of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the importer can clean, sort, re-label, re-package, and do other operations (but not manufacture) to the warehoused goods. Perishable goods, explosive substances, or prohibited importations may not be placed in a bonded warehouse. Certain restricted articles, though not allowed release from custody, may be warehoused. Additional information regarding entry for warehouse is contained in the United States Code Title 19 section 1557.



Under the supervision of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the importer can clean, sort, re-label, re-package, and do other operations (but not manufacture) to the warehoused goods

The advantages of a bonded warehouse entry are that no duties are collected until the goods are withdrawn for consumption. The importer has the luxury of being in control over the use of money until the duty is paid upon withdrawal of the goods from the bonded warehouse. If a domestic buyer is not found, the importer has the advantage of selling merchandise for exportation which cancels the obligation to pay duties. Another advantage is that the importer can lower his duty rates by remarking, re-labeling, repacking, sorting, and doing other operations to the goods while they are warehoused (please refer to 19 CFR 19.11). For example, many products stored in a bonded warehouse can be dried, sorted, graded, cleaned, bagged, or packed, which allows the savings of duties and taxes on moisture taken from content or dirt that is removed and having the cull thrown out. In addition, barrels and containers can be re-gauged and savings can be obtained while goods are warehoused since many shipments will lose portions of their content through evaporation, leakage, breakage, and other transformations that affect costs.

(1) In-Bond

Imported goods may be sent in a bonded status from the original port of entry to another Customs port. The normal entry process, including the payment of duty and processing fees, is completed when the merchandise reaches the final port of destination. This process is known as “traveling under Immediate Transportation procedures” and requires Customs Form 7512 (Transportation Entry and Manifest of Goods Subject to Customs Inspection and Permit) to be completed. Arrangements should be made before the goods leave the country of export.

(2) Temporary Importation Bond (TIB)

Goods of certain types may be admitted duty-free for one year, not to exceed three years, upon the premise that they will be exported under Customs supervision. The bonds associated with these goods are usually double the duty and can only be canceled after exportation. Prior to export, the exporter must advise the Customs office in writing, which will then designate a time and place for the inspection of the export items.

c. The Informal Entry Process

Informal entry covers personal shipments, commercial shipments and mail shipments that are being entered for consumption and are valued at less than \$2000. Goods admitted as informal entries do not require the posting of a bond and goods are liquidated on the spot.

d. The Inspection Process

The inspection process includes the classification and appraisal of the cargo entering the United States. Goods must be valued for duty status, examined for proper country of origin markings, for the shipment of prohibited items, and for correct invoicing including excess or shortage of quantities. The customs invoice is the most important document used during inspection process. It should be included with each shipment and be in English.

e. Classification of Imported Goods

Classifying imported goods must be completed for all shipments entering the United States. As mentioned earlier, the initial classification is the responsibility of the importer and is completed using the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. The Harmonized Tariff Schedule is divided into sections and chapters dealing separately with merchandise in broad product categories. With the influx of new trade agreements, tariff and classification changes occur without warning. In order to avoid costly mistakes when you are classifying importing goods, consult a licensed customs broker.

The classification of goods is based on the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. The tariff code is a numeric designation up to 10 digits. The degree of specificity is determined by the length of the code. Longer the strings of digits indicate a more specific description of the goods.

Here are the basic steps for determining a Harmonized Tariff classification code:

1. Determine an accurate and complete description of the goods you are importing. Try and be as specific as possible. Let's say you are importing footwear. There are a lot of different types of footwear, but specifically we're importing ski boots.
2. Next, Go to <http://www.usitc.gov/tata/index.htm>
3. Find the most current HTSA Edition by chapter and click on the link
4. Find and click on the Chapter applicable to the merchandise. In our example we are importing ski boots so we find footwear in chapter 64
5. Find the product description most applicable to the merchandise. In this case, ski boots

6. The digits on the left are the classification. In the case of ski boots, the classification is 6401.92.3000

f. Appraisal

The purpose of an appraisal is to determine the value of the goods being imported in order to levy tariffs or duties. Again, remember the importer is responsible to determine the initial value, but the U.S. Customs and Border Protection will fix the final appraisal. The primary determination used for this appraisal is the transaction value, which is the price actually paid or payable to the seller for the goods imported. Additional factors may increase the duty value of the merchandise, including packing costs, selling commissions, and royalty or licensing fees.

If for some reason the transaction value cannot be used, then secondary bases are considered for determining the duty tax. The secondary basis for calculating the transaction value is the transaction value of identical merchandise, the transaction value of similar merchandise, deductive value and computed value. A deductive value is the resale price in the U.S. after importation of the goods, with deductions for certain items. A computed value is the sum of materials, fabrication, processing, profit, general expenses, packing costs, and any assist not included above.

g. Duties

All goods imported to the United States are subject to duty, or duty-free entry based on their classification in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. Dutiable goods are assessed using ad valorem, specific, or compound rates. Ad valorem rates are most commonly used and are the percentages applied to the value of the merchandise by specific rates and specified amounts per unit of weight or other quantity. Compound rates combine both an ad valorem rate and a specific rate.

Duty charges may also vary based on the country of origin. Reduced rates apply to those countries in which the U.S. holds trade agreements and are known as most-favored nation or normal trade relations rates. Duty-free status is based on various conditional exemptions which are listed in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. One of the more frequently applied exemptions from duty occurs under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). GSP-eligible merchandise qualifies for duty-free when it is from a beneficiary developing country and meets certain other requirements.

Here are the basic steps to determine duty status:

1. Ascertain the HTS classification code for the imported goods as outlined in the Classification section above. In our example the code is 6401.92.3000
2. Go to http://dataweb.usitc.gov/scripts/tariff_current.asp
3. Find the Tariff Database for the most current year and click on the link

4. Enter the HTS classification code in the List Items box and hit enter
5. Make a selection from the list of codes provided and click the Detail button
6. The Tariff Treatment and links to import data for the classification data will be displayed

h. Liquidation

Once the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has determined whether or not to accept the imported goods and what duties are to be imposed, the entry process is normally completed and liquidation occurs. Liquidation is accomplished by posting a notice of entry electronically via the Customs Automated Commercial System (ACS) or on a public bulletin board at the Customs house.

i. Protest

A protest may be filed within 90 days of the liquidation date for any claims for an adjustment or refund. This is accomplished by filing a Customs Form 19 (19 CFR 174) with the port director whose decision is being protested. At the time the initial protest is filed, the importer must make a request for further review if one is desired.

4. RESTRICTED MERCHANDISE AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As previously mentioned, the U.S. Customs Service does not require a license or permit for entry, other agencies may require them. Some products which may require permits or licenses include (but are not limited to):

- ✓ Alcoholic beverages
 - ✓ Animal and animal products
 - ✓ Certain drugs
 - ✓ Certain trademarked and copyrighted articles (see Customs Publication No. 549 U. S. Customs and Protection of Intellectual Property Rights)
 - ✓ Firearms and ammunition
 - ✓ Fruits and nuts
 - ✓ Meat and meat products
 - ✓ Milk, dairy and cheese products
 - ✓ Plants and plant products
 - ✓ Poultry and poultry products
 - ✓ Petroleum and petroleum products
 - ✓ Vegetables
- The following items must comply with applicable regulations of other agencies:
- ✓ Art materials
 - ✓ Cultural property

- ✓ Hazardous/toxic/flammable materials
 - ✓ Household appliances
 - ✓ Some electronics products
 - ✓ Toys and children's articles
- Special standards, declarations, certification, marking or labeling requirements are required for (but not limited to):
- ✓ Automobiles
 - ✓ Boats
 - ✓ CD players
 - ✓ Clothing
 - ✓ Medical devices
 - ✓ Radios
 - ✓ Television sets
 - ✓ Textiles

Other merchandise must be examined for fitness of use, freedom from contamination, or may be subject to quotas on the quantity imported. Import restrictions designated by U.S. trade sanctions may also exist. These sanctions are administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

5. FOREIGN TRADE ZONES

The Foreign-Trade Zones Board is comprised of the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Treasury. The Board is chaired by the Secretary of Commerce. The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection also plays a key role, as it did prior to its recent move from Treasury to the Department of Homeland Security, providing a position during the FTZ Board voting process with respect to customs security, control, and resource matters. The Board has delegated action authority on most matters to a Committee of Alternates, which is composed of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Import Administration and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax, Trade, and Tariff Policy.

A foreign-trade zone is a designated site licensed by the Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZ) Board at which special customs procedures may be used. These procedures allow domestic activity involving foreign items to take place prior to formal customs entry. Duty-free treatment is accorded items that are re-exported and duty payment is deferred on items sold in the U.S. market, thus offsetting customs advantages available to overseas producers who compete with producers located in the United States. Sub-zones are special-purpose zones, usually at manufacturing plants. A site which has been granted zone status may not be used for zone activity until the site has been separately approved for FTZ activation by local U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, and the zone activity remains under the supervision of CBP. FTZ sites and facilities remain within the jurisdiction of local, state or federal governments or agencies.

In order to attract and promote international trade and commerce, foreign or "free" trade zones have been established outside of a nation's customs territory. Foreign trade zones are secured

areas that are within 60 miles or 90 driving minutes from the port of entry limits. Subzones, which are located in the zone user's private facility, are special-purpose facilities for companies that are unable to operate effectively at public zone sites. A Foreign Trade Zones Board reviews and approves all applications to create, operate and maintain foreign trade zones. Additionally, all foreign trade zones are free of tariffs for customs entry purpose. However, all other federal laws are applicable to products and establishments within the zones.

Foreign trade zones allow goods to be brought to the threshold of the market. This facilitates the purchase of goods as it avoids the possible cancellation of orders due to shipping delays. Merchandise may be exhibited in foreign trade zones. Importers are able to sell from stock in wholesale quantities, but are prohibited from retail trade. For additional information on Foreign Trade Zones please visit <http://ia.ita.doc.gov/ftzpage/index.html>

6. DRAWBACK

A drawback is a refund of 99 percent of the duties or taxes collected on imported merchandise because certain legal or regulatory requirements have been met. The objective of the drawback program is to assist American importers, manufacturers and exporters to compete in international markets by allowing them to receive refunds of duties paid.

There are three main types of drawback. They are:

- *Manufacturing drawback* – A refund of duties paid for imported merchandise that is used in the manufacture of articles that are either exported or destroyed. The imported goods must be used in manufacture and exported within five years from the importation date. Before any manufacturing drawback claims are filed, an approved drawback ruling must be on file with Customs.
- *Un-used merchandise drawback* – A refund on duties paid for imported goods that are exported or destroyed without undergoing manufacture and are never used in the U.S. The imported goods must be exported within three years of the date of importation.
- *Rejected merchandise drawback* – A refund of duties paid for imported merchandise that is exported because it did not meet specifications, conform to sample or was shipped without the consent of the consignee. Rejected merchandise must be exported within three years of its date of importation and cannot be destroyed in lieu of exportation.

An importer and exporter must file a drawback claim within 3 years after the date of exportation. If the drawback claim is not filed within 3 years, the exporter cannot file, unless CBP takes responsibility for the claim being filed untimely. The possibility of an extension is highly unlikely. For additional information on a drawback please refer to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection publication “*What every Member of the Trade Community Should Know About DRAWBACK*” at:

- http://www.customs.gov/ImageCache/cgov/content/laws/informed_5fcompliance_5frags/icp023_2epdf/v1/icp023.pdf

7. FREIGHT FORWARDERS

According to the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FIATA), a freight forwarder is the “person concluding a contract of freight forwarding services with a customer” where freight forwarding services are “services of any kind relating to the carriage, consolidation, storage, handling, packing or distribution of the Goods as well as ancillary and advisory services in connection therewith, including but not limited to customs and fiscal matters, declaring the Goods for official purposes, procuring insurance of the Goods and collecting or procuring payment or documents relating to the Goods.”

International freight forwarders are commonly known as “Transport Architects.” They offer expertise in logistics, statutory compliance, risk management, finance and payment, and cross functional integration.

Ocean freight forwarders are licensed by the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC). International air cargo agents are accredited by the International Air Transportation Association (IATA).

Freight forwarders offer some or all the following services:

- ✓ Advising on the best rates, routings and modes of transportation
- ✓ Possible advantages based on the large volume of freight
- ✓ Awareness of the ever-changing regulations
- ✓ Customized services to fit their client’s needs
- ✓ Coordination arrangements for storage
- ✓ Pick-and-pack operations
- ✓ Consolidations or full-container movements
- ✓ Inland transportation for door-to-door service
- ✓ Assistance with initial quotations or preparations of pro-forma invoices

Freight forwarders may be found through the National Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of America, Inc. (www.ncbfaa.org), the Transportation Intermediaries Association (www.tianet.org), or the yellow pages.

8. PORTS OF ENTRY

Ports of entry are responsible for daily port specific operations. There are 317 official ports of entry in the United States and 14 pre-clearance offices in Canada and the Caribbean. Port personnel are the face at the border for most cargo and visitors entering the United States. Here CBP enforces the import and export laws and regulations of the U.S. federal government and conducts immigration policy and programs. Ports also perform agriculture inspections to protect the USA from potential carriers of animal and plant pests or diseases that could cause serious damage to America's crops, livestock, pets, and the environment.

Additional information may be obtained from the ports of entry listed below. The telephone directory can also be utilized to find additional ports. The listing can be found under U.S. Government, Treasury Department or on the internet at :

<http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/ports/>

9. CONTACTS

- ***Department of Energy***
Consumer Goods
(202) 586-5000
<http://www.doe.gov/>
- ***Department of Health & Human Services***
Food, drugs, beverages
(877) 696-6775
<http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>
- ***Department of the Interior***
Wildlife
(202) 208-3100
<http://www.doi.gov/>
- ***Department of Justice***
Currency
(202) 514-2000
<http://www.usdoj.gov/>
- ***Environment Protection Agency***
Toxic, hazardous substances
(202) 272-0167
<http://www.epa.gov/>
- ***Federal Trade Commission***
Textiles
(202) 326-2222
<http://www.ftc.gov/>
- ***Food and Drug Administration***
Agricultural commodities
(888) 463-6332
<http://www.fda.gov/>

* The Federal Blue Pages of the telephone directory contain additional federal agencies which may regulate the import of other types of goods.