

## **AUTOMATED COMMERCIAL SYSTEM**

The Automated Commercial System (ACS) is the comprehensive system used by the U.S. Customs Service to track, control, and process all commercial goods imported into the United States. ACS is widely recognized as one of the world's most sophisticated and integrated large-scale business-oriented systems. Through the use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), ACS facilitates merchandise processing, significantly cuts costs, and reduces paperwork requirements for both Customs and the importing community.

## **AUTOMATED BROKER INTERFACE**

The Automated Broker Interface (ABI) is a feature of ACS that permits qualified filers to electronically transmit import data directly to Customs. ABI is a voluntary program available to brokers, importers, port authorities, and independent service centers. Currently, over 98% of all entries are filed through ABI and of those over 70% are paperless.

ABI expedites the release of merchandise for the trade community. Entry summaries are electronically transmitted, validated, confirmed, corrected, and paid. Administrative messages keep participants informed of all current information and issues. Participants can query quota status, visa requirements, manufacturer information, and cargo release and entry summary processing status. ABI allows filers to pay multiple entries with one payment transaction through statement processing. ABI filers can also pay Customs duties, fees, and taxes electronically through the Automated Clearinghouse (ACH).

- File cargo release data (CF-3461) and entry summary (CF-7501) electronically.
- File consolidated entry summary, combining multiple release transactions on one entry summary.
- File TIB entries and extensions, FTZ withdrawals, warehouse withdrawals for consumption, reconciliation entries and protest claims.
- Participate in Electronic Invoice filing, Remote Location Filing and In-bond programs.
- File selected "bypass" entry summaries electronically, without providing paper documentation. File Drawback data through ABI.
- Transmit entry summary data and separate invoice data in the Customs Proprietary Syntax.
- Receive results of ACS edits and validations of entry summary transactions. Choose to receive - either acknowledgment for all transactions or for error/warning transactions only.
- Receive paperless designation for qualifying cargo release and entry summary transactions.
- Specify processing priorities for entry transactions.

## **CARGO SELECTIVITY**

The ACS Cargo Selectivity System is used to sort high risk cargo from low risk cargo and to determine the type of examination required. The Cargo Selectivity System accepts data transmitted through ABI and compares it against established criteria. AMS or In-bond entries processed through the Cargo Selectivity System are automatically posted to the appropriate bill of lading. Cargo Selectivity facilitates faster cargo processing.

## **BORDER CARGO SELECTIVITY**

The Border Cargo Selectivity System was designed to determine risk assessment and examination requirements. The system uses the same editing process as the Cargo Selectivity system. ABI filers can also transmit manifest information through this system.

## **ENTRY SUMMARY SELECTIVITY**

The ACS Entry Summary Selectivity System automates the review of entry summary data. Using line item data transmitted through ABI, the system matches national and local selectivity criteria against entry summary data to assess risk by importer, tariff number, country of origin, manufacturer, and value. The entry summary selectivity system captures paperless summary activity, discrepant summary findings, and line item team assignment data.

- Update entry dates electronically.
- Add importer names and addresses electronically.
- Update Bill of Lading data on entries up to 15 days AFTER either the release date, actual date of arrival or estimated date of arrival.
- Designate one broker to receive all of an importer's liquidation information through National Importer Liquidations System (NILS).
- Certify entry summary for cargo release processing - eliminating the need for a separate CF-3461 transaction.
- Receive conditional cargo release results up to five days before arrival for vessel shipments (same day for air and rail).
- Receive additional release date update messages notifying the filer of release date changes.
- Receive priority handling through exam/release processing (including Quota and One-Stop-Quota).
- Receive liquidation information automatically or by request only.

## **CENSUS INTERFACE**

ACS captures Bureau of Census statistical data through the Census Interface System. ABI entry summary transmissions pass through Census edits and the Census data is captured in ACS. Customs then transfers the ABI entry summary data to Census. This eliminates the need for statistical copies of ABI entry summaries - one more step toward a paperless environment.

## **QUOTA**

The ACS Quota System tracks quantity controls on imported merchandise. It also tracks visas from other countries. (Visas determine the amount of exports allowed for certain countries.) The Quota System checks the quantities against the visas and transmits this information to the country of origin. The ACS quota and visa controls simplify reconciliation of imports and exports.

## **AUTOMATED SURETY INTERFACE (ASI)**

The Automated Surety Interface (ASI) gives sureties limited ABI capabilities. Sureties receive administrative messages and end of day notifications of release and entry summaries filed with any status/entry summary changes performed by Customs. End of week reports provide liquidation and late/unpaid error information.

- **ABI participants benefit from a flow of information between Customs and the trade:**
  - Receive tariff updates electronically
  - Receive FREE Harmonized Tariff System database, with ACS edits, on magnetic tape.
  - Receive liquidation/suspension/extension information automatically.
  - Receive information on ACS status, changes, or enhancements and daily quota information, including the quota critical list, through ABI administrative messages.
  - Update Customs manufacturer/supplier file by sending the manufacturer name and address. Customs provides the Manufacturer Identification (MID).
- **Choose from several payment options - send one check for each entry summary, one check for summaries on a statement, or pay statements electronically through the Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) or ACH Credit.**
- **ABI participants can extract data from the following Customs reference files:**
  - Antidumping/Countervailing Duty Cases
  - Carrier Codes
  - Country Codes (ISO)
  - Currency Conversion Codes
  - Currency Exchange Rates
  - Error Warning Statistics
  - Facilities Information and Resources Management System (FIRMS) Codes
  - Foreign Port Codes
  - Gold Prices
  - GSP Files
  - Harmonized Tariff Schedule
  - Import Specialist Team Assignments Information
  - Other Government Agency (OGA) Information Region/District/Port Codes
  - State and Zip Codes

## **PROTEST**

The Electronic Protest System allows the electronic filing and query of protests, petitions and NAFTA interventions through ACS. After initial filing, amendments and addenda may be filed to apply for further review, assert additional claims or challenge a decision. A user may request review of denial of further review, accelerated disposition, a denial be voided or the user may query the status of a protest. The participant will also receive automatic notification of all protest review events, including final decisions, electronically.

## **ABI - SOON**

Use ACH to pay Customs bills

Receive refunds through ACH

File continuous bonds in ABI

## **ELECTRONIC INVOICE PROGRAM (EIP)**

The Electronic Invoice Program (EIP) allows filers to send electronic invoice information to Customs. This information is transmitted to Customs using ABI record formats (All).

## **REMOTE LOCATION FILING (RLF)**

Remote Location Filing (RLF) is the National Customs Automated Program component which allows approved participants to electronically file an entry from a location other than where the goods will arrive or be examined.

## **DRAWBACK**

Filers can submit drawback data to Customs on a diskette or through ABI and Customs then uploads the information to ACS. This ensures that the data is quickly and accurately recorded in ACS and results in faster claim processing and issuance of the drawback payment. Immediate acceptance or rejection of data occurs.

### **• Query ACS files through ABI**

ADD/CVD information

Cargo release information

Consignee name/address information

Entry and entry summary status, collections, billings, and refund information

Error/Warning statistics by filer, district, port and application

Importer/Bond data

Laboratory/Gauger information

Manufacturer Identification (MID) codes

OGA files

Quota information

Visa requirements (tariff/country, category/country, or country subject to visa) Tariff information

FIRMS code information

## STATEMENT PROCESSING

Statement Processing allows ABI filers to pay multiple ABI entry summaries with one check or payment transaction. Customs generates a preliminary statement of summaries due and transmits the statement to the filer through ABI. The filer prints and reviews the preliminary statement, updates the statement with additions or deletions, and submits the statement with payment. Statement processing reduces the processing time for collection and acceptance of an entry summary. In addition, filers using statement processing are eligible to participate in ACH.

- Receive a daily statement of all entries scheduled for payment that day - print and review the statement prior to payment.
- Update scheduled daily statement with deletions, or reschedule entry summaries for payment, up to the day before the statement date. Delete or reschedule entries for payment even after the statement has been created.
- Receive a final statement of all summaries paid - this serves as a receipt for the payment.
- Reduce the costs and risks of handling multiple paper checks.
- Choose from two statement types. Broker statements group entry summaries by filer code. Importer statements group entry summaries for a single importer. Statements can be sorted by entry number or broker reference number.

## AUTOMATED CLEARINGHOUSE (ACH)

ACH debit is an electronic payment option that allows ABI filers to pay Customs fees, duties, and taxes with one electronic transaction. Filers transmit payment authorizations to Customs through ABI. The payer's account is debited and the Customs account is credited with the amount due. The accuracy and speed of ACH results in a higher volume of completed transactions for the importer and Customs, saving time and money.

ACH Credit is also an electronic payment option that allows the payment of Customs fees, duties and taxes with one electronic transaction. With ACH Credit, the payer initiates payment through their financial institution, who then electronically transmits the payment through the Federal Reserve network.

- Obtain an additional 10 days to pay duties, taxes and fees on quota and other special merchandise classes.
- Pay all ABI statements from a central location.
- Reduce errors and eliminate lost or stolen check problems.
- Control cash flow by identifying the exact day to allocate funds.
- Pay by ACH debit or credit.

## **OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY (OGA)**

ACS interfaces with other government agencies (OGA) to electronically transfer data on import transactions. The interface eliminates the need for paper copies of other agencies' forms, which are otherwise required by Customs with the entry or entry summary. The OGA interface allows filers to comply with Department of Transportation, Bureau of Census, Federal Communications Commission, Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requirements.

- File other government agency data electronically and receive Census, DOT, FCC, FDA, and FWS edit results.
- Identify transactions subject to other agency review.
- File other agency data electronically and obtain faster cargo release.
- Receive other agency cargo status and cargo release authorizations.

## **BORDER RELEASE ADVANCED SCREENING & SELECTIVITY (BRASS) - FORMERLY KNOWN AS LINE RELEASE**

The BRASS system tracks and releases highly repetitive shipments at land border locations. A Customs Inspector scans a bar code into a personal computer, verifies that the bar code matches the invoice data, enters the quantity, and releases the cargo. The cargo release data is transmitted to ACS, which establishes an entry and the requirement for an entry summary, and provides ABI participants with release information.

- Obtain release without preparing a CF-3461 or CF-3461 ALT- the barcode replaces these forms.
- Participate in an automated release system without expensive computer or printer equipment.
- Receive pre-approval for expedited release after one-time application.
- Receive a detailed report of all BRASS transactions electronically through ABI.
- Customs output report creates the entry summary records, which minimize filer's keying and processing operations.

## **AUTOMATED MANIFEST SYSTEMS (AMS)**

The Automated Manifest System (AMS) is a multi-modular cargo inventory control and release notification system. AMS interfaces directly with the Cargo Selectivity and In-Bond systems, and indirectly with ABI. This linkage allows faster identification and release of low risk shipments. AMS speeds the flow of cargo and entry processing that provides participants with electronic authorization of cargo prior to arrival. AMS facilitates the intermodal movement and delivery of cargo by rail and trucks through the In-bond system. Sea, air and rail carriers, port authorities, service bureaus, freight forwarders, rail carriers, and container freight stations can participate in AMS. AMS reduces reliance on paper documents and speeds the processing of manifest and waybill data. As a result, cargo remains on the dock for less time, participants realize faster tracking, and Customs provides better service to the importing community.

- Reduce paper documents and benefit from faster data processing.
- Receive electronic status notifications.

- Receive results of AMS edits electronically.
- Report hazardous cargo electronically.
- Receive notification 48 hours before expiration of the lay order period.
- Receive notification when an entry has been canceled or deleted.
- Receive notification when an entry is filed that references an air waybill or bill of lading that is not on file.
- Amend bill of lading data.

### SEA AMS

Sea AMS allows participants to transmit manifest data electronically prior to vessel arrival. Customs can then determine in advance whether the merchandise merits examination or immediate release. Upon receiving notification from Customs, the carrier can make decisions on staging cargo and the importer can arrange for examination, release, and distribution of the merchandise. All of this can be accomplished before the merchandise arrives. Sea AMS allows communication between AMS participants and other government agencies, container freight stations, and non-vessel operating common carriers.

- File inward manifest data electronically using Customs syntax (CAMIR) or ANSI ASC X.12.
- Receive electronic releases up to five days before vessel arrival.
- Benefit from electronic arrival of a vessel at each port of call.
- Amend, delete, or re-add bill of lading data electronically.
- Participate in Paperless Master In-bond Program.
- Receive electronic in-bond authorizations.
- Designate secondary parties to receive carrier status notifications; including AMS service centers, FIRMS locations, rail carriers, truck carriers, terminal operators, or other ocean carriers.
- Request and receive electronic authorizations for Permits to Transfer (PTT).
- Receive notification of APHIS and Customs holds.
- Receive batch numbers with transmissions from AMS to enhance tracking ability.
- Participate in the Paperless Manifest Program.

## PAPERLESS MANIFEST PROGRAM

The Paperless Manifest Program allows Automated Manifest System (AMS) vessel carriers to transmit the cargo manifest declaration (CF-1302) electronically and suspend the required additional paper submission. The electronic filing of the cargo allows an importing carrier to transmit one cargo declaration accessible by all Customs ports for enforcement review and regulatory purposes. The benefits realized by carriers include the elimination of multiple paper cargo declarations, lessened paper storage fees, reduced labor cost and increased system efficiency.

## NATIONAL IN-BOND

The National In-Bond system tracks cargo enroute in the United States. Using departure, arrival, and closure data, the In-bond system tracks cargo from the point of unlading to the port of entry or exportation. The In-bond system is incorporated within AMS. AMS retains control over all sea in-bond movements (both conventional and paperless) that are associated with automated bills of lading.

## PAPERLESS MASTER IN-BOND

The paperless master in-bond program controls the movement and disposition of master in-bond (MIB) shipments from the ocean carrier's custody at the port of unlading to the same ocean carrier's custody at the port of destination. This program utilizes the data already available in AMS, eliminating the need for paper documentation.

## SEA AMS - SOON

Revise in-bond tracking

Freight Remaining on Board Tracking

Manifesting International Mail

- **AMS Port Authorities can:**
  - File manifest data for multiple carriers calling at multiple ports.
  - Receive manifest data on AMS carrier cargo discharged at their port, via computer download.
  - Receive data on master in-bond cargo destined for their port.
  - Receive cargo release information for AMS carriers calling at their port. Receive cargo release information for non-automated carriers calling at their port (importer authorization required).
  - Receive hazardous cargo data from vessels transiting the port.
- **AMS Service Centers can:**
  - File manifest data for multiple carriers calling at multiple ports.
  - Receive cargo status notifications for AMS carriers (carrier authorization required).



## AIR AMS

Air AMS allows carriers to "arrive" an in-bond shipment and to file in-bond, permit to proceed, and local transfers electronically. The carrier obtains notifications of releases, in-bond authorizations, general order, permit to proceed, and local transfer authorization upon flight departure from the last foreign port of arrival. Air waybill data can be transmitted in any sequence. Carriers have the option to transmit bills at random or group them by flight. Amendments to any air waybill information can also be transmitted electronically through AMS. Air AMS increases data reliability and electronic enforcement capability by standardizing the way the trade community and the U.S. Customs Service communicate.

## AIR AMS - SOON

Transmit and request subsequent in-bond moves against a bill.

Transmit and request in-bond movements from deconsolidator's facility.

Receive status notifications for freight forwarders.

## AIR AMS

- File and amend air waybills and communicate flight departures electronically.
- File permit to proceed, in-bond, and local transfers electronically.
- Use the air waybill number as the in-bond control number.
- Update air waybill shipper and consignee data to release suppressed electronic notifications to the AMS carrier or deconsolidator.
- Designate a freight forwarder or deconsolidator to act as an agent for the carrier for a specific air waybill.
- Designate cargo as General Order through AMS.
- Receive cargo status notifications as soon as Air AMS is notified that the flight has departed from the last foreign port for manifested air waybills.
- Receive electronic in-bond authorizations and arrive in-bond shipments at the port of destination.
- Air AMS participants may submit an electronic query to request information and retransmission of previously sent status notifications for air waybills.
- **Freight Forwarders and Deconsolidators can:**  
File air waybill information electronically for non-automated air carriers.

Update existing air manifest data once designated as an agent by the carrier.

Receive all cargo status notifications for the non-automated carriers you service.

## **RAIL AMS**

Rail AMS allows rail carriers to transmit manifest data to U.S. Customs prior to the train crossing the border. Customs in turn downloads the advanced manifest data to designated ABI participants. Subsequent status notification messages are also sent to the ABI participants to advise of manifest holds, line release compliance exam requirements, Customs keyed narrative messages and OGA status. This program not only provides advanced shipment notice to filers but also reduces the filing and handling of paperwork by the carriers, importers, brokers, U.S. Customs and other government agencies.

- File advanced rail manifest notifications of impending shipment arrivals electronically.
- File notifications or "consisted" status of rail bills of lading electronically.
- File BRASS data electronically.
- Amend, delete, or re-add rail bills of lading data electronically.
- Receive AMS status notifications.
- Receive notifications of U.S. Customs and Department of Agriculture holds.
- Receive paperless consist messages.
- Receive paperless release messages electronically.