

Customs

Manual 2025

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs

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(Updated till 01.02.2025)

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Overview of Customs Functions



Chapter 1: Overview of Customs Functions

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC or the Board), Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India deals with the formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs, Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Central Excise duties, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Goods and Services Tax (GST), Central Excise, and Narcotics to the extent under CBIC's purview. The Board is the administrative authority for its subordinate organizations, including Customs Houses, Customs Preventive Commission rates, Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Commission rates and the Central Revenues Control Laboratory.
- 1.2 The important Customs related functions include the following:
- (a) Collection of Customs duties on imports and exports as per the Customs Act, 1962 and the Customs Tariff Act, 1975;
 - (b) Enforcement of various provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 governing imports and exports of cargo, baggage, postal articles and arrival and departure of vessels, aircrafts etc.;
 - (c) Discharge of agency functions and enforcing prohibitions and restrictions on imports and exports under various legal enactments;
 - (d) Prevention of smuggling including interdiction of narcotics drug trafficking; and
 - (e) International passenger clearance.
- 1.3 Customs functions cover substantial areas of activities involving international passengers, general public, importers, exporters, traders, custodians, manufacturers, carriers, port and airport authorities, postal authorities and various other government and semi-government agencies, banks etc.
- 1.4 Customs is continuously rationalizing and modernizing its procedures through adoption of EDI and global best practices. Also, as a member of the World Customs Organization, Indian Customs has adopted various International Customs Conventions and procedures including the Revised Kyoto Convention, Harmonized Classification System, GATT based valuation etc.

2. Statutory provisions for levy of Customs duty:

- 2.1 Entry No. 83 of List 1 to Schedule VII of the Constitution empowers the Union Government to legislate and collect duties on imports and exports. Accordingly, the Customs Act, 1962, effective from 01.02.1963 provides vide its Section 12 for the levy of duties on goods imported into or exported from India. The items and the rates of duties leviable thereon are specified in two Schedules to the Customs Tariff Act, 1975. The First Schedule specifies the various import items in systematic and well considered categories, in accordance with an international scheme of classification of internationally traded goods known as "Harmonized

System of Commodity Classification” and specifies the rates of import duties thereon, as prescribed by the legislature. The duties on imported items are usually levied either on specific or ad- valorem basis, but in few cases specific cum-ad-valorem duties are also levied. The Second Schedule incorporates items that are subject to exports duties and the rates of duties thereof.

- 2.2 The predominant mode of levy of duties is on ad-valorem basis i.e., with reference to value. For this purpose, the value of the imported goods is required to be determined as per Section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962 read with the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007. These provisions are essentially the adoption of GATT based valuation system (now termed WTO Valuation Agreement) which is being followed globally. Likewise, the value of export goods is required to be determined as per provisions of Section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962 read with the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Export Goods) Rules, 2007.

3. Ease of Doing Business

- 3.1 Board has initiated numerous measures to facilitate the Customs clearance process and reduce transaction costs. The objective is to make the Customs clearance process in India a world class experience by reducing dwell time of cargo, which in turn improves the competitiveness of businesses. Some of these measures are presently work in progress and their present importance is in the fact that these highlight the approach of the Board towards ensuring the ease of doing business.

3.2 Paperless Initiatives

1. **Single Window:** An Indian Customs Single Window Project has begun with the establishment of an appropriate administrative structure in the form of an inter-ministerial Steering Group that is chaired by Member (Customs), CBIC, a Project Management Group in CBIC and Project Management Units in the Ministries. With the introduction of Single Window, an electronic online message exchange between the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Department of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage (PQIS) with the Customs has started, which enables reducing the dwell time considerably. Under this online message exchange system for import goods there is seamless online exchange in real time of the Customs Bill of Entry (Import declaration) with these agencies and Release Order (RO) from both the agencies will be received by the Customs in electronic message format. The salient features of this online message exchange system are as under:

- (i) Indian Customs EDI System (ICES) would transmit “BE message” to the FSSAI and PQIS on completion of assessment of the relevant Bills of Entry (Bs/E) by the Customs ICES application after entry-inward of the consignment. The BE message would be provided to FSSAI/PQIS for all Bs/E falling under the identified Custom Tariff Heads (CTHs), as per list made available by the respective agencies.

- (ii) The Customs officers would be able to access the details of the Bs/E referred by the ICES to FSSAI/PQIS.
- (iii) The importers would track the status of the Bs/E on ICEGATE (<https://www.icegate.gov.in>).
- (iv) The receipt of the Bs/E message shall be acknowledged by the FSSAI/PQIS through a receipt message to the ICES.
- (v) On processing of the Bs/E message by the FSSAI/PQIS, these agencies would electronically transmit an RO, concerning each item of the Bs/E. From the Customs side, Out of Charge (OOC) will not be allowed in the system till the RO is received from the agency concerned for all the items. There are 6 types of ROs which may be provided by the FSSAI/PQIS to the ICES, as follows:
 - (a) Release - goods can be released by the Customs.
 - (b) Destruction goods to be destructed by the Customs.
 - (c) Deportation goods to be exported back to the Country of Origin.
 - (d) No Objection Certificate (NOC) goods can be released by the Customs.
 - (e) NCC (Non-compliance Certificate) non-rectifiable defects observed in the goods.
 - (f) Product Out of scope - goods are out of scope for FSSAI/PQIS.
- (vi) In case, the Release Order falls under types (b), (c) and (e) above, the OOC would not be allowed in the ICES. Details of such consignments will be entered by the Customs Assessing Officer in the closure of B/E menu after all processes are complete.
- (vii) On receipt of RO online, the Customs ICES shall integrate the data in the ICES database, which shall be available to the Customs officers concerned.
- (viii) The other formalities under the Customs Act, 1962 such as duty payment, goods registration, examination would continue during the time interval between transmission of Bs/E message from ICES to the receipt of RO message from FSSAI/PQIS. During this period the samples of the goods under consideration may also be taken for testing purposes.
- (ix) In terms of Board's Circular No.3/2011-Customs., dated 06.01.2011 import consignments that have been tested on previous five consecutive occasions and found in order may not be referred to FSSAI. Under single window project, the electronic monitoring and waiver of shipments which are eligible for waiver from FSSAI testing are being effected without human interference.
- (x) Since the electronically received RO in regard to Bs/E referred to FSSAI/PQIS shall be accepted by the Customs for clearance of the

imported foods items/plant materials, the Customs shall not insist on a physical copy of the RO from these agencies.

[Circular No. 09/2015-Customs dated 31.03.2015]

- (xi) SWIFT in Exports have been extended on export side for online referral to WCCB to all Customs EDI locations for smooth online clearance.
- (xii) Electronic Exchange with Animal Quarantine and Certification services (AQCS) has been enabled along with mandatory upload of Veterinary Health certificate, Laboratory reports/certificates or declaration based on products imported.

[Refer Circulars No.9/2015 -Cus., dated 31.03.2015, No.1/2017-Customs dated 04.01.2017, No.31/2017-Customs dated 25.07.2017, No. 24/2022-Customs dated 28.11.2022]

2. **IGM /SMTP:** Taking into account the requirement of Customs as well the fact that an electronic version of IGM is already available, Board has decided that the number of hard copies of IGM to be submitted by shipping lines / steamer agents at a Customs House shall be restricted to 2 (two) only. Further, the steamer agent has the option to (a) give a continuity bond and (b) merge the guarantee with the continuity bond, which would reduce the number of required documents to 1 (one) only and the periodicity (of submission) would also get reduced drastically. Also, it is decided that only 1 (one) copy of SMTP would be sufficient for the Customs at ICDs. Finally, no separate permission is required from jurisdictional Customs in case of change of mode of transshipment under the Goods Imported (Conditions of Transshipment) Regulations, 1995. However, the carrier is required to intimate the change to the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs who will ensure the bond covers both modes of transport.

[Refer Circular No. 2/2015 - Cus. dated 15.01.2015]

3. **Reduction of documents:** The Board has decided that in case an importer/exporter submits a commercial invoice cum packing list that contain all necessary data fields / information otherwise contained separately in these documents, a separate packing list would not be insisted upon by Customs. However, the option to do so is with the importer/exporter. As a result, the documents ordinarily required by the Customs stand reduced to only 3 viz. Bill of Entry or Shipping Bill, commercial invoice cum packing list and Bill of Lading or Air Waybill.

[Refer Circular No 1/2015 - Cus., dated 12.01.2015]

Mandatory uploading of specified documents in E-Sanchit: Board has decided to mandatorily require uploading on eSANCHIT, for every Bill of Entry, Invoice/ Invoice cum packing list and Transport Contract i.e. Bill of Lading/ Air Waybill etc., as the case may be. Directorate of Systems have issued Advisory No. 25/2019 dated (web link) laying down requirement of mandatory uploading on e-Sanchit, the Invoice/ Invoice cum packing list and Bill of Lading/

Air Waybill etc. for every Bill of Entry and subsequent declaration of document code and IRNs in the Bill of Entry. With effect from 02.12.2019, for every Invoice and Bill of Lading / Air Waybill declared in the Bill of Entry, the reference of IRN generated from eSANCHIT with the relevant document code as given above must be provided. The reference of the above document codes from eSanchit in the Bills of Entry has been made mandatory in System. As regards all the other supporting documents (such as Country of Origin Certificate (COO), license/ permission from any Government Agency (PGA) in relation to the eligibility for import / clearances or claim of duty exemption), it is emphasized that to make Customs duty truly paperless, uploading of these documents through eSANCHIT either by beneficiary or by PGAs, should be ensured administratively. Therefore, the field offices must ensure that no physical copy of any supporting document is submitted and every relevant document is submitted only electronically via eSanchit either by the beneficiary or by the Participating Government Agency.

[Refer Circular No 42/2019 - Cus., dated 29.11.2019]

4. **Dispensing with SDF:** The Board has issued Notification No 46/2015-Cus (N.T.), dated 18.05.2015 to incorporate the following declaration in lieu of SDF form in the Shipping Bill.

“I/We undertake to abide by provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, as amended from time to time, including realization / repatriation of foreign exchange to / from India”

Thus, submission of SDF form along with Shipping Bill has been dispensed with provided the said declaration is furnished in the Shipping Bill.

[Refer Circular No.15/2015 - Cus., dated 18.05.2015]

5. **Digital Signature:** The Board has decided that with effect from 01.04.2015 importers, exporters, customs brokers, shipping lines, airlines or their agents shall have the facility to use Digital Signature Certificate for filing Customs process documents viz. Bills of Entry, Shipping Bills, IGM (General Declaration and Cargo Declaration), EGM (General Declaration), CGM through Remote EDI System (RES). Besides ACP, all importers, exporters using services of Customs Brokers for formalities under Customs Act, 1962, shipping lines and air lines are required to file customs documents under digital signature certificates mandatorily with effect from 01.01.2016.

[Refer Circulars No.10/2015-Cus., dated 31.03.2015 and No. 26/2015-Customs dated 23.10.2015]

6. **E-Sanchit:** The CBIC has introduced 'eSanchit' for paperless transaction. The importers are now required to upload the required documents online through www.icegate.gov.in while filling the Bill of Entry instead of submitting the physical papers. Reply to queries raised by Customs Officers can be submitted online by uploading the documents. Physical presence of paper or person for assessment related works have been done away with. CBIC is embarking on a project to bring all Participating Government Agencies (PGAs)

under eSanchit wherein PGAs who issues Licenses, Permits, Certificates and Other Authorizations (LPCOs) would upload the documents themselves doing away with uploading of such document by the beneficiary (importer/exporter) themselves. Importers/ Exporters, Customs Brokers and other beneficiaries are required to register on ICEGATE for this purpose.

[Refer Circular No. 35/2018 - Customs dated 01.10.2018]

E-Sanchit expansion: Aimed at further reducing physical interface between Customs/regulatory agencies and the trade and to increase the speed of clearance in both imports & exports, the E-Sanchit application provides a facility to upload digitally signed Licenses/Permits/Certificates/Other Authorizations (LPCOs) by Participating Government Agencies (PGAs) at all ICES locations across India. In this regard, kindly Refer to Board's Circulars No. 44/2018-Cus. dated 13.11.2018, No.13/2019-Cus. dated 03.06.2019, No.19/2019-Cus. dated 16.07.2019, No.03/2020-Cus dated 15.01.2020, No.11/2020-Cus. dated 10.02.2020 and No.24/2020 dated 14.05.2020. With issue of Board Circular No.57/2020-Customs dated 30.12.2020, two (2) more PGAs namely Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and Export Promotion Council for EOUs & SEZs (EPCES) were brought on board eSANCHIT platform. With this, the total number of PGAs on Board eSANCHIT becomes 53.

[Refer Circular No.57/2020-Customs dated 30.12.2020]

7. **Electronic Closure of Manifest:** With the submission of supporting documents online, the manifest department of Customs Houses will not receive hard copies of dockets. Officers shall rely on the electronic records maintained on ICES.

Request for re-testing of sample made within a specified time by the importer or agent may be granted by the Additional Commissioner or Joint Commissioner of Customs as a trade facilitation measure. For uniformity in procedure at the various field formations, Board has issued detailed guidelines for retesting of samples.

[Refer Circular No. 30/2017-Customs dated 18.07.2017]

8. **Implementation of Electronic Cash Ledger:**

The Electronic Cash Ledger (ECL) has enabled the importer, exporter, or any person liable to pay duty, fees etc., to deposit an advance with the Government instead of transaction wise payment as was being done, to pay his liabilities under this Act or under any other law for the time being in force. ECL deposit is non-interest bearing and is utilized for payment of duties and other sums relating to Customs by debiting seamlessly from the ECL. Since 01.03.2024, ECL has been extended to Courier Shipments. The List of deposits exempted from ECL is provided through Board Notification Nos. 19/2022-Customs (N.T) dated 30.03.2022 latest amended vide 06/2024-Customs (N.T.) New Delhi, dated the 19.01.2024.

[Refer Circular No. 09/2023-Customs dated 30.03.2023]

9. Implementation of Use of ICETABs for efficient examination and Customs clearance:-

CBIC has launched the new version of ICETAB from 23.08.2024, which has an exclusive Mobile Application to enable examining officers to view RMS Instructions, Examination Order, Bill of Entry (BE) details along with other supporting documents, capture images of cargo examination for integration with the Bill of Entry and submit examination report immediately on completion of the cargo examination. With this launch, the examination order will be seamlessly available to Examining officer on ICETAB. Accordingly, there will be no requirement for any paper documents for the purpose of carrying out examination.

[Refer Circular No. 10/2024-Customs dated 20.08.2024]

10. Exchange Rate Automation Module:- Indian Customs has always been at the forefront when it comes to adopting cutting edge technology for providing better services. In this regard, Board has launched the Exchange Rate Automation Module and the modalities has been explained in Circular 07/2024-Cus dated 25.06.2024. The exchange rates shall be published on ICEGATE website at 6.00 p.m. twice a month (i.e. 1st & 3rd Thursday of every month) and shall be accessible for public viewing on ICEGATE website. Thus, the automated system has now replaced the manual process of publication of exchange rates.

3.3 Other Initiatives

1. Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations (SCMTR): Vide Notification No.38/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 11.05.2018 the Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations (SCMTR), 2018, were notified. The SCMTR seek to bring about transparency, predictability of movement, advance collection of information for expeditious clearance and supersedes the earlier regulations viz. Import Manifest (Vessels) Regulations, 1971 and Export Manifest (Vessels) Regulation, 1976. The new Regulations stipulate for advance notice by authorized carriers for goods arriving in or being exported out of India through gateway seaports and further movement between Customs stations. They stipulate the obligations, roles and responsibilities for the various stakeholders involved in movement of imported/export goods. The implementation plan and timelines for mandatory compliance pertaining to stakeholders such as ASC/ASA (Authorized Sea Carriers/Sea Agents), ANC (Other Notified Carriers- like Freight forwarders, NVOCCs etc.) and ATP (Authorized Transshippers), and the documents to be filed by them have been laid down in annexure to Circular No.43/2020-Customs dated 30th September, 2020. To provide time for readiness of the Systems and stakeholders, a transitional arrangement was introduced through Regulation 15 to file in the old format in addition to the new format during this transitional arrangement. This arrangement got postponed since 2018 due to various reasons including COVID. The SCMTR was introduced in a phased manner at Mormugao (10.09.2024), Mangalore (30.09.2024), Mumbai & Kandla (15.10.2024) in terms of Notification 54/2024 dated 31.08.2024, Tuticorin & Vishakhapatnam (15.11.2024) and Ennore, Kattupalli & Cochin (30.11.2024) in terms of Notification No. 74/2024-Customs dated 30.10.2024. Further, considering the

issues faced by trade as well as field formations in filing of certain SCMTR messages, the implementation of the said regulations has been extended till 31st March, 2025.

[Refer Circular No. 43/2020-Cus. dated 30.09.2020, Notifications No. 57/2024-Customs dated 31.08.2024, No. 74/2024-Customs dated 30.10.2024, and No. 02/2025-Customs (N.T.) dated 15.01.2025]

2. **Mandatory filing of documents in SCMTR by Custodians:** Board has decided that messages by the Custodian i.e., Stuffing Message (SF), ASR Filing, DP Filing and AR filing by the Custodians and VCN message by the Terminal Operators mandatorily required to be filed w.e.f. 20th July 2021.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2021- Cus. dated 30.06.2021]

3. **Re-export permission:** With a view to expedite decision-making in respect of re-export of when the said goods are destined elsewhere but which are inadvertently imported at a particular Customs station, the Board has decided that the permission for re-export may be granted on merit by the officer concerned as per the adjudication powers as per Section 122 of the Customs Act, 1962.

[Refer Circulars No.24/2011-Cus., dated 31.5.2011 and No.4/2015-Cus dated 20.1.2015]

4. **CRCL Module - Forwarding of samples using electronic Test Memo to CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories:** As detailed in circular No. 46/2020-Customs dated 15.10.2021, CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories have been upgraded with several new, state of the art equipment, thereby enabling the testing of a wider variety of commodities in lesser time, with greater accuracy. For details, the CRCL brochure available at www.crcl.gov.in may be perused. In order to further ease the testing process, DG Systems has enabled a 'CRCL module' in ICES with the objective of automating all paperwork related to sampling, forwarding of test memos to CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories, and electronic receipt of test reports, instantly by the Customs Officers. The officials of CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories have been provided access for both import and export functionalities in the CRCL module. The CRCL module is also seamlessly integrated with current modules of ICES.

[Refer Circular No.46/2020-Customs dated 15.10.2020 and Instruction No.14/2021-Customs dated 21.06.2021]

5. **CCFC:** Board has set up a Customs Clearance Facilitation Committee (CCFC) at every major Customs seaport, airport, Customs Preventive Commissionerate (Land Customs Stations) and Commissionerate having jurisdiction over Inland Container Depot, which is chaired by the Principal Commissioner of Customs/Commissioner of Customs concerned. Its membership includes the senior-most functionary of the departments/agencies/stakeholder at the particular seaport/airport namely, (i) Food Safety Standards Authority of India/Port Health Officer (PHO), (ii)

Plant Quarantine Authorities, (iii) Animal Quarantine Authorities, (iv) Drug Controller of India (CDSO), (v) Textile Committee, (vi) Port Trust / Airport Authority of India / Land Ports Authority of India (for CCFC in LCSs), (vii) Custodians, (viii) Forest and Wild Life Authorities, (ix) Railways/CONCOR, (x) Border Security Agencies (for CCFC in LCSs), (xi) Pollution Control Board and (xii) any other Department / Agency / stakeholder to be co-opted on need basis. The CCFC is required to meet once a week or more frequently, if needed, as per the following mandate:

- (i) Ensuring and monitoring expeditious clearance of imported and export goods in accordance with the timeline specified by the parent ministry/Department concerned;
- (ii) Identifying and resolving bottlenecks, if any, in the clearance procedure of imported and export goods;
- (iii) Initiating Time Release Studies for improvement in the clearance time of imported and export goods;
- (iv) Having internal consultations to speed up the clearance process of imported and export goods and recommending best practices thereto for consideration of CBIC / Departments / Agencies concerned; and
- (v) Resolving grievances of members of the trade and industry in regard to clearance process of imported and export goods.

[Refer Circulars No. 13/2015-Customs, dated 13.4.2015; No. 44/2016-Cus dated 22.09.2016. For more details of CCFC, please refer Chapter 33]

6. Encouraging Women participation in International Trade:

The Board has issued Circular No. 02/2024-Customs dated 08.03.2024 to encourage the representation of women in trade at all levels— be it as traders, customs house agents, freight forwarders, or customs brokers and gave following directions to all zones:

- (i) ensure Representation of women in the Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee (PTFC) and Customs Clearance Facility Committee (CCFC) meetings, preferably through women associations,
- (ii) ensure inclusion of at least one agenda point from women perspective,
- (iii) encourage the Trade bodies/ custodians to establish dedicated help desks and processing, mechanisms for women traders and women logistics service providers and
- (iv) support in upskilling women logistics service providers, freight forwarders and custom brokers by offering relevant trainings for women.

[Refer Circular No. 02/2024-Customs dated 08.03.2024]

4. Control and regulatory provisions:

- 4.1 The Customs Act, 1962 is the basic statute which regulates the entry/exit of different categories of vessels/crafts/goods/passengers etc., into or outside the country. Various allied laws and regulations also apply. It is the responsibility of Customs to handle international traffic speedily and effectively while ensuring that all the goods/passengers etc., imported/coming into the country or exported/going out of the country by sea, air, land or rail routes are in conformity with the laws of the land.
- 4.2 In terms of the Customs Act, 1962, the Board is given the powers to appoint Customs ports, airports and Inland Container Depots (ICD) where alone the imported goods can be unloaded or export goods loaded. Similar powers have been given to the Board to notify places as Land Customs Stations (LCS) for clearance of goods imported or exported by land or by inland water. Thus, various airports, ports, ICDs and LCSs have been notified across the country and also routes have been specified for carrying out trade with neighboring countries like Nepal.
- 4.3 Once a particular Customs port or airport is notified, the Customs Act, 1962 empowers the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs to approve specific places therein where only loading and unloading can take place and also to specify the limits of the Customs area where the imported goods or the export goods are ordinarily to be kept before clearance by Customs authorities.
- 4.4 Essentially all goods brought into the country or meant for export must pass through authorized points, be reported to Customs, and the importers/exporters must fulfil the prescribed legal and procedural requirements laid down under Customs Act, 1962 and allied laws including payment of the duties leviable, if any. The legal provisions allow Customs to regulate the outflow of the goods (and persons) out of the country and subject them to proper checks before allowing final exit out of the country by sea/ air/land/rail routes. Customs also detect legal infringements and foil any attempts of smuggling or commercial frauds by unscrupulous parties.

5. Role of Custodians:

- 5.1 In regard to all imported goods unloaded in a Customs area, the Commissioner of Customs is required to appoint a custodian under whose custody the imported goods shall remain till these are cleared for home consumption or are warehoused or transshipped as provided in the law. With the growth of containerized traffic, the facility of Customs clearances in the interiors of the country has also been provided by opening various ICDs, which are actually dry ports and here too the goods remain with the appointed custodian till these are cleared by the Customs. In addition to custodians appointed by the Commissioner of Customs, the Customs Act, 1962 recognizes other custodians as provided under any other law. For instance, the Mumbai Port Authority is a legal custodian under the Major Ports Authorities Act, 2021. The custodian is essentially required to take charge of the imported goods from the carrier, arrange its proper storage and safety and allow clearance to the importers only after they fulfill all Customs formalities, pay requisite duties and other charges/fees and discharge various other obligations. No goods can be cleared

from a Customs area without the express permission of Customs. Moreover, since the Customs Act, 1962 obliges the custodians to ensure safe custody of the imported goods till delivery, in case these goods are pilfered while in custody, the custodian is required to pay duty on such goods.

- 5.2 Various port trusts and other authorities in the public and private sectors handle the import and export cargo when kept in their custody at various ports, international airports/ ICDs. The cargo handling and custody at the international airports is generally entrusted to Airport Authority of India (AAI), but there is an increasing trend of the AAI leasing such facility to private sector or even of direct entry of private sector in this area. Also, new ICDs are being opened at various places in the interior of the country as a facilitation measure with the result that Customs clearances of both imported and export cargo from these places has expanded substantially in recent years.
- 5.3 Maximum import and export cargo is handled at different sea ports and there is a trend towards containerized cargo movement; increasing part of import cargo landed at some ports like Nhava Sheva is also transshipped to interior ICDs for final clearance by importers at their door steps. Security arrangements ensure there is no pilferage/ theft of the cargo and arrangements of loading and unloading of cargo at different berths in various docks, their movement to different places including container yards/ storage godowns etc., are arranged by the port authorities.
- 5.4 Customs authorities are given appropriate office place and requisite facilities in the dock area as well as in international cargo complexes/ICDs etc., to discharge their functions in relation to imports and exports such as supervision of loading/unloading of goods from vessels/crafts etc., supervision of stuffing or de-stuffing of containers, inspection and examination of goods which are imported/presented for exportation before Customs clearance formalities etc. For this purpose and in order to provide comprehensive guidelines for custodians / Customs Cargo Service Providers (CCSP) for handling, receipt, storage and transportation of cargo in a Customs area, the Board has framed the Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009.

6. Obligations of carriers:

- 6.1 To regulate and have effective control on imports and exports the Customs Act, 1962 enjoins certain liabilities on the carriers. Thus, they have to bring in the cargo imported into the country for unloading only at notified ports/airports/Land Customs Stations; furnish detailed information to Customs about goods brought in for unloading at that particular port/international airport as also those which would be carried further to other ports/airports. Declaration of such cargo has to be made in an Import General Manifest (IGM) prior to arrival of the vessel/aircraft at the Customs station. In the case of imports through Land Customs Stations the person in charge of the vehicle has to give similar import report within 12 hours of its arrival. Since the cargo clearance formalities are linked generally with the availability of information about cargo being brought by a vessel for unloading at any port, provisions are also made for prior filing of an IGM if all details of relevant cargo for any port are available even before the vessel arrives. The final IGM can be filed after arrival of the vessel.

- 6.2 Unless, the IGM is furnished in the prescribed form, no unloading of cargo can be undertaken from any vessels/aircrafts/vehicles in normal circumstances. After the IGM is duly delivered the unloading takes place under the supervision of the Preventive Officers of Customs. The law prohibits unloading of any goods at a Customs station, which are not mentioned in the IGM/import report. Similarly, there are restrictions on loading for export such that no vessel/aircraft can begin loading goods for export unless intimation is given to Customs and its permission for loading obtained – Outward what is also called “Entry of the vessel”. Loading of cargo on vessels, aircrafts etc. is checked and supervised by Preventive Customs Officers who ensure that cargo loaded has discharged the prescribed Customs formalities such as payment of duties or cess, where leviable, any other formalities enjoined by the law, and authorization for exports is duly given by the proper officer as a part of Customs clearance formalities.
- 6.3 The person in charge of the vessel/aircraft is required to furnish details of all the goods loaded on a vessel/aircraft in a prescribed form, which is termed 'Export General Manifest' (EGM). The person in charge of a vehicle must furnish a similar report called “Export Report”. The EGM/Export Report is to be furnished before the vessel/aircraft/ vehicle departs and is essentially taken as the proof of shipment/export.

7. Customs preventive control:

- 7.1 No vessel/aircraft can leave a Customs station unless a written order for port clearance is given by the proper officer of Customs. This permission for departure is given subject to the satisfaction of the proper officer that all the prescribed formalities have been fulfilled, duties/penalties etc., have been paid or secured.
- 7.2 The Preventive Officers of Customs are authorized to board the vessels/aircrafts to take suitable declarations, crew property list etc., and to check whether there are any goods which are not declared for unloading at a particular Customs station in the IGM with intention to smuggle them without following the prescribed formalities and payment of duties. A thorough examination and checking of the vessels/aircrafts - known as rummaging - is also undertaken on selective basis taking due note of the past history of the vessels, the port/airport from which these are arriving, the intelligence report etc.
- 7.3 The Preventive Officers of Customs also keep a very careful vigil for checking any illegal activities and develop intelligence to guard against any possible attempts of unauthorized removals from the docks, unloading of un-manifested cargo etc.

8. Customs clearance of cargo:

- 8.1 Before any imported goods can be cleared for home consumption in the country or for warehousing for subsequent Customs clearances as and when needed etc., the importers have to comply with prescribed Customs clearance formalities. Essentially, these involve presentation of certain documents along with a prescribed application normally termed “Bill of Entry”, which gives essential particulars in relation to imported goods, country of origin, particulars of vessel/aircraft etc. seeking clearance of goods for home consumption/warehousing etc. The importer either himself handles the import

clearance documents or appoints Customs Brokers who are trained and experienced in Customs clearance work and are licensed by Customs for such work in terms of the Customs Broker Licensing Regulations, 2018.

- 8.2 The import clearance documentation, presentation, and processing are handled in the Customs Houses by Appraising staff trained in assessment matters. After a tally has been made with related IGM to ensure the goods sought for clearance have arrived and declared in the particular IGM of the vessel/aircraft mentioned in the Bill of Entry (or even where the prior manifest is filed) the scrutiny of documents - manually or through EDI system is taken up. The main function of the Appraising staff in the Custom Houses is the careful scrutiny of the Bill of Entry and related particulars / information with a view to checking the import permissibility in terms of the Foreign Trade Policy and any other laws regulating import and to determine value, classification and duties leviable on the goods on import - (Basic, Additional, Anti-dumping, Safeguards etc.). Permissibility of various benefits of duty-free clearances under different schemes or applicability of any exemption notification benefits is also checked and decided.
- 8.3 Normally, the import declarations made are scrutinized without prior examination of the goods with reference to documents made available and other information about the values/classification available with Customs and duties chargeable on the goods are assessed and paid up by the importer or his authorized representative. It is only at the time of clearance of the goods from the custody of the port Authorities/Airport authority or other custodians that these are examined on percentage basis by separate staff posted in the premises where the goods are stored pending Customs clearance. These officers undertake checking of nature of goods, valuation and other part of declaration, or draw samples as may be ordered by the Appraising officers of the Custom House/Air Cargo Complexes/ICDs. If no discrepancies in relation to the nature of goods, quantity, value etc., are observed at the time of examination of the cargo, 'Out of Customs Charge' orders are issued, and thereafter goods can be cleared after discharging any other fees/charges etc., of the custodians.
- 8.4 At times, for determining the duty liability and permissibility of import it may become necessary to examine the goods. Such goods are examined after filing of Bill of Entry and other documents and based upon the report of the examining staff, duties etc. are assessed and if there is no prohibition etc., the goods are taken clearance from the custodian without the need for further examination.
- 8.5 Where disputes arise in the matter of classification/valuation or any violations of any provisions of law are observed, where the goods cannot be allowed clearance finally without further investigations and following adjudication proceedings, the law provide for provisional clearances subject to suitable bond/security. Only where the goods are of prohibited nature or in certain other exceptional cases, where provisional release is not considered advisable, the final decision may be taken after results of enquiries etc. are known and adjudication proceedings completed, where necessary.
- 8.6 Customs clearance formalities for goods meant for export have to be fulfilled by presenting a "Shipping Bill" and other related documents to the Export Section of the Custom Houses or EDI Service Centers. The Appraising staff checks the declarations to assess the duties/cess, if leviable, propriety of export incentives,

where claimed under different schemes like Duty Drawback or duty-free exemption schemes etc. Appropriate orders for examination before shipments are allowed export are given on the Shipping Bill. The Customs staff in the docks/cargo complexes/ICDs examines the goods meant for export on percentage basis, and allows shipment if there are no discrepancies misdeclarations etc., and no prohibitions/violations come to light. Appropriate penal action as per law is initiated where any fraudulent practices get detected during initial stage of scrutiny or at the time of examination etc.

9. Turant Customs-Next Generation reforms:

9.1 The next generation reforms in the Customs clearance process under the umbrella of Turant Customs are with the objectives of speedy clearance, transparency in decision making, and ease of doing business. Board rolled out numerous changes to the Customs clearance process, which combine together support Turant Customs. These initiatives include the self-registration of goods by importers, automated clearances of bills of entry, digitization of customs documents, paperless clearance, etc. The Turant Customs is primarily based on Faceless, Contactless and Paperless Customs processes.

9.2 **Faceless Customs** : Indian Customs has initiated Faceless Assessment on imports from June 2020 (Reference Circular No.28/2020-Customs and Instruction No.09/2020 both dated 5th June 2020). The first phase began by linking Chennai and Bengaluru which was gradually expanded to other geographical locations till eventual all India coverage by 31.10.2020. Briefly put, Faceless Assessment uses a technology platform to separate the Customs assessment process from the physical location of a Customs officer at the port of arrival. This measure is with the intent of bolstering efforts to ensure an objective, free, fair and just assessment. Key objectives of Faceless Assessment include:

- (i) Anonymity in assessment for reduced physical interface between trade and Customs
- (ii) Speedier Customs clearances through efficient utilization of manpower
- (iii) Greater uniformity of assessment across locations
- (iv) Promoting sector specific and functional specialization in assessment.

[Refer to Chapter 4 for more details on Faceless Customs]

9.3 **Contactless Customs**: In recent years, CBIC has initiated reforms such as online registration of goods, automated queuing and automated clearances of Bills of Entry, simplified online registration in ICEGATE, auto debit of bonds, setting up of Turant Suvidha Kendras (TSKs) etc. All these have enabled an environment which has done away with the requirement of members of the trade to physically interact with Customs in the goods clearances process and has fostered a `Contactless Customs` environment.

[Refer to Chapter 3 Para 4.3 for more details on Contactless Customs]

- 9.4 **Paperless Customs:** CBIC has taken initiatives to enable digital submission and transmission of both Bills of Entry and Shipping Bills in 2020. Besides saving time, the cost of printing paper documents has also been substantially reduced.

[Refer to Chapter 3 Para 4.4 for more details on Faceless Customs]

10. Smuggling and other violations and penal provisions:

- 10.1 Unscrupulous elements do attempt to evade the duties leviable and bypass various prohibitions/restrictions in relation to imports by attempting to bring the goods into the country from places other than the notified ports/airports/Land Customs Stations without reporting or presenting the goods to customs. Similar attempts are made to unauthorizedly take goods out of the country. This is essentially termed as “smuggling” and Customs officers have very important role in ensuring that they detect any such attempts of smuggling into or out of the country and take appropriate action both against the goods as well as against the persons involved.
- 10.2 The Customs Act, 1962 provides for strict penalties in relation to the goods/persons involved in smuggling and other violations of the legal provisions. These include seizure/ confiscation (including absolute confiscation) of the offending goods and fines and penalties on the persons involved in the offence as well as those abetting the offence. The law also empowers Customs officers to carry out searches, arrests and prosecution of persons involved in smuggling and serious commercial frauds and evasion of duties or misuse of export incentives by fraudulent practices (mis-declaration of nature, and value of the goods or suppression of quantities etc.).
- 10.3 Whereas the Customs Act, 1962 provides for deterrent penal provisions for violations, due process of law has to be followed before action is taken against offending goods or persons/conveyance etc. involved. The Customs officers act as quasi-judicial authorities and the liabilities for duty evaded or sought to be evaded, fines, penalties etc., are adjudged by giving the persons concerned due notice (or Show Cause Notice) of contemplated action against including the gist of the charges and their basis and providing opportunity for representation as well as personal hearing.
- 10.4 In grave offence cases, the Customs Act, 1962 provides for prosecution with imprisonment up to maximum of 7 years. This involves criminal proceedings in a Court of law, after sanction for prosecution is given by the competent Customs officer.
- 10.5 Guidelines for launching of prosecution in relation to offences punishable under the Customs Act, 1962 has been prescribed in Circular No.27/2015-Customs dated 23.10.2015 amended by Circulars No.46/2016-Customs dated 04.10.2016, No.07/2017-Customs dated 06.03.2017, No.12/2019-Customs dated 24.05.2019 and No.12/2022-Customs dated 16.08.2022.

11. Appellate remedies:

11.1 Any concerned person aggrieved with the departmental adjudication is given the right to appeal against the said order. The first level of appeal is to Commissioner (Appeal) and thereafter to an independent Tribunal (CESTAT) unless the adjudication order is originally passed by the Commissioner of Customs in which case the first level of appeal is to the CESTAT. On questions of law, the orders of CESTAT could also be considered for reference to the High Court and certain categories of decisions involving classification or valuation can be appealed even before the Supreme Court. In a case where the High court on its own motion or on an oral application made by the aggrieved party, immediately after passing of the judgment, certifies the case to be fit for appeal to the Supreme Court, a Civil Appeal is filed against the High Court order under Sec. 35L of the Act for which limitation is 60 days from the date of the order (and not the date of receipt of order). However, in most of the cases no such application is made by the aggrieved party before the High Court and therefore, in such cases, if aggrieved party intends to agitate the order / judgment of the High Court before the 6 Supreme Court, then it can be done by way of filing a Special Leave Petition under Article 136 of the Constitution. The limitation for filing of SLP is 90 days from the date of the High Court's order.

12. Passenger processing:

12.1 All incoming international passengers after immigration clearance have to pass through Customs who ensure their facilitation and speedy clearance. However, at time unscrupulous passengers may try to smuggle goods into the country which are sensitive and otherwise prohibited/restricted or evade duties by non-declaration/mis-declaration to Customs. Similarly, the Customs have to ensure that these passengers do not smuggle out foreign currency, antiques or other wildlife and prohibited items or narcotics drugs or psychotropic substances. The Customs have also to ensure enforcement of various other allied laws before any goods carried by the passengers on person, in hand bag or accompanied baggage enter into the country or get out of the country.

13. Import/Export by post/courier:

13.1 Customs is charged with coordination with Postal authorities for giving Customs clearances after appropriate checks on selective basis of various goods coming as post parcels, etc. Customs also ensure that these postal mail/packages/parcels enter into the country in accordance with the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962. Unless the goods brought by post are within the value limits prescribed for free gift or free samples these have to be assessed to duties by Customs and the same indicated to Postal authorities. The duties are collected before the Postal authorities deliver the goods to addressees.

13.2 Imports/exports through couriers are governed by the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998 and the Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010. These Regulations facilitate such goods in terms of quick Customs clearance, after discharge of duties, if any, for delivery to the consignees. At few places dedicated Courier terminals manned by Customs officers (akin to Air Cargo Complexes) are established to handle courier cargo.

14. Citizen Charter:

14.1 Customs has committed in its Citizen Charter to provide to trade and industry time bound and speedy cargo clearance facility, quick redressal of grievances, and inculcating in its officers' a sense of service with courtesy, understanding, integrity, objectivity and transparency. Customs is committed to render professional, efficient and prompt service to all stakeholders.

An aerial, top-down view of a large container ship sailing on a deep blue ocean. The ship is oriented vertically, moving away from the viewer. The deck is densely packed with multi-colored shipping containers in shades of red, blue, and white. The ship's wake is visible in the water. A semi-transparent red rounded rectangle is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the page number and title.

2

Arrival of Conveyances and Related Procedures

Chapter 2: Arrival of Conveyances and Related Procedures

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Customs control over conveyances that bring imported goods and take out export goods is necessitated by the fact that all imports and exports are required to be subjected to appropriate Customs clearance procedures. Hence, legal provisions are in place to monitor such conveyances and the goods carried thereon. Furthermore, in terms of Section 2 of the Customs Act, 1962 conveyance includes a vessel, an aircraft and a vehicle thereby covering all possible modes of transport and carriage of goods.

2. Conveyance to call only at notified Customs port/airport:

- 2.1 Section 7 of the Customs Act, 1962 envisages that unloading of imported goods and loading of export goods shall be allowed only at places notified by the Board as Customs ports, Customs airports, Land Customs Stations, Inland Container Depots or Air Freight Stations, Foreign post offices or International Courier Terminals. At each such customs station, the Principal Commissioner of Customs or the Commissioner of Customs is empowered to approve proper places for the unloading and loading of goods, and specify the limits of such Customs area. It is further provided vide Section 29 *ibid* that the person in charge of a vessel or an aircraft shall not call or land at any place other than a customs port or a customs airport unless permitted by the Board, except, subject to certain conditions when compelled by accident, stress of weather or other unavoidable cause to call or land.

3. Power to board conveyance, to question and to demand documents:

- 3.1 Section 37 of the Customs Act, 1962 empowers the proper officer of Customs to board any conveyance carrying imported goods or export goods and Section 38 *ibid* provides that the proper officer may require the person in charge of any conveyance to answer any question or produce any documents. The person in charge of the conveyance is bound to comply with these requirements.

4. Delivery of Arrival Manifest or Import Manifest or Import Report:

- 4.1 In accordance with section 30 of the Customs Act, 1962 the person in charge (Master /Agent) of a vessel or an aircraft or a vehicle carrying imported goods or export goods has to deliver an import manifest (an import report in case of a vehicle), in electronic form, prior to arrival in the case of a vessel and an aircraft or within 12 hours of arrival in case of a vehicle in the prescribed form. The person-in-charge or any other person who causes delay and the proper officer is satisfied that there was no sufficient cause for such delay, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Rs.50,000/-. A person delivering the import manifest or import report has to declare the truthfulness of its contents.

5. Person filing the manifest to be registered:

- 5.1 In terms of the Sea Cargo Manifest Regulations, 2018 and Import Manifest (Aircrafts) Regulations, 1976 any person, who delivers the Arrival Manifest/Import Manifest for a vessel or an aircraft to the proper officer under Section 30 of the Customs Act, 1962 is required to be registered with Customs.

- 5.2 Sea Cargo Manifest and Transhipment Regulations, 2018 (SCMTR): CBIC vide notification No.38/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 11.05.2018 has notified 'Sea Cargo Manifest and Transhipment Regulations, 2018'. The SCMTR seek to bring about transparency, predictability of movement, advance collection of information for expeditious clearance and supersedes the earlier regulations viz. Import Manifest (Vessels) Regulations, 1971 and Export Manifest (Vessels) Regulation, 1976. The new regulations *inter-alia* stipulate –
- (a) Changes in timelines and requirements for advance notice by authorized carriers for goods arriving in or being exported out of India through gateway seaports and further movement between Customs stations.
 - (b) They stipulate the obligations, roles and responsibilities for the various stakeholders involved in movement of imported/export goods.
 - (c) The implementation plan and timelines for mandatory compliance pertaining to stakeholders such as Authorised Sea Carriers (ASC)/ Authorised Sea Agents (ASA), ANC (Other Notified Carriers- like Freight forwarders, NVOCCs etc) and ATP (Authorized Transhippers), and the documents to be filed by them have been laid down in annexure to Circular No.43/2020-Customs dated 30.09.2020.
 - (d) The Declarations under SCMTR are to be provided in the new message format. The DG Systems has developed the new formats for submission by different stakeholders. Since there is a change in the manner of reporting, the regulation has provided the transitional provisions for submission under old and new formats simultaneously, so as to cause less disruption to the trade and provide time for adoption of new processes. Currently the transitional provisions have been extended till 31.03.2025.

[Refer Circulars No.110/2003-Customs, dated 22.12.2003, No. 15/2004-Customs, dated 16.2.2004 and No. 30/2004-Customs, dated 16.4.2004, No.43/2020-Customs dated 30.09.2020, No.17/2021-Customs dated 23.07.2021, No. 02/2025-Customs(N.T.) dated 15.01.2025]

- 5.3 In order to ensure that the Import Manifest for vessel or aircraft is filed prior to arrival of vessel or aircraft, the following procedure has been formulated:
- i. The person responsible for filing of the Import Manifest, both at Master as well as House- level details, shall register with the Customs in advance. The application for registration shall be made to the jurisdictional Commissioner in Form V or Form VI, as the case may be, of the said Regulations. The application should be accompanied by an undertaking to file the manifest details as required.
 - ii. Airlines/Steamer Agents/Shipping Lines/Consol Agents (including 'any other person' notified as per Section 30 of the Customs Act, 1962) are assigned business category codes as AL, ASA, ASC and CN (in case of Air) and ANC (in case of sea), respectively.

For the purpose of registration under SCMTR, the stakeholder shall apply for registration through a completely automated process on the ICEGATE Portal. Detailed advisory on registration is available at ICEGATE Portal.

Airlines/ Air Consol Agents are required to submit the Information as per the prescribed Annexure "A" which is a system complaint form that contains information prescribed as per the Form V of the Import Manifest (Aircraft) Regulations, 1976, to the respective Commissioners, where they are operating, for capturing the details in the EDI System. For Airlines, the existing Airline Code already allotted to them shall be used for filing manifest and same shall be their registration number. As regards Air consol agents, their registration number shall be of 12 digits (10-digit Income Tax PAN, followed by business category code, i.e. CN). A sample of registration number of a consol agent will look like AAACK8719PCN.

- iii. In the case of chartered flights where the consol agents themselves are entrusted with the responsibility of filing both Master as well as House-level details, the consol agents will have to be registered with the Customs as airline agent and will be allotted an ad-hoc/temporary code (accepted by system), as per existing format for each such flight.
- iv. Access to the system for filing IGM details will be allowed after the receipt of the applications, in the Annexure "A" along with a self-declaration of the correctness of the particulars, by the jurisdictional Commissioner. The verification of details will be done subsequently and for this the applicant will mention in Annexure "A" the name of the Commissionerate i.e. "Port/Airport/ICD of verification" where their details would be verified. In the case of any discrepancies observed at the time of verification the registered party would be debarred from filing IGM. The concerned Commissionerate after the verification will send the registration number along with the name of the registered entity to webmaster of www.cbic.gov.in who in turn will post the details on the website for the information of all stakeholders. Verification of the declaration will be done only by the "Port/Airport/ICD of verification" mentioned in Annexure "A" and no other port etc. will be required to do further verification. In case of doubt, they may refer the same to the Commissioner of "Port/Airport/ICD of verification".
- v. The responsibility for filing the import manifest with Master level details shall rest with the person in-charge of the vessel or aircraft or their agent while the House level details shall be filed by "any other person" specified under Section 30 of the Customs Act, 1962. In case the "any other person" is not registered under the said Regulations, then, the responsibility to file House level details shall also rest with the person in-charge of the vessel or aircraft or their agent. The shipping lines or airlines should, therefore, ensure that the person authorized to issue delivery orders in respect of goods carried by them, are duly registered with Customs. Failure to file the IGM in advance will invite action as per Section 30(1) of the Customs Act, 1962.
- vi. At Customs stations having operational Indian Customs EDI (ICES) system, the IGM shall be filed through electronic mode. At other i.e. non-EDI Customs stations, the hard copies of IGM shall be required to be filed manually, in advance as per the Section 30 of Customs Act, 1962. Where ICES is operational but some Bills of Entry are filed manually, hard copy of IGM will have to be filed but late filing of hard copy will not be considered as

non-filing or late filing of IGM, provided that the soft copy is filed in time.

- vii. In the case of vessels, where the voyage from the last port of call exceeds 4 days, the IGM shall be filed at least 48 hours before the entry inward of such vessels. In the case of short haul voyages, i.e., where the voyage from the last port of call is less than 4 days, the IGM is required to be filed 10 hours before entry inward of the vessel.
- viii. In the case of long-haul flights i.e. flight time of at least 3 hours from the last airport, the IGM shall be filed within 2 hours before the arrival of the aircraft and for short haul flights, before the arrival of the aircraft. Further, flights in domestic sector, which carry transshipped imported goods from one Indian airport to another airport in India, would be treated as short haul flight for the purpose of filing IGM under Section 30 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- ix. The vessel's stores list and list of private property in possession of the Master, officer and crew etc. should contain the quantity of store on board at the time of departure from the last port of call and estimated quantity likely to be consumed till the grant of entry inward.
- x. At the time of registration, the requirement stipulated in the para 5 of Form V of the Import Manifest (Aircraft) Regulations, 1976 and SCMTR, 2018 respectively.

6. Amendments of IGM:

6.1 Section 30(3) of the Customs Act, 1962 read with Levy of Fee (Customs Documents) Regulations, 1970) allows the proper officer to permit an IGM to be amended or supplemented, on payment of prescribed fees, if he is satisfied that there is no fraudulent intention. Further, Board has placed all amendments in two broad categories - Major and Minor:

(a) Major Amendments:

- (i) Addition of extra entries (Line numbers in the IGM).
- (ii) Amendment in the quantity of goods already declared.
- (iii) Changing the date of the Bill of Lading mentioned in the IGM.
- (iv) Changing the Importer's/consignee name.
- (v) Commodity description.
- (vi) Conversion of general description of goods from cargo to un-accompanied baggage and vice-versa.

(b) Minor Amendments:

- (i) Changing the Importers address only.
- (ii) Correcting any spelling mistakes.
- (iii) Conversion from one unit of measurement to another.
- (iv) Change in the container number (only alphabetic prefix and last 10th test numerical).

- (v) Change/addition of marks and numbers.
- (vi) Conversion from local to TP/SMTP and vice-versa.
- (vii) Port of Loading.
- (viii) Size of containers (provided there is no change in weight of consignment).
- (ix) Port of discharge;
- (x) Type of packages.
- (xi) Number of packages (provided there is no change in the weight).
- (xii) Seal number.

- 6.2 The need for adjudication will arise only in cases where there are major amendments involving fraudulent intention or substantial revenue implication. Further it is possible that in certain special situations such as mother/daughter vessel operation for lighter age on account of shortage of draft, congestion of port, natural calamity, the final quantity of goods covered by the IGM would be known only after completion of such lighter age operation, requiring amendment in quantity originally declared at the time of filing IGM. These exceptional situations need to be taken care so that penal action is not initiated mechanically.
- 6.3 Amendment of IGM after the arrival of vessel or aircraft would not be treated as late filing. However, the veracity of the amendment would be examined by the Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner of Customs for the purpose of invoking penal provisions under Section 116 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- 6.4 Procedure for disposal of amendment applications within specified time limits have been prescribed by the Board. All minor amendments are expected to be approved on the same day while all major amendments are expected to be generally approved within 24 hours of submission of complete application.

[Refer Circulars No. 13/2005-Cus, dated 11.3.2005 and No. 44/2005-Cus., dated 24.11.2005, No. 14/2017- Customs dated 11.04.2017; Please refer para 24 of Chapter 3 regarding approval related to amendments]

7. Penal liability:

- 7.1 Any mis-declaration in the IGM will attract the penal provisions of Sections 111(f) and 112 of the Customs Act, 1962. Thus, the goods concerned would be liable to confiscation and the person concerned liable to penalty.

8. Exclusion from IGMs of items originally manifested:

- 8.1 Exclusion from IGMs of items originally manifested is permitted only on the basis of an application from the person filing the IGM and on production of the documentary evidence of short shipment of goods. Further, prescribed fee will have to be paid for the amendment, if permitted.
- 8.2 Exclusions or amendments of items in the IGM involving reduction in number of packages or weight thereof is allowed on an application from the person filing the IGM and on the basis of connected documentary evidence. Such excisions or amendments will only be allowed if investigation proves that the excess quantity was originally shown in error. In the absence of such proof, the application will be

dealt with by the Manifest Clearance Section at the time of closure of the manifest file.

- 8.3 Applications for the exclusion or amendments of items for which Bills of Entry have been noted will be dealt with by the Manifest Clearance Section if made within two months of the arrival of the vessel.
- 8.4 In respect of a vessel, an IGM shall, in addition, consist of an application for grant of Entry Inwards.

9. Enclosures to Import General Manifest:

- 9.1 The various IGM forms are designed according to IMO-FAL Convention. The forms have to be filed in prescribed sizes along with the following declarations:
- (i) Deck Cargo declaration/certificate.
 - (ii) Last port clearance copy.
 - (iii) Amendment application (when relevant).
 - (iv) Income Tax Certificate in case of export cargo.
 - (v) Nil export cargo certificate.
 - (vi) Port Trust "No Demand" certificate
 - (vii) Immigration certificate.
 - (viii) Application for sign on/sign off of crew (when relevant).
 - (ix) Application for crew baggage checking when they sign on (when relevant).

[Refer Circular No.36/95-Cus., dated 10.04.1995]

10. Procedure for filing IGM at EDI Custom Houses:

- 10.1 In case of sea cargo, the shipping lines are required to submit the electronic version of the IGM through the EDI Service Centre or through internet at ICEGATE, containing all the details and particulars. It is to be ensured that all the particulars and details of the IGM are correct and that details of House Bill of Lading are also incorporated in case of consol cargo.
- 10.2 In case of air cargo, the airlines are required to file IGM in prescribed format through electronic mode. The IGMs should contain all details and particulars, including the details of the Master Airway Bills and the House Airway Bills in the case of consol cargo. The airlines are also required to furnish the additional information, namely, the ULD numbers for use by the custodians.

11. Filing of Stores List:

- 11.1 When entering any port/airport, all vessels are required to furnish to the proper officer, a list (or "nil" return) of ships stores intended for landing (excluding consumable stores issued from any Duty-Free Shops in India). Retention on board of imported stores is governed by Import Store (Retention on board) Regulations, 1963. The consumable stores can remain on board the vessel without payment of duties during the period the vessel/aircraft remains as "foreign going". Otherwise, such consumable stores are to be kept under Customs seal. Even in respect of foreign going vessels, only stores for immediate use may

be left unsealed while excessive stores such as liquor, tobacco, cigarettes, etc. are kept under Customs seal.

12. Entry Inwards and unloading and loading of goods:

- 12.1 On arrival of the vessel, the shipping line needs to approach the Preventive Officer for granting Entry Inwards. Before making the application, the shipping line has to make payment of the Light House dues, as may be applicable.
- 12.2 Section 31 of the Customs Act, 1962 requires that the Master of the vessel shall not permit unloading of any imported goods until an order is given by the proper officer granting Entry Inwards to such vessel. Normally, Entry Inwards is granted only after the IGM is delivered. The date of Entry Inwards is crucial for determining the rate of duty in case of filing of prior Bill of Entry, as provided in Section 15 of the Customs Act, 1962. However, unloading of items like accompanied baggage, mail bags, animals, perishables and hazardous goods are exempt from this stipulation.
- 12.3 No imported goods are to be unloaded unless specified in the IGM/Import Report for being unloaded at that Customs station and such unloading shall only be at places provided therefore. Further, imported goods shall not be unloaded except under the supervision of the proper officer. Similarly, for unloading imported goods on a Sunday or on any holiday, prior notice shall be given and prescribed fees paid.
- 12.4 Board has clarified that unloading of liquid bulk cargo from the ship to the bonded storage tanks through pipe lines is allowed under the provisions of Section 33 of Customs Act, 1962 subject to the conditions that the premises where the goods are received through pipe lines is a bonded warehouse under Section 58 or 59 of Customs Act, 1962; permission of the proper officer is obtained for unloading prior to discharge of such cargo; and other requirements under the Customs Act, 1962 are fulfilled. If the bonded tanks are located outside the jurisdiction of the Commissioner in charge of port permission may be granted subject to concurrence of Commissioner in whose jurisdiction the bonded tanks are located, and other safeguards as necessary.

[Refer Instruction F.No.473/19/2009-LC, dated 9.5.2011]

13. Other liabilities of carriers:

- 13.1 The person in charge of vessel/aircraft has other legal liabilities under the Customs Act, 1962, the non-fulfilment of which may result in suitable penal action, as reflected in Sections 115 and 116 of the Customs Act, 1962. For instance, Section 115 provides for confiscation of vessel / conveyance in the following circumstances:
- (a) A conveyance within Indian waters or port or Customs area, which is constructed, adopted, altered or altered for concealing goods.
 - (b) A conveyance from which goods are thrown overboard, staved or destroyed so as to prevent seizure by Customs officers.
 - (c) A conveyance, which disobeys an order under Section 106 to stop or land,

without sufficient cause.

- (d) A conveyance from which goods under drawback claim are unloaded without the proper officer's permission.
- (e) A conveyance, which has entered India with goods, from which substantial portion of goods are missing and failure of the master to account therefor.
- (f) Any conveyance, when used as means of transport for smuggling of any goods or in the carriage of any smuggled goods, unless the owner establishes that it was used without the knowledge or connivance of the owner, his agent and the person in-charge of the vessel.

13.2 Under Section 116 of the Customs Act, 1962, penalty may be imposed on the person incharge of vessel if there is failure to account for all goods loaded in the vessel for importation into India or transshipped under the provisions of Customs Act and these are not unloaded at the place of destination in India or if the quantity unloaded is short of the quantity to be unloaded at particular destination. Penalty may be waived if failure to unload or deficiency in unloading is accounted for to the satisfaction of competent officer. Thus, if there is any shortage, which is not satisfactorily accounted for, the person incharge of the vessel will be liable to penalty, which may be twice the duty payable on the import goods not accounted for.

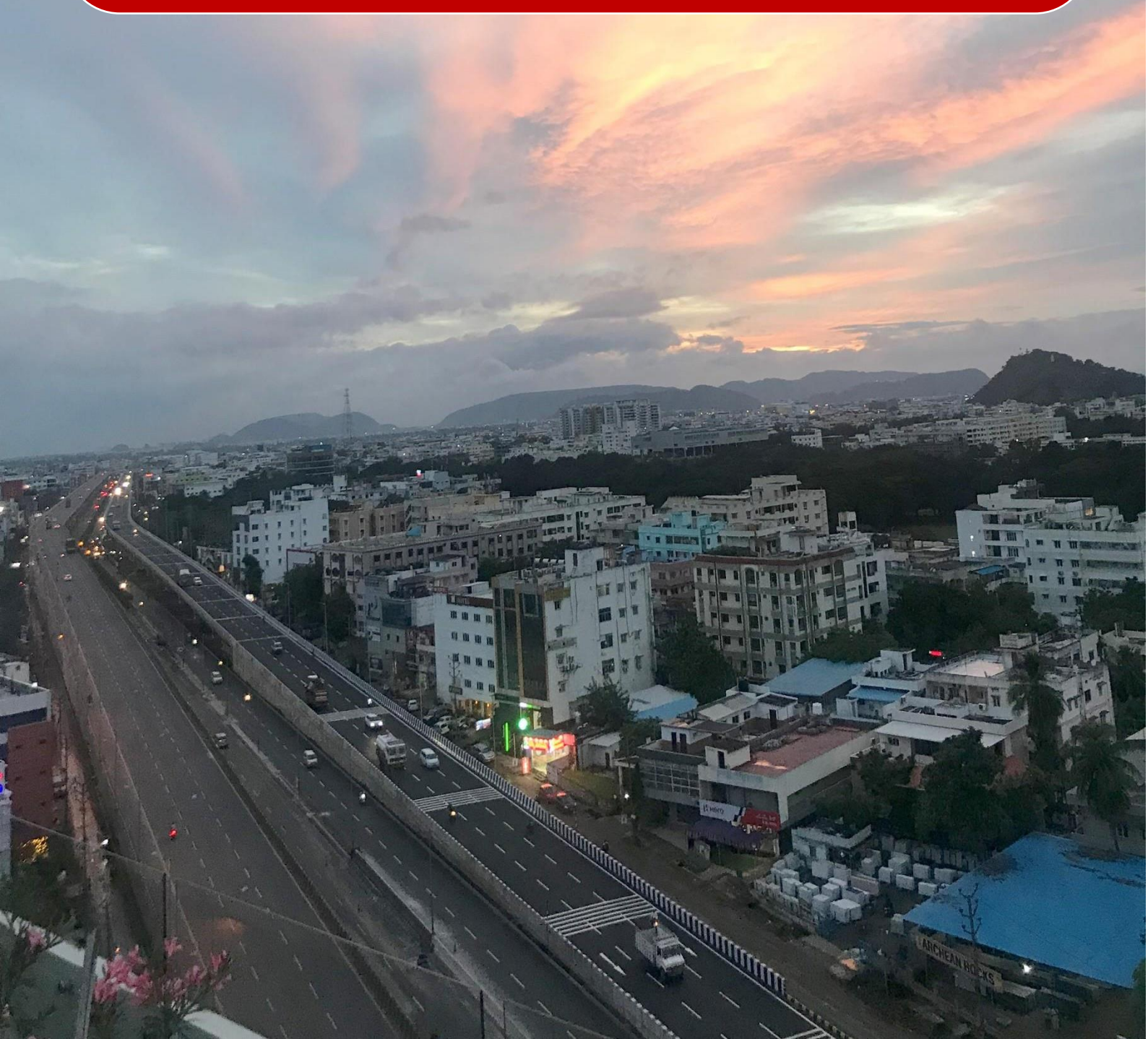
[Refer Circulars No.36/95-Cus., dated 10.04.1995, No.110/2003-Cus., dated 22.12.2003, No.15/2004-Cus., dated 16.2.2004, No.30/2004-Cus., dated 16.4.2004, No.34/2004-Cus. dated 13.5.2004, No.13/2005-Cus, dated 11.3.2005, and No.44/2005-Cus., dated 24.11.2005]

14. Implementation of Body Worn Cameras for Boarding Officers:

14.1 To enhance transparency, accountability, and professionalism during the boarding of vessels, CBIC mandated the use of boarding jackets equipped with Body Worn Cameras (BWC) for Customs Boarding Officers, effective from April 15, 2023. The BWCs, which are stand-alone devices without Wi-Fi or SIM functionality, are to be worn by officers during their duties on board vessels. The cameras will record interactions and verification processes, providing evidence in case of any offenses or suspected offenses. The recorded data is to be securely stored and reviewed by supervisory officers on a regular basis. This measure underscores the commitment to maintaining the integrity of customs operations and protecting officers from frivolous complaints.

[Refer Circular No. 7/2023 – Customs dated 07.03.2023]

3 Procedure for Clearance of Imported and Export Goods



Chapter 3: Procedure for Clearance of Imported and Export Goods

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The imported goods before clearance for home consumption or for warehousing are required to comply with prescribed Customs clearance formalities. This includes presentation of a Bill of Entry containing details such as description of goods, value, quantity, exemption notification, Customs Tariff Heading etc. The Bill of Entry is subject to verification by the proper officer of Customs (under self-assessment scheme) and may be reassessed if declarations are found to be incorrect. Normally import declarations made are scrutinized with reference to documents and other information about the value / classification etc., without prior examination of goods. It is at the time of clearance of goods that these are examined by the Customs to confirm the nature of goods, valuation and other aspects of the declarations. However, it may be noted that examination of goods is carried out only after facilitation level is decided by the Risk Management System. In case no discrepancies are observed at the time of examination of goods 'Out of Charge' order is issued and thereafter the goods can be cleared. Similarly, Customs clearance formalities for goods meant for export have to be fulfilled by presenting a Shipping Bill and other related documents. These documents are verified for correctness of assessment and after examination of the goods, if warranted, "Let Export Order" is given on the Shipping Bill.

2. Import procedure - Bill of Entry:

- 2.1 Goods imported into the country attract Customs duty and are also required to confirm to relevant and corresponding legal requirements. Thus, unless the imported goods are not meant for Customs clearance at the port/airport of arrival such as those intended for transit by the same vessel/aircraft or transshipment to another Customs station or to any place outside India, detailed Customs clearance formalities have to be followed by the importers. In contrast, in terms of Section 52 to 56 of the Customs Act, 1962, the goods mentioned in the IGM or Import Report for transit to any place outside India or meant for transshipment to another Customs station in India are allowed transit without payment of duty. In case of goods meant for transshipment to another Customs station, simple transshipment procedure has to be followed by the carrier and the concerned agencies at the first port/airport of landing and the Customs clearance formalities have to be complied with by the importer after arrival of the goods at the other Customs station where goods are intended to be delivered to the importer. There could also be cases of transshipment of the goods after unloading to a port outside India. For this purpose, a simple procedure is prescribed and no duty is required to be paid.
- 2.2 For goods which are offloaded at a port/airport for clearance, the importers have the option to clear the goods for home consumption after payment of duties leviable or to clear them for warehousing without immediate discharge of the duties leviable in terms of the warehousing provisions of the Customs Act, 1962. For the purpose of clearance of imported goods, every importer is required to file, in terms of the Section 46 *ibid*, a Bill of Entry for home consumption or warehousing, as the case may be, in the form prescribed under the relevant

regulations. In cases where it is not feasible to make entry electronically on the customs automated system, Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, allow an entry in any other manner.

- 2.3 Foreign Trade Policy provides that Importer-Export Code (IEC) number, a 10-character alpha- numeric allotted to a person by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is mandatory for undertaking any export/import activities. However, exempt categories and corresponding permanent IEC numbers are provided in Para 2.07 of Handbook of Procedures issued by DGFT.
- 2.4 For clearance of goods through the EDI system, the importer is required to file a cargo declaration having prescribed particulars required for processing of the Bill of Entry for Customs clearance.
- 2.5 Under the EDI system, the importer by himself or through his authorized customs broker may file the declarations in electronic format through the service center or ICEGATE. Facility of uploading scanned documents along with the declaration for filing a bill of Entry, is also available through “e Sanchit’ functionality.
- 2.6 As already explained under Chapter 1 (under paras 8.7 and 9.2), CBIC has implemented Faceless Assessment on imports which enables verification of Bills of Entry by an officer located in a remote office other than the Customs station where the goods are presented for Customs clearance.

3. Self-assessment of imported and export goods:

- 3.1 Section 17 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that an importer entering any imported goods under section 46 or an exporter entering any export goods under section 50 shall self-assess the duty. Thus, under self-assessment, it is the importer or exporter who will ensure that he declares the correct classification, applicable rate of duty, value, benefit of exemption notifications claimed, if any, etc. in respect of the imported / export goods while presenting Bill of Entry or Shipping Bill.
- 3.2 The declaration filed by the importer or exporter may be verified by the proper officer when so interdicted by the Risk Management Systems (RMS). Such verification will be done selectively on the basis of the RMS, which not only provides assured facilitation to those importers having a good track record of compliance but ensures that on the basis of certain rules, intervention, etc., high risk consignments are interdicted for detailed verification before clearance. On the basis of interdictions under RMS, Bills of Entry may either be taken up for verification of assessment or for examination of the imported goods or both. If the self-assessment is found incorrect, the duty may be reassessed. In cases where there is no interdiction by RMS or non-existence of any other factor, there will be no cause for the declaration filed by the importer to be taken up for verification, and such Bills of Entry will straightaway be facilitated for clearance without assessment and examination, on payment of applicable duty, if any.
- 3.3 The verification of a self-assessed Bill of Entry or Shipping Bill, which are interdicted by the RMS, shall be with regard to correctness of classification,

value, rate of duty, exemption notification or any other relevant particular having bearing on correct assessment of imported or export goods. For the purpose of verification, the proper officer may order for examination or testing of the imported or export goods. The proper officer may also require production of any relevant document or ask the importer or exporter to furnish any other relevant information. Thereafter, if the self- assessment is not found to have been done correctly, the proper officer may re-assess the duty. This is without prejudice to any other action that may be warranted under the Customs Act, 1962. On reassessment, contrary to the self-assessment done by the importer or exporter, the proper officer shall pass a speaking order, if so desired by the importer or exporter, within 15 days from the date of re-assessment of bill of entry or shipping bill. When verification of self-assessment in terms of Section 17 requires testing / further documents / information, and the goods cannot be re-assessed quickly however, the importer or the exporter requires the goods to be cleared on urgent basis. In such cases, provisional assessment may be done in terms of Section 18 of the Customs Act, 1962, once the importer or exporter, as the case may be, furnishes such security as deemed fit by the proper officer of Customs for payment of deficiency, if any, between the duty as may be finally assessed or re-assessed as the case may be, and the duty provisionally assessed.

- 3.4 In cases, where the importer or exporter is not able to determine the duty liability or make self- assessment for any reason, except in cases where examination is requested by the importer under proviso to Section 46(1), a request shall be made to the proper officer for provisional assessment of duty under Section 18(1)(a) of the Customs Act, 1962. In such a situation an option is available to the proper officer to resort to provisional assessment of duty by asking the importer / exporter to furnish security as deemed fit for payment of the deficiency, if any, between the duty as may be finally assessed or re-assessed, as the case may be, and the duty provisionally assessed.
- 3.5 For the purpose of proper assessment of duty and to ensure correctness of trade statistics, importers/exporters should mandatorily declare the Standard Unit Quantity Code (UQC), as indicated in the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.

[Refer Circular No. 26/2013-Cus. dated 19.7.2013]

4. Turant Customs:

- 4.1 India has seen significant improvements in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Index rankings in recent years. Customs is concerned with the `Trading Across Borders` (TAB) component of the EoDB index which is primarily based on time and cost of import and export processes. The improvements in the TAB parameter of EoDB Index have been made possible largely due to several reform measures initiated and implemented by the CBIC, which *inter alia* include SWIFT, e-Sanchit, DPD, revised AEO programme, RFID e-seal programme etc. which combined to reduce the time and cost of clearance of goods in the various Customs ports. To enhance the Ease of Doing Business, CBIC has introduced the next generation reforms aptly named Turant Customs which is a comprehensive package of various elements that have been implemented in recent years. The next generation reforms in the Customs clearance process under the umbrella of Turant Customs are with the objectives of speedy clearance, transparency in decision making, and ease of doing

business. Board rolled out numerous changes to the Customs clearance process, which combine together to support Turant Customs. These initiatives include the self-registration of goods by importers, automated clearances of bills of entry, digitization of customs documents, paperless clearance, etc. The Turant Customs is primarily based on Faceless, Contactless and Paperless Customs processes.

4.2 Faceless Customs:

4.2.1 Indian Customs has initiated Faceless Assessment on imports from June 2020 (Reference Circular No.28/2020-Customs and Instruction No.09/2020 both dated 5.06.2020). The first phase began by linking Chennai and Bengaluru which was gradually expanded to other geographical locations till eventual all India coverage by 31.10.2020. Briefly put, Faceless Assessment uses a technology platform to separate the Customs assessment process from the physical location of a Customs officer at the port of arrival. This measure is with the intent of bolstering efforts to ensure an objective, free, fair and just assessment. Key objectives of Faceless Assessment include:

- (i) Anonymity in assessment for reduced physical interface between trade and Customs
- (ii) Speedier Customs clearances through efficient utilization of manpower
- (iii) Greater uniformity of assessment across locations
- (iv) Promoting sector specific and functional specialization in assessment.

4.2.2 To further smoothen implementation of Faceless Assessment and to have a robust system in place for meeting desired objectives as above, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) constituted the National Assessment Centers (NACs) in September 2020. These NACs have been mandated, amongst other responsibilities, to monitor assessments, to set up structures for liasoning with different Customs formations and Directorates under CBIC, to function as knowledge hub for the commodities assigned to that particular NAC etc.,

[Refer Circular No.40/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020]

4.2.3 Subsequent to all India coverage of imports by Faceless Assessment, CBIC took certain measures for timely assessment and faster clearance of goods such as-measures to ensure that there would be no delays on weekends and holidays, measures to minimize and rationalize raising of queries to importers, measures to streamline import cases which are to be sent for First Check examinations, measures for better facilitations by warranting interactions between NACs and Risk Management Division of CBIC, guidelines for reassessing imports as well as general grievance redressal mechanisms and issues relating to enforcement of Rules of Origin.

[Refer Circular No.45/2020-Customs dated 12.10.2020]

- 4.2.4 After comprehensive stakeholder consultations with members of the trade, CBIC issued fresh directions and clarifications on various aspects relating to Faceless Assessment such as re-assessments to be done in accordance with principles of natural justice, requirement of members of the trade to ensure full and complete submission of required documents and accurate declarations, increasing the monetary limits for assessment and for sensitizing Customs officers in assessment of liquid bulk cargo.

[Refer Circular No.55/2020-Customs dated 17.12.2020)]

- 4.2.5 In July 2021, CBIC has taken a call to increase facilitation to 90 percentage (%). This implies that more number of import documents would be cleared without intervention of Customs officers. Linked to this decision, the existing Direct Port Delivery (DPD) scheme has also been revamped to shift to a regime of Customs document based DPD from existing client based DPD. CBIC has also prescribed time limits for assessments and has taken a call to further re-organise composition of Faceless Assessment Groups (FAGs) under the NACs with the intent to foster faster clearances and better facilitation.

[Refer Circular No.14/2021-Customs dated 07.07.2021]

- 4.2.6 Standard Examination Order:

In order to enhance uniformity in assessments across various customs ports across the country, CBIC has implemented Standard Examination Orders in the Customs system. The said implementation started for goods covered under Assessment Group 4 in all the Customs Stations. This functionality is expected to enhance the uniformity in examination, and lower the time taken in the process as well as reduce associated costs. Considering the on-track implementation and to harmonize the examination orders across FAGs, the Board has implemented the Standard Examination Orders to the goods across all other Assessment Groups also.

[Refer Circulars No.14/2021-Customs dated 07.07.2021, No.16/2022-Customs dated 29.08.2022, No.23/2022-Customs dated 03.11.2022 and No. 02/2023 dated 11.01.2023]

- 4.2.7 Board changed the structure of NAC's by reducing them from 11 to 8. It was decided that each of the 8 NAC's will have one PCC/CC as convener and the concept of co-convener was done away with. In alignment with the changes to NAC, Faceless Assessment Groups (FAG) were also re-organized to further promote specialization.

[Refer Circular No.13/2023-Customs dated 31.05.2023]

4.3 Contactless Customs:

In recent years, CBIC has initiated reforms such as online registration of goods, automated queuing and automated clearances of Bills of Entry, simplified online registration in ICEGATE, auto debit of bonds, setting up of Turant Suvidha Kendras (TSKs) etc. All these have enabled an environment which has done away with the requirement of members of the trade to physically interact with Customs in the goods clearances process and has fostered a 'Contactless Customs' environment.

4.3.1 Online registration of goods: A facility has been provided for the importers or their authorized persons to register the goods online on the ICEGATE web portal after the goods have arrived (and not after payment of duty, as per previous practice). This self-registration has further reduced the time of clearance besides freeing the Customs officers for handling other important items of work.

[Refer Circular No.09/2019-Customs dated 28.02.2019]

4.3.2 Automated queuing of Bills of Entry: Significant changes have been made in the ICES 1.5 for clearance of imported goods after finalization of assessment and payment of duty under Section 47(1) of the Customs Act, 1962. The proper officer now has access to a fully automated queue of Bills of Entry ready for the grant of clearance in the ICES 1.5 which obviates the present necessity of the importer/authorized person having to present the Bill of Entry number and date to this officer for seeking clearance. Based upon the Bills of Entry which are ready for clearance in this automated queue the proper officer would be able to directly and immediately grant clearance on the System. Besides greatly reducing the dwell time of the goods that are pending only for the grant of such clearance, this has reduced the interface of the trade with the department personnel to the advantage of both. The Bills of Entry which are fully facilitated by the Risk Management System will also be automatically routed to the proper officer for giving clearance after registration has been completed by the importer.

[Refer Circular No.09/2019-Customs dated 28.02.2019]

4.3.3 Automated clearances of Bills of Entry: A further trade facilitation initiative in the Customs clearance process is the Customs Compliance Verification (CCV) which operates after an importer registers the imported goods even while duty has not been paid or its payment is in process. Once the goods are registered, the proper officer carries out all necessary verifications as per Sections 17/18 and Section 47(1) of the Customs Act, 1962. On satisfaction that the goods are ready for clearance, but for the payment of duties, the proper officer confirms the completion of the CCV for the particular Bill of Entry in the System. Thereafter, on payment of duty by the importer, the Customs Automated System electronically gives clearance to the Bill of Entry, as provided for in the 1st proviso to Section 47(1) of the Customs Act, 1962. This facility of automated clearance of Bills of Entry has been introduced on a pilot basis in Chennai Customs House and

Jawaharlal Nehru Customs House w.e.f. 06.02.2020. The said facility was introduced at an all-India level w.e.f. 05.03.2020.

[Refer Circular No.09/2019-Customs dated 28.02.2019, Circulars No. 05/2020- Customs dated 27.01.2020 and No.15/2020-Customs dated 28.02.2020]

4.3.4 Registration of Authorized Dealer Code, Bank Accounts through ICEGATE: CBIC has now enabled functionality within ICEGATE login which allows the exporters to make an online request for registration/modification of their AD Code / Bank Account(s) and also electronically submit the Passbook copy or Bank Authorization letter through eSanchit. The exporters would also have access to a Dashboard to view the status of approval and acceptance at PFMS, for quick rectification at their end.

[Refer Circular No.32/2020-Customs dated 06.07.2020]

4.3.5 Automated debit of bond after Assessment: CBIC has done away with the requirement for importers to physically visit Customs House for physical debit of Bonds after the Bill of Entry is returned (to the importer) for the payment of duty. ICES now automatically debits the Bond and reflect the same in the first copy of the Bill of Entry, provided the details of the Bond are provided during submission of the Bill of Entry.

[Refer Circular No.32/2020-Customs dated 06.07.2020]

4.3.6 Simplified Registration of Importers/Exporters in ICEGATE: Simplified Registration module for importers / exporters based on verification provided in associated GSTIN has been provided without the requirement of digital signature. These functionalities are useful to the importers / exporters and would help them in their management of imports and exports. Some of these functionalities are Management of Bank Accounts, Ledger View, IGST Refund status, Query Reply etc.

[Refer Circular No.32/2020-Customs dated 06.07.2020]

4.3.7 Setting up of Turant Suvidha Kendra in All Customs Formations: Circular No.28/2020- Customs, dated 05.06.2020 provided for setting up Turant Suvidha Kendras (TSK) for the purpose of implementation of 1st Phase of Faceless Assessment at Bengaluru and Chennai. Considering the benefits ushered in by providing single point interface, Board decided to extend TSKs to all the Customs formations for carrying out the functions as follows:

- (i) The document verification by Customs officers at Assessment and Customs Compliance Verification (CCV) stages would normally be based on the documents uploaded in the e-Sanchit, not requiring physical submission of documents. However, if in any exceptional situation the physical submission of documents is required by Customs, for defacement or validation, such submission would be made only at the TSKs.

- (ii) Documents requiring verification during examination for validation with goods would continue to be done during examination, as at present.
- (iii) One or more TSKs may be set up for the convenience of the trade.
- (iv) Suitable procedures are to be devised for handling & safe keeping of the documents produced at TSKs. Ideally these documents should also be kept in electronic form

[Refer Circular No.32/2020-Customs dated 06.07.2020]

4.4 Paperless Customs:

CBIC has taken initiatives to enable digital submission and transmission of both Bills of Entry and Shipping Bills in 2020. Besides saving time, the cost of printing paper documents has also been substantially reduced.

4.4.1 PDF copies of Bills of Entry and gatepass: Board has decided to enable electronic communication of PDF based Final eOoC (electronic Out of Charge) copy of BoE and eGatepass to the importers/Customs Brokers. This electronic communication would reduce interface between the Customs authorities and the importers/Customs Brokers and also do away with the requirement of taking bulky printouts from the Service Centre or maintenance of voluminous physical dockets in the Customs Houses. The Final eOoC copy of BoE and eGatepass copy is now emailed to the concerned Customs Broker and/or importer, if registered, once the Out of Charge is granted. The eGatepass copy will be used by the Gate Officer or the Custodian to allow physical exit of the imported goods from the Customs area. These new features have been implemented w.e.f 15.04.2020.

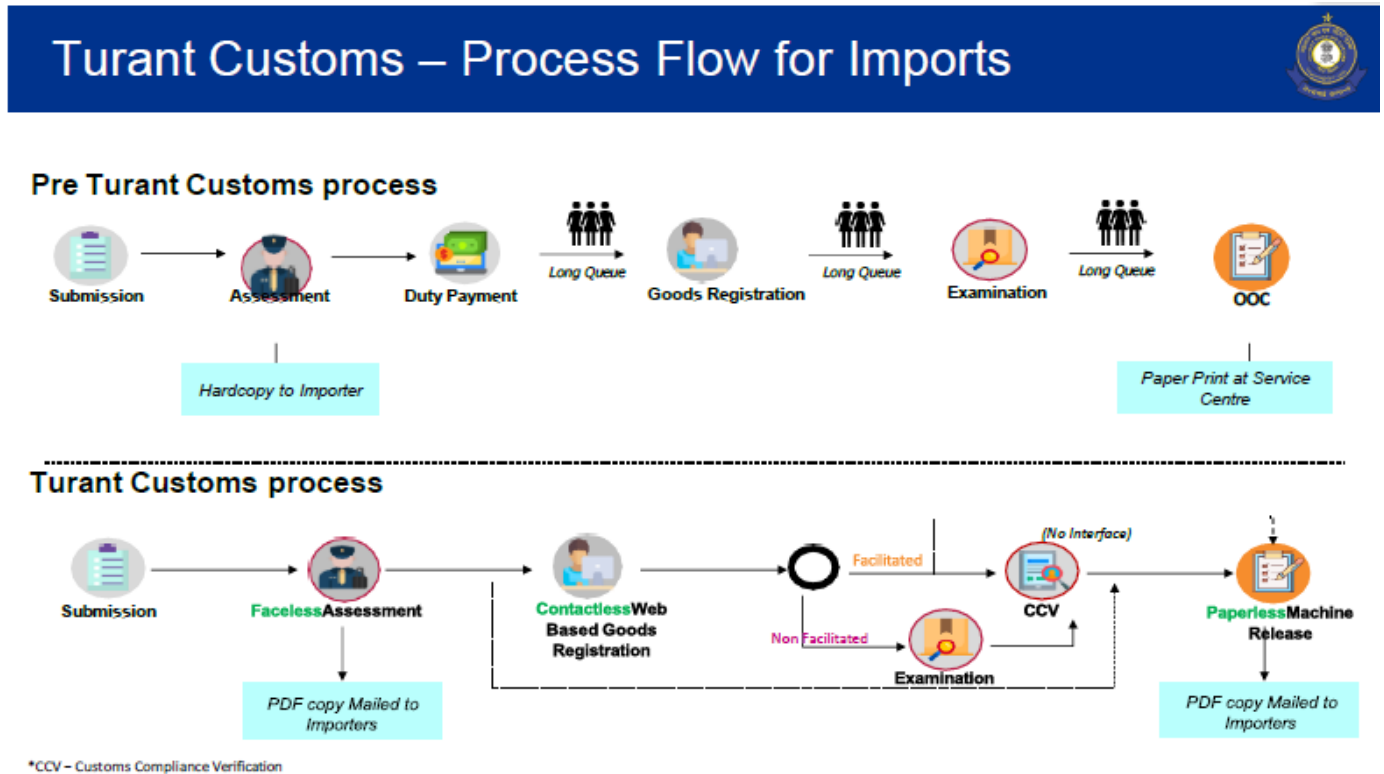
[Refer Circular No.19/2020-Customs dated 13.04.2020]

4.4.2 Electronic Communication of PDF Based Copies of Shipping Bill & e-Gatepass to Custom Brokers/Exporter: In its continuing endeavour to promote 'Faceless, Contactless, Paperless Customs' Board decided to rely upon digital copies of the Shipping Bill and do away with the requirement of taking bulky printouts from the Service Centre or maintenance of voluminous physical dockets in the Custom Houses. This reform will yield immense benefits in terms of saving the time and cost of compliance for the trade, thereby enhancing the ease of doing business, while providing enhanced security features for verification of authenticity and validity of the electronic document. Board has directed that w.e.f. 22.06.2020 only the digital copy of the Shipping Bill bearing the Final LEO would be electronically transmitted to the exporter and the present practice of printing copies of the said document for the exporters and also for maintaining a docket in the Customs House would stand discontinued.

[Refer Circular No.30/2020-Customs dated 22.06.2020]

Diagrammatic Representation of Pre-Turant Customs and Post-Turant Customs process flow for Imports is illustrated in Figure 3.1, on the next page.

Figure 3.1: Process Flow for Imports- Pre and Post Turant Customs



5. Examination of goods:

5.1 The imported goods, which are interdicted for examination by the RMS, are required to be examined for verification of correctness of description/declaration given in the Bill of Entry and related documents. The imported goods may also be examined prior to assessment in cases where the importer does not have complete information with him at the time of import and requests for examination of the goods before assessing the duty liability or, where the proper officer, on reasonable belief feels that the goods should be examined before assessment, giving reasons for the same. Wherever required, samples are drawn in the examination area for chemical analysis, verification or any other purposes.

5.2 Standard Examination Order has been introduced for all second check cases since April 2023. More information at para 4.2.6

[Refer Circulars No.14/2021-Customs dated 07.07.2021, No.16/2022-Customs dated 29.08.2022 and No.23/2022-Customs dated 03.11.2022]

5.3 After assessment by the appraising group or for cases where examination is carried out before assessment, bill of entry needs to be presented for registration for examination of imported goods in the import shed. The proper officer of

customs examines the goods along with requisite documents. The shipments, found in order are given clearance order by the proper officer of customs in the Import Shed.

6. Execution of bonds:

- 6.1 For availing partial or complete exemption from duties under different schemes and notifications, execution of end use/ provisional duty bonds with Bank Guarantee or other surety may be required, in the prescribed forms. The amount of bond and bank guarantee is determined in terms of the instructions issued by the Board or conditions of the relevant notification or provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 or rules/regulations made there under.

7. Payment of duty:

- 7.1 With effect from 17.09.2012, e-payment of Customs duty is mandatory for importers registered under Accredited Clients Programme/Authorised Economic Operator scheme and importers paying duty of Rs. 1 lakh or more per Bill of Entry. Since 17.08.2017, e-payment is mandatory for importers paying duty of Rs. 10,000 or more per Bill of Entry.
- 7.2 Customs Notification No. 134/2016-Customs (N.T) & 135/2016-Customs (N.T.) dated 2nd November, 2016 allowed Importers certified under Authorized Economic Operator Programme as AEO (Tier-Two) and AEO (Tier-Three) to make deferred payment of duty of Customs. The Deferred Payment of Import Duty Rules were notified vide Notification no. 28/2017- Customs (N.T.) dated 31st March, 2017. Since 19.08.2020, Deferred Payment facility has been extended to Authorised Public Undertakings.

[Refer Circulars No.33/2011-Cus., dated 29.7.2011 and No. 24/2012-Cus., dated 5.9.2012, No. 52/2016- Customs dated 15.11.2016, Notification No. 78/2020-Cus (NT) dated 19.08.2020 & Circular No.37/2020 dated 19.08.2020]

- 7.3 The ICEGATE e-Payment Platform is enhanced to facilitate the electronic collection of Voluntary/Self-Initiated Payments (SIP). This innovative functionality is designed to replace the traditional TR-6 payments, which were previously processed manually at various Customs Stations. With this enhancement, users can generate self-initiated challans for voluntary payments and make payments via the ICEGATE e-payment platform without requiring further approval from Customs officers. The following details outline the key features:

- (i) All registered ICEGATE users will have access to this feature for payments related to past import/export transactions. It is important to note that this is not a replacement for challans generated by ICES, ECCS, SEZ online, or ACES applications.
- (ii) Voluntary payments can be made by debiting the Electronic Cash Ledger, a feature available exclusively to IEC holders and Customs Brokers.

- (iii) For users wishing to initiate challan-wise payments, the platform allows transaction-wise payments through the Electronic Cash Ledger before accounting for duty payment.
- (iv) Upon successful testing for the acceptance of voluntary payments, the following modes are currently enabled for challan-wise payments:
 - I. Internet banking through nine authorized banks
 - II. NEFT/RTGS via the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
 - III. Payment Aggregator mode

[Refer Circular No. 27/2024- Customs dated 23.12.2024]

8. Amendment of Bill of Entry:

- 8.1 Bonafide mistakes noticed after submission of documents, may be rectified by way of amendment to the Bill of Entry with the approval of Deputy/Assistant Commissioner. Levy of Fees (Customs Documents) Amendment Regulations, 2017, issued vide Notification No. 36/2017-Customs (N.T.) dated 11.04.2017, provides a number of amendments which can be allowed on payment of amount mentioned therein.
- 8.2 Request for amendments under Section 149 of the Customs Act, 1962 leading to reassessments: After introduction of Faceless Assessment, several representations have been received regarding dealing with amendments under section 149 of Customs Act, 1962 and consequent reassessment of B/E, based on the request of the importers to change the elements of assessment. This is typically the case when the importer claims that he has forgotten to claim an exemption or is in possession of some document that requires an element such as freight etc. to be changed. The various scenarios and the prescribed routes for carrying out reassessment are laid down in para 2.5. of Circular No. 45/2020-Customs dated 12.10.2020.

[Refer Circular No.45/2020-Customs dated 12.10.2020]

9. Advance Filing of Bill of Entry:

- 9.1 For faster clearance of the goods, Section 46 of the Customs Act, 1962 allows filing of Bill of Entry prior to arrival of goods. This Bill of Entry is valid if vessel/aircraft carrying the goods arrives within 30 days from the date of presentation of Bill of Entry.
- 9.2 Often, goods coming by container ships are transferred at intermediate ports (like Colombo) from mother vessel to smaller vessels called feeder vessels. At the time of filing of advance Bill of Entry, the importer does not know which vessel will finally bring the goods to Indian port. In such cases, the name of mother vessel may be filled in on the basis of the Bill of Lading. On arrival of the feeder vessel, the Bill of Entry may be amended to mention names of both mother vessel and feeder vessel.
- 9.3 Advance filing is mandated to facilitate pre-arrival processing and assessment of Bills of Entry (BE) by mandating their advance filing thus leading to significant

decrease in the Customs clearance time. Since 29.03.2021, Importer is required to file a BE latest as per the time-limits provided in the table below:

Table

S.No.	Customs Station	Bill of Entry is Required to be Filed Latest by End of the Day of Arrival of the Vessel/Aircraft/Vehicle	Bill of Entry is Required to be Filed Latest by the End of Day Preceding the Day of Arrival of the Vessel/Aircraft/Vehicle
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	Sea Port	Imports consigned from following countries viz. 1. Bangladesh 2. Maldives 3. Myanmar 4. Pakistan 5. Sri Lanka	Imports consigned from all countries other than those mentioned in column (3)
2	Airport	All imports	None
3	Land Customs Station (LCS)	All imports	None
4	Inland Container Depot (ICD)	None	All imports

[Refer Circular No. 08/2021-Customs dated 29.03.2021]

- 9.4 Wherein the Bill of Entry is not filed within the time specified in Para 8.3 above and the proper officer of customs is satisfied that there is no sufficient cause for such delay, the importer shall be liable to pay charges for the late presentation of Bill of Entry at the rate of rupees five thousand per day for initial three days of the default and at the rate of rupees ten thousand per day for each day of default thereafter. However, the said charges may not exceed the duty payable in respect of that particular bill of entry. In cases, where the duty or any other charges is not payable, the said charges shall not exceed Rs.50,000/-. If there is a proper officer is satisfied with the reasons for delay, the said charges may be waived. Importer should not be penalized for delay happening due to system related fault. The proper officers (Additional/Joint Commissioners) are advised to judiciously exercise powers conferred on them to ensure that the trade and stakeholders particularly the diplomatic community is not put to undue hardship and necessary relief, as applicable, may be provided to the importers in bona-fide cases.

[Refer Notifications No. 26/2017-Customs (N.T.) dated 31.03.2017, No. 36/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 11.05.2018, Instruction No. 12/2017-Customs dated 31.08.2017]

10. Bill of Entry for bond/warehousing:

- 10.1 A separate form of Bill of Entry is used for clearance of goods for warehousing. All documents, as are required to be filed with a Bill of Entry for home consumption are also required with the Bill of Entry for Warehousing which is assessed in the same manner and duty payable is determined. However, since

duty is not required to be paid at the time of warehousing, the purpose of assessing the duty at this stage is only to secure the duty by way of execution of Bond. The duty is paid at the time of ex-bond clearance of goods for which an Ex-Bond Bill of Entry is filed. In terms of Section 15 of the Customs Act, 1962, the rate of duty applicable to imported goods cleared from a warehouse is the rate in- force on the date of filing of Ex-Bond Bill of Entry.

[Refer Circular No. 22/2016-Customs dated 31.05.2016]

11. Risk Management System in Indian Customs:

11.1 “Risk Management System” (RMS) is one of the most significant steps in the ongoing Business Process Re-engineering of the Customs Department. RMS is based on the realization that ever- increasing volumes and complexity of international supply chain and the deteriorating global security scenario present formidable challenges to Customs. Besides, the traditional gatekeeper approach of scrutinizing every document and examining every consignment will simply not work. Also, there is a need to reduce the dwell time of cargo at ports/airports, as well as the transaction costs in order to enhance the competitiveness of Indian businesses, by expediting the release of cargo where compliance level is high. Thus, an effective RMS strikes an optimal balance between facilitation and enforcement and promotes a culture of compliance. RMS is also expected to improve the management of the Department’s resources by enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in meeting stakeholder expectations and bringing the Customs processes at par with best international practices.

[Refer Circular No. 43/2005-Cus., dated 24.11.2005]

11.2 Facilitation of legitimate trade is one of the key motivating forces for simplification of procedures and reduction of barriers to the trade. Indian Customs has been at the forefront of taking initiatives aimed at catalysing economic development through transparency, harmonization, predictability and automation in trade. Risk management has been one of the key vehicles for Indian Customs to better meet the demands of the operating environment of the Trade facilitation. The risk management in its new avatar-an intelligence data driven risk management framework embedded with compliance culture-has enabled more effective decision-making at all levels. The past 15 years have produced many changes in implementation of risk management capabilities since its introduction in the year 2005 in imports. The technology stack, which is based on Oracle database remained the same, but the original port-wise distributed architecture was replaced by centralized architecture in the year 2010. Now, RMS for cargo clearance is functional for all the locations, which have the facility of electronic cargo clearance.

11.3 Indian Customs Risk Management System has already made forays into post-clearance audit, exports, container selection, IPR, integrated declaration and integrated risk management involving partner government agencies (single window), courier cargo, and e-sealing. With the insertion of proviso to Section 17 (2) of the Customs Act 1962 (vide Finance Act 2018), the selection for verification of self-assessed declarations (Bills of Entry or Shipping Bills) by the Assessing Officer shall primarily be on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria. Besides, provisos to Section 47 (1) and Section 51(1), the

orders of clearance of imported goods for home consumption and goods for exportation respectively, in addition to the proper officer, may also be given electronically through the Customs Automation System on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria. This in turn paved way for machine release of goods through customs automation system in the case of imported and export goods.

11.4 Risk Management processes in Imports: Bills of Entry and IGMs filed electronically in ICES through the Service Centre or the ICEGATE are transmitted by ICES to the RMS. RMS processes the data through a series of steps and produces an electronic output for the ICES. This output determines whether a particular Bill of Entry will be taken-up for appraisal or examination or both or be cleared after payment of duty without assessment and examination. As a part of decision support, where necessary, RMS provides instructions for Appraising Officer, Examining Officer or the Out-of-Charge Officer. It needs to be noted that the appraising and examination instructions communicated by the RMS have to be necessarily followed by the proper officer. It is, however, possible that in a few cases the proper officer might decide to apply a particular treatment to the Bill of Entry which is at variance with the instruction received from the RMS. This may happen due to risks which are not factored in RMS. Such a course of action shall, however, be taken only with the prior approval of the jurisdictional Pr. Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs or an officer not below the rank of Additional / Joint Commissioner of Customs, authorized by him for this purpose, after recording the reasons for the same. A brief remark on the reasons and the particulars of Commissioner's authorization should be made by the officer examining the goods in the departmental comments section of the electronic Bill of Entry in the EDI system.

11.5 Automated clearances of Bills of Entry: A further trade facilitation initiative in the Customs clearance process is the Customs Compliance Verification (CCV) which operates after an importer registers the imported goods even while duty has not been paid or its payment is in process. Once the goods are registered, the proper officer carries out all necessary verifications as per Sections 17/18 and Section 47(1) of the Customs Act, 1962. On satisfaction that the goods are ready for clearance, but for the payment of duties, the proper officer confirms the completion of the CCV for the particular Bill of Entry in the System. Thereafter, on payment of duty by the importer, the Customs Automated System electronically gives clearance to the Bill of Entry, as provided for in the 1st proviso to Section 47(1) of the Customs Act, 1962. This facility of automated clearance of Bills of Entry has been introduced on a pilot basis in Chennai Customs House and Jawaharlal Nehru Customs House w.e.f. 06.02.2020. The said facility was introduced at an all India level w.e.f. 05.03.2020.

[Refer Circulars No.09/2019-Customs dated 28.02.2019, No.05/2020-Customs dated 27.01.2020, No.15/2020-Customs dated 28.02.2020]

11.6 Post-Clearance Audit (PCA): Based on a set of criteria, bills of entry are selected for PCA under the Risk Management System for audit/verification of the correctness of the declaration/assessment of the bill of entry. The objective of PCA is to monitor, maintain and enhance compliance levels, while reducing the

dwelling time of cargo. The RMS selects the Bills of Entry for audit, after clearance of the goods, and these selected Bills of Entry are directed to audit officers for scrutiny.

11.7 As per the new scheme introduced in the Customs Act, 1962 (vide Finance Act, 2018), the endeavour is to audit the assessment and also to verify compliance of an auditee with the various provisions of the Customs Act and other allied laws in respect of imported or export or dutiable goods, as a means to measure and improve compliance. A new Section 99A (under Chapter XIIA) has been introduced in the Customs Act 1962, to provide a statutory framework for the procedure for conducting post clearance audit. The Customs Audit Regulations (CAR), 2018 framed under Section 99A of the Act are notified vide Notification No.45/2018-Customs (NT) dated 24.05.2018 in supersession of the On-site Post Clearance Audit regulations consequent to omission of Section 17(6) of the Act. Regulation (4) of the said CAR, 2018 stipulates that the selection of auditee or the selection of import declarations or export declarations, as the case may be, for the purposes of audit shall primarily be based on risk evaluation through appropriate selectivity criteria.

12. Risk Management processes in Exports:

12.1 Risk Management in export clearance was introduced in July 2013 (Circular No.23/2013-Customs dated 24.06.2013 refers). RMS in exports clearance has enabled low risk consignments to be cleared based on self-declaration by the exporters, while routing high-risky consignments to field officers for verification of self-declaration or examination of consignment or both. This has resulted in reduction in dwell time, transaction cost, clearance formalities without compromise with Custom controls and other regulatory compliances in respect of export of goods.

12.2 Shipping Bills filed electronically in ICES through the Service Centre or the ICEGATE are processed by RMS through a series of steps/corridors and an electronic output is produced for the ICES. This output from RMS determines the flow of the Shipping Bill in ICES i.e. whether the Shipping Bill will be taken up for verification of self-assessment/examination or both; or be given "Let Export Order" directly after payment of Export duty (if any) without any given verification of self-assessment/ examination.

12.3 To provide support in decision making and to ensure uniformity in verification practices adopted by customs officers, the RMS also provides suitable instructions for Assessing Officer and Examining Officer. Deviation or variance with RMS instructions as discussed under Para 10.4 in respect of import are also apply, mutatis mutandis, in export.

[Refer Para 5 of the Circular No.23/2013-Customs dated 24.06.2013]

12.4 The selection of Shipping Bills for verification of Self-assessment and/or examination is based on the output given by RMS to ICES. However, owing to some technical reasons if RMS fails to provide output to ICES or RMS output is not received by ICES, within a pre-defined time window, the existing norms of assessment and examination (Refer Para 10 of the Circular No.23/2013-

Customs dated 24.06.2013) are applicable.

12.5 Pursuant to launch of RoDTEP (Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products) scheme on 01.01.2021, the phase-II of RMS in exports has been launched. Now subsequent to filing of EGM, the Shipping Bills having a claim of Duty Drawback or RoDTEP scheme are processed by RMS through a series of steps/corridors and an electronic output is generated for the ICES. This output determines the flow of the Shipping Bill in ICES i.e. whether the Shipping Bill will be taken up by the Customs Officers for verification of these claims or not, before grant of these export incentives to exporter. The RMS will select the Shipping Bills for audit, after issue of LEO, and these selected Shipping Bills will be directed to the audit officers for scrutiny.

13. Other RMS capabilities:

13.1 Data Analytics and Machine learning: Traditionally, Risk Rules are created by NCTC staff. Risk is assessed based on data analysis conducted through the use of various tools, as well as the analysis of legal changes, notifications, circulars. In order to leverage new technologies for automated analysis and targeting, machine learning based interdictions have been introduced in the RMS application. With the enhanced precision and accuracy in the interdiction of risky cargo, NCTC has successfully codified various descriptive fields and created data-based interdictions for automated identification of risky declarations through machine learning tools.

13.2 Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS): ECCS is a web-based automated clearance System, which was launched in the year 2017, for risk based electronic clearance of express cargo, handled by courier companies. Currently, it is operational at three courier terminals viz Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru. Customs declarations filed for clearance under ECCS are known as courier bills of entry (CBEs) and courier shipping bills (CSBs), and are different from the regular customs declarations, used for clearance of normal cargo. CBEs and CSBs filed for customs clearance under ECCS are subjected to RMS processes. RMS either facilitate or interdict a CBE or CSB as per risk parameters. Imported goods or export goods covered under CBEs or CSBs that are facilitated by RMS (no assessment and no examination) and cleared by customs Xray scanning shall be given out of charge or let export order, respectively. Under new initiatives of “auto out of charge” or “auto let export”, for fully facilitated CBE’s or CSEs are given automatic by ECCS System.

[Refer Circulars No.40/2019-Customs dated 29.11.2019 and
No. 41/2020-Customs dated 07.09.2020]

13.3 Container Selection Module (CSM): Non-Intrusive inspection (NII) is also an integral part of risk management ecosystem, wherein risk is assessed based on cargo declaration and risky containers are scanned to identify and mitigate risks related to concealment. Import General Manifests (IGMs), filed electronically, at a few selected locations, are processed by the RMS and an electronic output is produced, determining whether or not a container will be scanned by using NII equipment. By the end of 2020, CBIC has deployed 15 Container Scanners at 12 major port locations. After the linkage between Container Selection Module

commonly known as “CSM” Application and Bill of Entry module of ICES has been established, a new feature is appearing as pop-up on the screen of OOC officers. The Docks Examiner and OOC Officer can see on their screen whether a container has been selected for scanning or not.

- 13.4 Logistics security- E-sealing of export containers: Board, in the year 2017, introduced e-sealing of self-sealed export containers replacing the existing procedure of supervised factory stuffing with one-time bottle seal. An e-seal is a sealing device, having an inbuilt unique Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip, which can be identified by chip readers. E-sealing has enhanced the supply chain security and cargo integrity of export containers, as it significantly reduces the possibility of any unlawful intrusion or replacement of cargo en-route to customs gateway port. NCTC-Cargo (former RMCC) has been entrusted with the overall management of the e-seal project, including the authorisation of vendors and e-sealing data management.
- 13.5 IPR Application: RMCC responsible for registration of intellectual property rights with Indian customs. These registered rights are protected by Indian Customs across all Customs stations. Based on set out parameters, RMS interdicts consignments that may be infringing the intellectual property rights of these registered right holders. In the year 2017, RMCC launched a new Web- based IPR Application (IPR::ICeR) <https://ipr.icegate.gov.in> for this registration. This Application provides for linkage with other sites, and also has provision for raising queries and replying to queries. UTRN (Unique Temporary Registration Number) function as user-id for access for amendments/query reply/sending infringement message, provision for registration under international agreements/protocols. The other facilities under new application include facility to the Right Holder to upload 20 images and features of genuine & fake products, amendment or renewal of UPRN (Unique Permanent Registration Number), sending infringement messages and to have access to bond Transactions.
- 13.6 Under Single Window initiative (SWIFT), import-related risks of PGAs, such as Central Drug Standard and Control Organization (CDSCO), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Plant Quarantine (PQ), Animal Quarantine (AQ), and Wildlife Crime and Control Bureau (WCCB), are being gradually managed in the RMS application by adopting an integrated risk management approach. A risk-based selection of Bills of Entry for four PGAs namely FSSAI, WCCB, PQ, and CDSCO has already been implemented.

14. National Risk Management Committee (NRMC):

- 14.1 Risk Management is a dynamic process. Risk Management policies and processes need to be continually monitored and reviewed at a senior level. Board had constituted the NRMC vide Circular No.23/2007-Customs dated 28.06.2007, with a mandate to review the functioning of, and supervise the implementation of, Risk Management System (RMS).
- 14.2 In 2022, NRMC was re-constituted as National Risk Management Committee for Customs and GST. The DGARM, Delhi will be the nodal agency responsible for convening the NRMC meeting to review the functioning of the NCTC-Cargo,

NCTC(Pax) and the GST Business Analytics Wing. These wings under the DGARM will supervise the implementation and enhancement of RMS, APIS and the DGARM applications and provide feedback for improving the effectiveness of risk management and all related aspects. The NRMC will be a Standing Committee with the Member (Investigation), CBIC, as Chairman and Additional Director General, DGARM Hqrs, Delhi will be the Member Secretary of the NRMC.

14.3 The NRMC shall be convened once every year and will have the following main (but not limited to) functions:

- (i) Review the effectiveness of existing Risk Parameters employed in various modules namely Import, Export, Container Scanning, Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS), Post Clearance Audit (PCA), Protection and enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) etc., and Risks posed by changes in Modus Operandi, new exemption notifications and new CCR's.
- (ii) Review existing parameters and suggest new parameters to address concerns on border and port security.
- (iii) Once NCTC(Pax) is operationalized, the NRMC shall look at incremental improvements to be made in the Automated Targeting System.
- (iv) The Business Analytics wing of GST implements various modules e.g., Risky Exporters, Risky Taxpayers, Scrutiny of Returns, Audit, Analytical reports etc. The NRMC will advise on changes, if any, to be made in the various risk criteria that define the Risk in these modules.
- (v) Deliberate and advise on new and emerging risks and suggest ways to address systemic risks, having cross-cutting implications.
- (vi) Discuss new initiatives and projects for stepping up risk management strategy and associated processes, including the development of new modules and deployment of new technologies.
- (vii) Be the Forum for giving feedback and suggestions on improving the efficacy of risk management.
- (viii) Discuss and recommend measures for timely and effective risk mitigation by field formations.
- (ix) Deliberate on economic trends, changes in policies, duty rates and exemptions, etc., that could be exploited by the trade to evade Duties and Prohibitions and suggest remedial action for the same.
- (x) Discuss the efficacy of the Examination orders that would be made available shortly through the ICETAB, obviating the need for printing in the paper.
- (xi) Have an oversight on the generation of the centralized examination orders based on various parameters and its rollout in phases to enhance uniformity.

- (xii) To discuss and advise on enhanced use of technology, data sources and analytics capabilities to discern Security related Risks. Deliberate on use of AI/ML, Image analytics, geospatial analysis etc.
- (xiii) To address security vulnerabilities in the International Supply Chain through entity profiling of stakeholders, leveraging information in databases about movement of vessels and containers etc.
- (xiv) Any other matter that DGARM may consider for seeking the views of the NRMC.

[Refer Instruction No. 3/2022-Customs dated 23.03.2022]

15. Local Risk Management (LRM) Committee:

15.1 A Local Risk Management (LRM) Committee headed by Commissioner of Customs has been constituted in each Custom House / Air Cargo Complex / ICD, where RMS is operationalized. The LRM Committee comprises the Additional / Joint Commissioner in charge of Special Investigation and Intelligence Branch (SIIB), who is designated as the Local Risk Manager and includes the Additional / Joint Commissioner in charge of Audit and a nominee, not below the rank of a Deputy Director from the regional / zonal unit of the DRI, and a nominee, not below the rank of Deputy Director from the Directorate of Valuation, if any. The LRM Committee meets once every month and some of its functions are as follows:

- (i) Review trends in imports of major commodities and valuation with a view to identifying risk indicators,
- (ii) Decide the interventions at the local level, both for assessment and examination of goods prior to clearance and for PCA.
- (iii) Review results of interventions already in place and decide on their continuation/ modification or discontinuance etc.
- (iv) Review performance of the RMS and evaluate the results of the action taken on the basis of the RMS output.
- (v) Send periodic reports to the NCTC with the approval of the Pr. Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs.

[Refer Circular No.43/2005-Cus., dated 24.11.2005]

16. Authorized Economic Operator scheme:

16.1 The earlier Accredited Clients Programme (ACP)/Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) scheme granted assured facilitation to importers who have demonstrated capacity and willingness to comply with the laws administered by the Customs. The earlier existing ACP and AEO programmes were merged into the new AEO programme vide Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22-7-2016. For the economic operators other than importers and the exporters, the new programme

offers only one tier of certification (i.e. AEO-LO) whereas for the importers and the exporters, there are three tiers of certification (i.e. AEOT1, AEO-T2 and AEO-T3).

- 16.2 AEO is a voluntary compliance programme under the aegis of the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate Global Trade. The programme aims to enhance international supply chain security and facilitate movement of legitimate goods. Under this programme an entity engaged in international trade is approved by Customs as compliant with supply chain security standards and granted AEO status & certain benefits. India's AEO Programme is in sync with the commitments made under Article 7.7 of WTO FTA.
- 16.3 It enables Indian Customs to enhance and streamline cargo security through close cooperation with the principal stakeholders of the international supply chain viz. importers, exporters, logistics providers, custodians or terminal operators, custom brokers and warehouse operators. The legal framework for AEO program provides a three tier AEO Status for Exporters and Importers. The three tiers are AEO-T1, AEO – T2, AEO – T3, where AEO T3 is the highest level of accreditation. All three tiers provide for varying benefits and incrementally increasing level of facilitation to the status holder. There is one more category of AEO – LO that covers all other entities in the supply chain other than the importers and exporters covering the stakeholders such as Custom Brokers, Freight Forwarders, Shipping Lines, Airlines, Warehouse owners, CFS owners, Custodians etc. However, the entities that are not directly engaged in the international movement of goods such as banks, financial entities etc. are excluded from the purview of this programme.
- 16.4 Considering the likely volume of cargo imported by the Authorized Economic Operator, Custom Houses are advised to create separately earmarked facility/counters for providing Customs clearance service to them. Commissioners of Customs are also required to work with the Custodians for earmarking separate storage space, handling facility and expeditious clearance procedures for these clients.
- 16.5 The RMD maintains the list of AEOs centrally in the RMS and also monitors their levels of compliance, in co-ordination with the DRI/Commissioners of Customs. Where compliance levels fall, the importer is at first informed for self-improvement and in case of persistent non-compliance, the importer may be deregistered under the AEO.
- 16.6 The new combined three tier AEO programme enhance the scope of these programmes so as to provide further benefits to the entities who have demonstrated strong internal control system and willingness to comply with the laws administered by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs. Benefits besides lowered risk ratings on RMS includes simplified Customs procedure, declarations, etc. besides faster Customs clearance of consignments of/for AEO status holders The features and details of the revised programme are available in CBIC Circular No. 33/2016- Customs dated 22.07.2016.

16.7 Mutual Recognition Arrangement/Agreement (MRA)

Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) is a broad concept embodied within WCO SAFE Framework of Standards, whereby two countries arrive at an agreement or arrangement to mutually recognize AEO authorizations, that has been properly granted by one Customs administration. MRA provides a platform for AEO programmes to provide additional benefits to their members through international recognition with partner countries. Under WCO SAFE Framework of Standards, Customs Administrations are encouraged to develop partnerships with businesses and between each other to secure and facilitate international trade.

[Refer Circulars No.33/2016-Customs dated 22.07.2016, No.03/2018-Customs dated 17.01.2018 and No.26/2018-Customs dated 10.08.2018. For more details, please refer Chapter 35.]

17. Export procedure - Shipping Bill:

17.1 For clearance of export goods, the exporter has to obtain an Importer- Export Code (IEC) number from the DGFT prior to filing of Shipping Bill. Under the EDI System, IEC number is received online by the Customs System from the DGFT. The exporter is also required to register authorized foreign exchange dealer code (through which export proceeds are expected to be realized) and open a current account in the designated bank for credit of Drawback incentive, if any.

17.2 All the exporters intending to export under the export promotion scheme need to get their licenses etc. registered at the Customs Station. For such registration, original documents are required.

17.3 eSANCHIT has been extended to all ICES locations on PAN India basis for all types of exports under ICES.

[Refer Circulars No. 29/2018- Customs dated 30.08.2018 and No. 43/2018- Customs dated 08.11. 2018]

18. Waiver of Guaranteed Remittance (GR) form:

18.1 Generally the processing of Shipping Bills requires the production of a GR form that is used to monitor the foreign exchange remittance in respect of the export goods. However, there are few exceptions when the GR form is not required. These exceptions include export of goods valued not more than US \$25,000/- and export of gifts valued upto Rs.5 lakhs.

[Refer RBI Notifications No.FEMA.23/2000-RB, dated 3.5.2000, and No.FEMA.116/2004-RB, dated 25.3.2004]

19. Arrival of export goods at docks:

19.1 The goods brought for the purpose of export are allowed entry to the customs area on the strength of the check list and other declarations filed by the exporter in the Service Center. The custodian has to endorse the quantity of goods actually received on the reverse of the check list.

20. Customs examination of export goods:

20.1 After the receipt of the goods in the customs area, the exporter/ customs broker may contact the Customs Officer designated for the purpose, and present the check list with the endorsement of custodian and other declarations along with all original documents such as, Invoice and Packing list, ARE-1, etc. The Customs Officer may verify the packages of the goods actually received and enter the same into the system and thereafter mark the Electronic Shipping Bill, handing over all original documents to the Dock Appraiser who assigns a Customs Officer to carry out examination of goods, if required under the Risk management System and indicate the officers' name and the packages to be examined, if any, on the check list and return it to the exporter/ Customs Broker.

21. Examination norms:

21.1 The Board has been fixing norms for examination of export consignments and such norms depend upon the quantum of incentive, value of export goods, country of destination etc. The instructions under the Risk Management System and examination order by the Appraising Groups follow the norms framed in this regard.

21.2 After presentation of goods for registration to Customs and determination of action as to whether or not to examine the goods, no amendments request in the normal course should be entertained. However, in case an exporter still wishes to change any of the critical parameters resulting in change of value, Drawback, port etc. such consignment should be subjected to examination to rule out malafide in the request of the exporter.

21.3 Notwithstanding the examination norms, any export consignment can be examined by the Customs (even up to 100%), if there is any specific intelligence in respect of such consignment. Further, to test the compliance by trade, once in three months a higher percentage of consignments (say for example, all the first 50 consignments or a batch of consecutive 100 consignments presented for examination in a particular day) would be taken up for examination. Out of the consignments selected for examination a minimum of two packages with a maximum of 5% of packages (subject to a maximum of 20 packages) would be taken up for checking/examination.

21.4 In case export goods are stuffed and sealed in the presence of Customs/Central Excise officers at the factory of manufacture/ICD/CFS/warehouse and any other place where the Commissioner has, by a special order, permitted, it may be ensured that the containers should be bottle sealed or lead sealed. Also, such consignments shall be accompanied by an examination report in the prescribed form. In case of export through bonded trucks, the truck should be similarly bottle sealed or lead sealed. In case of export by ordinary truck/other means, all the packages are required to be lead sealed.

[Refer Circulars No.6/2002-Cus., dated 23.1.2002, and No.1/2009-Cus., dated 13.1.2009]

21.5 Routine examination of perishable export cargo is not to be conducted. Customs resort to examination of such cargo only on the basis of credible intelligence or

information and with prior permission of the concerned Assistant Commissioner/ Deputy Commissioner. Further, the perishable cargo which is taken up for examination should be given Customs clearance on the day itself, unless there is contravention of Customs laws.

[Refer Circular No.8/2007-Cus., dated 22.1.2007]

22. Drawl and testing of samples:

22.1 The representative sample from the consignment is drawn in accordance with the orders of the proper officer.

22.2 If considered necessary, the Assistant / Deputy Commissioner, may order sample to be drawn for purposes other than testing such as for visual inspection and verification of description, market value inquiry, etc.

22.3 Request for re-testing of sample made within a specified time by the importer or agent may be granted by the Additional Commissioner or Joint Commissioner of Customs as a trade facilitation measure. For uniformity in procedure at the various field formations, Board has issued detailed guidelines for retesting of samples.

[Refer Circular No. 30/2017-Customs dated 18.07.2017]

22.4 CRCL Module - Forwarding of samples using electronic Test Memo to CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories: As detailed in circular No. 46/2020-Customs dated 15.10.2021, CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories have been upgraded with several new, state of the art equipment, thereby enabling the testing of a wider variety of commodities in lesser time, with greater accuracy. For details, the CRCL brochure available at www.crcl.gov.in may be perused. In order to further ease the testing process, DG Systems has enabled a 'CRCL module' in ICES with the objective of automating all paperwork related to sampling, forwarding of test memos to CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories, and electronic receipt of test reports, instantly by the Customs Officers. The officials of CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories have been provided access for both import and export functionalities in the CRCL module. The CRCL module is also seamlessly integrated with current modules of ICES.

[Refer Circular No.46/2020-Customs dated 15.10.2020 and Instruction No.14/2021-Customs dated 21.06.2021]

22.5 For list of identified laboratories where field formations may directly forward samples of certain goods where CRCL labs are not equipped, refer Circulars No.43/2017-Customs dated 16.11.2017, No.11/2018-Customs dated 17.05.2018, No.28/2018-Customs dated 30.08.2018 and No.15/2019-Customs dated 07.06.2019.

23. Stuffing / loading of goods in containers:

23.1 In case of container cargo, the stuffing of container at Dock is done under Preventive supervision. Further, loading of both containerized and bulk cargo is to be done under Preventive supervision. The Customs Preventive Officer

supervising the loading of container and general cargo into the vessel may give "Shipped on Board" endorsement on the Exporters copy of the Shipping Bill.

23.2 Palletization of cargo is done after grant of Let Export Order (LEO). Thus, there is no need for a separate permission for palletization from Customs. However, the permission for loading in the aircraft/vessel is to be obtained.

[Refer Circular No.18/2005-Cus., dated 11.3.2005]

23.3 Further the auto LEO facility is also allowed upon X-ray clearance to CSB marked for 'assessment only', provided that the CSB has been cleared under assessment and examination has not been mandated.

[Refer Circular No. 19/2023-Customs dated 02.08.2023]

24. Amendments:

24.1 Any correction/amendment in the check list generated after filing of declaration can be made at the Service Centre provided the documents have not yet been submitted in the EDI system and the Shipping Bill number has not been generated. Where corrections are required to be made after the generation of the Shipping Bill number or after the goods have been brought into the Export Dock, the amendments will be carried out in the following manner:

- (i) If the goods have not yet been allowed "Let Export" the amendments may be permitted by the Assistant / Deputy Commissioner (Exports).
- (ii) Where the "Let Export" order has already been given, amendments may be permitted only by the Additional/Joint Commissioner in charge of Export.

24.2 In both the cases, after the permission for amendments has been granted, the Assistant Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner (Export) may approve the amendments on the EDI system on behalf of the Additional/Joint Commissioner. Where the print out of the Shipping Bill has already been generated, the exporter may first surrender all copies of the Shipping Bill to the Dock/Shed Appraiser/Superintendent for cancellation before amendment is approved on the system. [Refer para 6 in Chapter 2 on types of Amendments]

25. Drawback claim:

25.1 After actual export of the goods, the Drawback claim is automatically processed through EDI system by the officers of Drawback Branch on first-come-first-served basis. The status of the Shipping Bills and sanction of Drawback claim can be ascertained from the query counter set up at the Service Center. If any query is raised or deficiency noticed, the same is also shown on the terminal and a print out thereof may be obtained by the authorized person of the exporter from the Service Centre. The exporters are required to reply to such queries through the Service Centre. The claim will come in queue of the EDI system only after reply to queries/deficiencies is entered in the Service Centre.

25.2 All the claims sanctioned on a particular day are enumerated in a scroll and transferred to the Bank through the system. The bank credits the drawback

amount in the respective accounts of the exporters. The bank may send a fortnightly statement to the exporters of such credits made in their accounts.

- 25.3 The Steamer Agent/Shipping Line may transfer electronically the EGM to the Customs EDI system so that the physical export of the goods is confirmed, to enable the Customs to sanction the Drawback claims.

[For more details on duty drawback Scheme, please refer Chapter 23]

26. Export General Manifest:

- 26.1 All the shipping lines/agents need to furnish the Export General Manifests, Shipping Bill-wise, to the Customs electronically before departure of the conveyance.

- 26.2 Apart from lodging the EGM electronically the shipping lines need to continue to file manual EGMs along with the exporter copy of the Shipping Bills in the Export Department where they would be entered in a register. The shipping lines may obtain acknowledgement indicating the date and time at which the EGMs were received by the Export Department.

27. Electronic Declarations for Bills of Entry and Shipping Bills:

- 27.1 Bill of Entry (Electronic Integrated Declaration and paperless processing) Regulations, 2018 and Shipping Bill (Electronic Integrated Declaration and paperless processing) Regulations, 2019 as amended, have been framed in exercise of powers conferred under section 157 read with section 46 and section 50 of the Customs Act, 1962 to mandate self-assessment by the importer or exporter, as the case may be.

[Refer Notifications No.36/2018-Cus (N.T.) dated 11.05.2018 and No.33/2019-Cus (N.T.) dated 25.04.2019]

28. 24x7 Customs clearance facility:

- 28.1 With effect from 31.12.2014 the facility of 24x7 Customs clearance had been made available for specified import viz. goods covered by “facilitated” Bills of Entry and specified exports viz. factory stuffed containers and goods exported under free Shipping Bills, at the 18 sea ports and the facility of 24x7 Customs clearance for specified imports viz. goods covered by facilitated Bills of Entry and all exports viz. goods covered by all Shipping Bills had also been made available at the 17 air cargo complexes (ACCs). Lately, it has been decided to extend the facility of 24x7 Customs clearance for specified imports viz. goods covered by facilitated Bills of Entry and specified exports viz. reefer containers with perishable/temperature sensitive export goods sealed in the presence of Customs officials as per Circular no. 13/2018-Cus. Dated 30.05.2018 and goods exported under free Shipping Bills. Presently 24x7 Customs clearance facility is available at 20 sea ports and 17 Air Cargo Complexes.

[Refer Circulars No.19/2014- Cus. dated 31.12.2014, No. 01/2016 dated 06.01.2016, and No. 31/2018 dated 05.09.2018]

28.2 Board had advised all the Pr. Chief / Chief Commissioners, having jurisdictions over Inland Container Depots (ICDs) to consider having the ICDs within their jurisdictions designated with extended facility of Customs clearance beyond normal working hours in any of the following ways, namely :-

- a) The facility of Customs clearance may be made available on a 24x7 basis, similar to the current Board guidelines for Sea Ports and Air Cargos/Airports;
- b) The facility of Customs clearance may be extended on all seven (7) days of the week (including holidays), with stipulated timings (say from 9 :30 AM to 6 :00 PM);
- c) The facility of Customs clearance may be extended beyond normal working hours for specified days in a week and with specified timings.

The decision to designate an ICD in any manner under para 3(a), 3 (b) or 3(c) above, based on location requirement and resources availability, could be for specified imports viz. goods covered by 'facilitated' Bills of Entry only, or specified exports viz. reefer containers with perishable/ temperature sensitive export goods sealed in the presence of Customs officials only or goods exported under free Shipping Bills only, or for all the three categories mentioned

[Refer Circular No. 11/2022-Customs dated 29.07.2022]

29. Sealing of Export Goods: electronic sealing facility

29.1 Board has laid down a simplified procedure for stuffing and sealing of export goods by introducing self-sealing subject to certain conditions.

29.2 Exporter shall inform the details of the premises whether a factory or a warehouse or any other place where container stuffing is to be carried out to the jurisdictional officer at least 15 days before first planned movement of a consignment from his factory premises for consideration of grant of permission by the jurisdictional Commissioner.

29.3 Customs formation granting the self-sealing permission shall circulate the permission along with GSTIN of the exporter to all Customs Houses/Station concerned. Principal Commissioners/ Commissioners would also communicate to RMD the IEC of the exporters newly granted permission for self-sealing; exporters already operating under self-sealing procedure, exporters permitted factory stuffing facility, AEOs.

29.4 Exporter shall seal container with tamper-proof electronic seal of standard specification before leaving the premises. The physical serial number of the electronic seal shall be declared by the exporter at the time of filing integrated online Shipping Bill. Prior to sealing the container, exporter shall feed data such as name of exporter, IEC, GSTIN, description of goods, tax invoice number, name of authorized signatory (for affixing the e-seal) and Shipping number in the electronic seal.

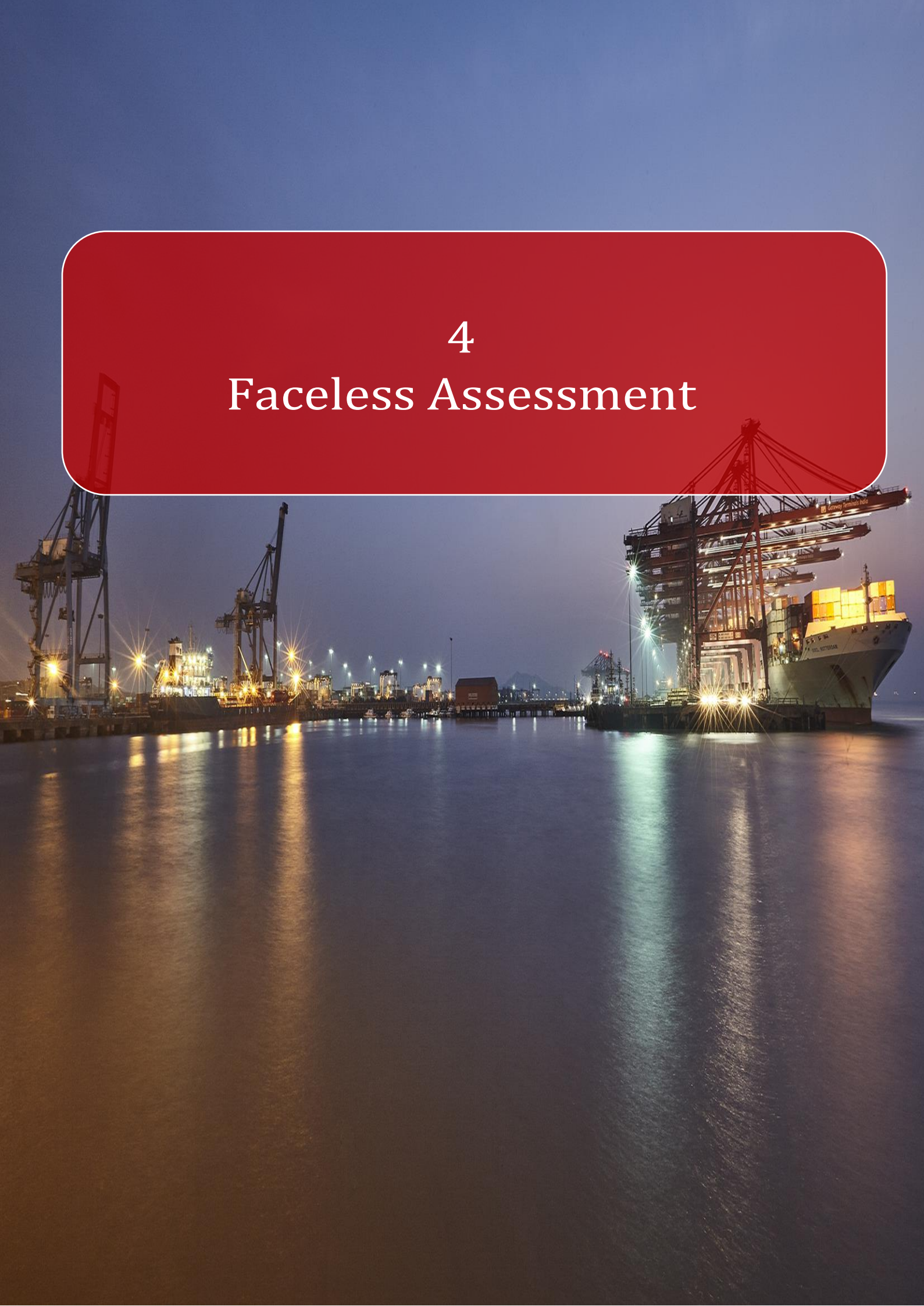
29.5 Exporter shall procure the RFID seals from vendors conforming to the standards specified by the Board.

29.6 All consignments in self-seal containers shall be subject to risk-based criteria and intelligence, if any, for inspection/ examination at the port of export. At the port/ ICD, Customs officers would verify the integrity of the seals to check for any sign of tampering enroute.

[Refer Circulars No. 26/2017- Customs dated 01.07.2017, No. 36/2017- Customs dated 28.08.2017, No. 37/2017- Customs dated 20.09.2017, No. 41/2017- Customs dated 30.10.2017, No. 44/2017- Customs dated 18.11.2017, No. 51/2017-Customs dated 21.12.2017]

4

Faceless Assessment



Chapter 4: Faceless Assessment

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Faceless Assessment, duly supported by Paperless and Contactless Customs clearance processes, is a critical reform. The pilot programme of Faceless Assessment was launched in Chennai on 14.08.2019 for primarily electrical machineries falling under Chapter 85 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975. This pilot programme was subsequently expanded to Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Delhi, Mundra and Visakhapatnam for goods primarily falling under Chapters 39, 84, 86 to 92, 72 to 83 and 50 to 71 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.
- 1.2 These pilot programmes helped test Faceless Assessment, first in the same Zone (e.g. imports at Chennai seaport and air-cargo were assessed by Customs officers in either location instead of only in the port/air-cargo of import) and then across Zones (e.g. imports at Chennai sea/air-cargo were assessed by Customs officers at Bengaluru air-cargo/ICD and vice versa).
- 1.3 The pilot programmes were followed by the launch of Phase I of Faceless Assessment on 05.06.2020, cutting across the Customs formations in Chennai and Bengaluru for articles primarily falling under the Chapters 84 and 85 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.
- 1.4 Phase II of Faceless Assessment, which was begun on 03.08.2020 at Customs formations in Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi, for goods falling under the Chapters 50 to 71, 84, 85 and 86 to 92 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 and at Customs formations in Mumbai, for goods falling under the Chapter 29 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.
- 1.5 Subsequently, the board rolled-out the Faceless Assessment at an All India level in all ports of import and for all imported goods by 31.10.2020.

[Refer Circular No. 40/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020]

2. Constitution of National Assessment Centers (NACs):

- 2.1 National Assessment Centres (NAC) are commodity wise specialized assessment centers and critical in the working of faceless assessment. At present there are 8 NACs and each NAC is convened by one Pr. Chief/Chief Commissioner. The NACs have been selected on the basis of volume of imports of a particular commodity done by a zone as compared to the All India imports and/or share of import of the particular commodity group(s) in their own Zones.
- 2.2 The important responsibilities of the NACs shall include the following:
 - i. Monitor the assessment practice for enhancing uniformity of classification, valuation, exemption benefit and compliance with import policy conditions.
 - ii. Assess the application of Compulsory Compliance Requirements (CCRs) and ensure uniform practices in accordance with the relevant statutes/Legal provisions.

- iii. Study audit objections and take corrective actions regarding assessments, wherever necessary and provide inputs to the concerned ports of import.
- iv. Analyse the RMS facilitated Bills of Entry pertaining to Chapters falling under their purview and advise the DGARM regarding possible interventions or review of risk parameters.
- v. Liaise with Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs at ports of import about interpretational issues pertaining to classification, valuation, scope of exemption notifications and trade policy conditions.
- vi. Interact with sectoral trade and industry for inputs, and on issues relating to assessment.
- vii. Function as a knowledge hub or repository for that particular Chapter(s);
- viii. Examine the orders/appellate orders in relation to assessment practices pertaining to goods assigned to each Faceless Assessment Group and provide inputs to the Commissionerates for uniformity of assessment orders before legal fora.
- ix. Constitute Working Groups for matters relating to:
 - a) Monitoring for timely assessment of Bills of Entry
 - b) Valuation and related issues
 - c) Classification and related issues
 - d) Restrictions and prohibitions and Co-ordination with PGAs
 - e) Communication and Outreach for departmental officers and trade
 - f) Any other matter relevant to timely and uniform assessment, as may be decided.

2.3 NACs are also required to co-ordinate with:

- i. Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) related to management of alerts undertaken by the NAC.
- ii. Directorate General of Valuation (DGoV) to enhance expertise related to sensitive commodities handled. DGoV shall also appoint nodal person for every NAC for better co-ordination.
- iii. Directorate General of Analytics and Risk Management (DGARM) to provide feedback and enhance risk assessment and accuracy of CCR Instructions.
- iv. National Academy of Customs and Indirect Taxes (NACIN) to hold capacity building sessions for departmental officers.
- v. Directorate General of Taxpayer Services (DGTS) to enhance outreach measures to the taxpayers by providing content, faculty for holding webinars, workshops etc.
- vi. Directorate General of Audit (DG Audit) and Audit Commissionerates related to audit objections and feedback.
- vii. Directorate General of Systems and Data Management (DG Systems) in regard to System issues and enhancements.
- viii. Any other formations in CBIC to fulfil the stated objectives.

[Refer Circular No. 40/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020]

3. Faceless Assessment Group:

- 3.1 A Faceless Assessment Group consists of Appraisers/Superintendents and Assistant Commissioners/Deputy Commissioners for verification of assessment of any bill of entry that is assigned to this group in the Customs Automated System. Customs officer located in a particular Customs station are empowered to do the assessment of imports taking place at any other port in the country.
- 3.2 To promote specialisation in assessment, the Board created separate FAGs for certain commodities, from 15.07.2021.
- 3.3 Re-organisation of FAGs - Optimisation of workload: To further optimise the performance, Board decided to re-organise the NACs as per Annexure I of the circular 13/2023-Customs dated 31.05.2023. Due care has been taken to balance the objectives of improved and faster assessments with the efficient deployment of available manpower. In particular, the endeavor has been to ensure that the reconfiguration of the FAGs does not lead to a disproportionate reduction/increase in the overall workload (i.e. BEs) presently being handled by the Zones. Since the parameters for setting up of NACs/ re-organisation are dynamic variables, Board carries out periodic reviews in consultation with NACs for further improvement in the performance of Faceless Assessment.
- 3.4 In alignment with the changes to NAC, Faceless Assessment Groups (FAG) for different commodities listed in the Column (2) of the table in annexure to circular 13/2023-Customs dated 31.05.2023, were identified based on the imported goods handled by these goods on basis of assessable value. This is done to further promote specialization. At present, the number of FAG's is 189 that are spread across 35 faceless assessment sites.

[Refer Instruction No. 09/2020 dated 05.06.2020 and Circular No.13/2023-Customs dated 31.05.2023]

4. Responsibilities of the Port of Import:

- 4.1 The ports of import would continue to have the Port Assessment Group(s) to cater to all other functions pertaining to the bills of entry which are not marked to the Faceless Assessment Group by the Customs Automated System, including the cases referred by the Faceless Assessment Group to the Customs station of import for any reason.
- 4.2 In addition, the port of import would continue to be responsible for handling the examination/inspection of goods and all other functions other than assessment. The request for waiver of fee for late filing of bill of entry, request in relation to Section 49 of the Customs Act, 1962, request for permission under Section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962 shall also be done by the designated proper officers of the port of import.

[Refer Instruction No. 09/2020 dated 05.06.2020]

5. Port Assessment Groups:

- 5.1 Port Assessment Groups (PAG) is the Appraising Group located in each port of import for verification of the assessment and other related functions as is the

normal practice. The PAGs also handle all functions pertaining to the bills of entry which are not marked to the Faceless Assessment Group by the Customs Automated System as well as the bills of entry that are referred by the Faceless Assessment Group to the port of import for any reason. The port of import is the Customs station of import of the goods where the importer has entered any bill of entry under Section 46 or Section 68 of Customs Act, 1962 for home consumption or warehousing.

- 5.2 In addition, the port of import is also responsible for handling the examination/inspection of goods and all other functions other than assessment. The request for waiver of fee for late filing of bill of entry, request in relation to Section 49 of the Customs Act, 1962, request for permission under Section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962 is also done by the designated proper officers of the port of import.

[Refer Instruction No. 09/2020 dated 05.06.2020]

6. Conference on Tariff & Other Customs Matters:

Joint Secretary, Customs, (CBIC) would be responsible for coordinating with the NACs in organizing a Conference on Tariff & Other Customs Matters every 6 months to review the functioning of the NACs and FAGs. The Conference would be chaired by Member (Customs).

[Refer Circular No. 40/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020]

7. Appeals filed in respect of Faceless Assessments

Board has issued Notification No.85/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 04.09.2020 by virtue of which the Commissioners of Customs (Appeals) are empowered take up appeals filed in respect of Faceless Assessments pertaining to imports made in their jurisdictions even though the Faceless Assessment officer may be located at any other Customs station. To illustrate, Commissioners of Customs (Appeals) at Bengaluru would decide appeals filed for imports at Bengaluru though the Faceless Assessment officer is located at any other port of the country, say Delhi.

[Refer Circular No. 40/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020]

8. Turant Suvidha Kendras and Grievance Redressal:

- 8.1 Turant Suvidha Kendras (TSK) are dedicated cells in every Customs port of import manned by Custom officers for facilitating the trade in completing various formalities relating to the Customs assessment locally at the port of import.
- 8.2 The Commissionerate having jurisdiction over port of import would set up a Turant Suvidha Kendra for facilitating Customs clearances. It merits mention that to begin with each Customs station would set up a Turant Suvidha Kendra and the Principal Commissioners/Commissioners have been advised to devise suitable procedures for numbering, handling & safekeep of documents handled in the TSK.

- 8.3 Some of the functions to be entrusted to the Turant Suvidha Kendra are:
- i. Accept Bond or Bank Guarantee;
 - ii. Carry out any other verifications that may be referred by Faceless Assessment Groups;
 - iii. Defacing of documents/ permits licences, wherever required;
 - iv. Debit of documents/ permits/ licences, wherever required; and
 - v. Other functions determined by Commissioner to facilitate trade
- 8.4 In addition to other functions, Turant Suvidha Kendra (TSK) at the Port of Import would act as Facilitation Helpdesk for any grievance related to clearances of the B/E filed in the port. The list of the TSKs and their email and telephone/ contact details are available at CBIC website may be kindly referred to. TSKs may also set up suitable online communication channels for quick redressal of grievances.
- 8.5 The Principal Commissioner/Commissioner at the Port of Import may also designate a nodal officer not below the level of Additional/Joint Commissioner who may serve as a single point interface for the escalation of the grievances in such port. The details of the nodal officer and his/her contact details would be made available through Public Notice and in CBIC website for escalation of any issues including the B/Es in the FA requiring urgent attention. The Principal Commissioner/Commissioner at the Port of Import may further make other necessary internal arrangements for co-ordination at the appropriate levels for early resolution.
- 8.6 To better address the grievances of trade relating largely to delays in assessment, DG Systems have operationalised an Anonymized Escalation Mechanism (AEM) on ICEGATE which empowers importers/Customs Brokers to directly register his/her requirement of expeditious clearance of a delayed Bill of Entry, which may be pending for assessment or examination. The features of the AEM includes:
- i. In case of delay of more than 1 working day, an importer/Customs Broker would be able to initiate AEM through ICEGATE or approach TSK for the same.
 - ii. The AEM will automatically route the grievance to the concerned FAG/Import Shed, with a notification to Additional/Joint Commissioners of Customs of the concerned FAG and Port of Import.
 - iii. The concerned FAG is required to dispose the grievance promptly and same shall be monitored by the concerned Additional/Joint Commissioner of Customs of the concerned FAG/Import Shed.
 - iv. The status of the disposal would be updated on the dashboard of ICEGATE, TSK, FAG and to the concerned officers.

[Refer Instruction No. 09/2020 dated 05.06.2020, Circulars No. 40/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020, No. 45/2020-Customs dated 12.10.2020 and No. 14/2021-Customs dated 07.07.2021]

9. Enhancement of Facilitation Levels:

Various initiatives have been taken to leverage technology as well as simplify extant procedures. The use of machine learning and the other state of art technologies now enables RMS to more precisely target the risky consignments thereby enabling more focused attention on lesser number of Bills of Entry for assessment by the FAGs. Thus, Board w.e.f. 15.07.2021 enhanced the facilitation level across all Customs stations to 90% relating to RMD. The element of randomness in interdiction of any Bill of Entry is retained by RMS. This measure was taken to enable faster clearance of non-risky imports with enhanced focus on risky imports, so that revenue remains safeguarded.

[Refer Circular No.14/2021-Customs dated 07.07.2021]

10. Enhancing Direct Port Delivery (DPD):

Circular No.29/2019-Customs dated 05.09.2019 stipulates the eligibility criteria for availment of DPD by the importers. Since then, a number of measures including advance filing of Bill of Entry have led to quicker turn-around time for the import cargo. The present decision to enhance the facilitation levels is also a step in this direction. However, while facilitation levels are going up, the DPD levels are not rising commensurately. This is primarily because the present policy is to have an entity based DPD while facilitation levels are linked primarily to Bills of Entry.

Accordingly, in order to enhance DPD for faster Customs clearances as well as de-congestion of ports, Board has decided to shift from entity based DPD to a Bill of Entry based DPD. In short, in partial amendment to the said circular, Board has decided that, as a general principle, all the advance Bills of Entry which are fully facilitated (do not require assessment &/or examination) would be granted the facility of DPD.

It is clarified that, this facility is over and above the present system of entity based DPD extended to AEO clients. However, the entity whose Bill of Entry has been facilitated for DPD would be required to adhere to the requirements of the ports/terminals/custodians for taking physical delivery of the container. Further, to optimise the ground handling by the ports/terminals/custodians, the ICEGATE shall modify the electronic message being sent to the ports/terminals/custodians on arrival of the cargo, to additionally flag the containers granted (or ready for) DPD along with IEC details. The flag would also indicate the requirement of scanning of specific containers, wherever applicable. This would be done at the stage of Entry Inwards to facilitate efficient planning in stacking and movement of these containers and thus quicken their turn-around time. Similar message would be sent to the importer/Customs Broker.

[Refer Circular No.14/2021-Customs dated 07.07.2021]

11. Procedure for Verification of Assessment of Bill of Entry by Faceless Assessment Group:

I. Procedure to be adopted in normal course:

- i. **Presentation of BE:** The importer shall present bill of entry on the Customs Automated System (i.e., ICEGATE portal) electronically, as per Section 46 of

the Customs Act, 1962 and upload supporting documents such as Invoice, Packing List, Bill of Lading, as usual in all the cases, and License/Authorisation/Permission, BIS or other registrations, Scrips, Equipment Type Approval, Certificate of Origin, Certificate for claiming duty exemption etc., if required for the consignment, on e-Sanchit.

- ii. **Description of Goods:** As at present, the selection of a bill of entry for verification of self-assessment shall primarily be on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria. The importers/Customs Brokers shall give the complete description of the imported goods while filing the Bill of Entry, in the first instance. In this context, the attention of the importers/Customs Brokers may be drawn to the following fields that are available in the electronic Bill of Entry format:
 - **Generic Description:** The description in generic text relevant to text provided in the duty exemption notification that is claimed/Anti-Dumping (ADD)/IGST levy, as applicable.
 - **Specific Description:** The description specific to the product and as given in the invoice, trade name or specific product details to be provided (Brand name or model details may be avoided-same needs to be provided separately).
 - **Model and Brand Name:** Model details and Brand Name may be provided and if the imported goods are unbranded, the text “UNBRANDED” may be used.
 - **Supplier and Manufacturer Details :** In cases where duty applicability is based on manufacturers such as Anti-Dumping Duty (ADD), Safeguard Duty (SD) etc, the details of manufacturer may be provided. In case of products attracting ADD, these details would be required to be mandatorily provided.
 - **Item Qualifiers:** Some imported items may have specific distinguishing characteristics or have industry specific names (e.g. scientific names, IUPAC names etc.). These item names or qualifiers may be declared, as applicable. The illustrative list of such item qualifiers are at Annexure A. DG Systems, CBIC would shortly issue a detailed advisory for guidance of the trade, in this regard.
 - **Previous Bills of Entry:** The Bill(s) of Entry details of previous import may be mentioned, if available.

- iii. **Execution of Continuity Bond:** In cases, where the importer has prior knowledge that there would be a requirement of execution of Bond or Bank guarantee for the assessment of the said bill of entry, such as in the case of a warehouse bill of entry or where the importer has sought provisional assessment or where a claim to any concessional rate of duty or exemption under duty remission/exemption schemes, is subject to filing of Bond/ Bank Guarantee, they should be encouraged to opt for Continuity Bond option, to avoid fresh registration of Bonds every time during filing of bill of entry.

- iv. **Assessment of Bill of Entry:** The bill of entry would be assigned to an officer of the concerned Faceless Assessment Group for verification of assessment

purposes by the Customs Automated System. For verification of assessment of the bill of entry, the Faceless Assessment Group may decide to:

- a) return the bill of entry to the importer for payment of duty after verification on the basis of the declaration made and documents available in e-Sanchit; or
- b) seek additional information or documents for proceeding with the verification; and/or
- c) get examination and/or testing of goods carried out, for the determination of duty liability and/or for ensuring the compliance of restriction and prohibition;

v. **Enhancement in the monetary limit for assessment by the Appraising Officers:** Board vide Circular 55/2020 dated 17.12.2020 decided to enhance the monetary limit of assessment of Bills of Entry by the Appraising Officers. All Bills of Entry with an assessable value of up to Rupees 5 lakh shall be accordingly finally assessed only by the Appraising Officers, w.e.f 21.12.2020. However, the re-assessments of Bills of Entry would continue to be done with the approval of the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, as is the present practice. In order to assess the impact of this change, the Board has also decided that 10% of the Bills of Entry that are now entrusted to the Appraising Officers would be subjected to transactional PCA.

vi. **Assessments in respect of Liquid Bulk Cargo:**

The Board has also received representations in respect of delays in the assessment of liquid bulk cargo. One common refrain of the trade here is the unnecessary resort to the First Check System of assessment, in such cases. With respect to import of `liquid bulk cargo`, it is stated that the assessments are to be carried out on a provisional basis. This is primarily on account of the ascertainment of actual imported quantity which is done subsequently. Also, at times, there may be a doubt with respect to the composition, product specification etc. Both these aspects do not warrant a First Check system of assessment. The respective NACs assessing such consignments are advised to ensure that all such consignments are subjected to the Second Check system of assessment, with duty being assessed on a provisional basis.

Moreover, the concerned officers in the FAGs and the respective NAC Commissioners may be suitably sensitized to follow Board's Circulars No. 34/2016-Cus, dated 26.07.2016 and No. 38/2016-Cus, dated 22.08.2016, while carrying out such assessments. Board has also observed that suitable templates in the form of Public Notices, issued by major Customs Houses are available in the public domain, so as to serve as a ready reckoner and guidance tool for the Assessing Officers, for assessment of liquid bulk cargo. The same maybe incorporated as standard practice by the concerned NACs, with a view to removing any ambiguity in the process to be followed.

- vii. **Assessment during holidays:** There may be possible delays in assessment when Bills of Entry (B/E) are assigned to FAGs in locations that are on an official holiday or when assessment is to be done on a closed holiday (say, Sunday). Further, time sensitive goods such as life-saving drugs or imports by security/defence and other Government agencies would require prompt Customs clearance at all times including outside the normal office hours. Hence, all Saturdays (except second Saturday) have been designated as working day for all the faceless assessment groups across the country. The number of locations, officers and their working timings can be fixed keeping in mind the overall objectives.
- viii. **Expediting assessment process:** Board observes that, at present, the working hours of the FAGS across the country are not uniform. Thus, there is uneven output such that some officers of a FAG who begin work earlier clear more than the targeted Bills of Entry while others whose working hours begin later do not get sufficient number of Bills of Entry. Moreover, the time take for the 'first decision' by the Appraising Officers and Deputy/Assistant Commissioners of Customs is also much more than necessary resulting in lower than optimum output. Accordingly, with a view to facilitating faster decisions and, in turn, faster verification of self-assessments as well as to promote operationalize and enhance uniformity in assessment, the assessment procedure, shall be adhered to:
- The working hours of all FAGs shall be uniform from 10 AM till 8 PM on any working day. It is clarified that within these uniform working hours, Chief Commissioners of the NACs shall ensure that no assessing officer is required to work for more than the working hours that are prescribed, as per the existing guidelines of the Government of India. However, considering the nature of Customs functioning, Chief Commissioners of the NACs shall ensure adequate number of assessing officers are available during the holidays as per the fixed roster. Also, in the event of administrative exigencies or local circumstances that may emanate from time to time, the jurisdictional Pr. Commissioner/ Commissioner may permit the officers to work beyond the prescribed time interval of 10 AM to 8 PM by way of issue of local instructions.
 - NACs and jurisdictional Pr. Commissioners/Commissioners of Customs shall administratively monitor that FAGs communicate the 'first decision' on the Bill of Entry within 3 working hours after its allocation. The first decision could be:
 - a) acceptance of the self-assessment,
 - b) query to the importer or
 - c) a First Check, as may be warranted.
 - Jurisdictional Pr. Chief/ Chief Commissioners of Customs shall ensure as far as possible that one Appraising Officer is given responsibility of not more than 2 (two) FAGs. The re-organisation within the zones may be

undertaken such that assessing officers at the ports with the expertise of the items under a FAG are allotted to that FAG.

- The total number of queries which can be raised by an Appraising Officer in respect of a Bill of Entry would now be restricted to 3 (three). Further, such queries can now be raised without seeking approval of the Addl./Joint Commissioner of Customs.
 - In this regard, considering this limit to the number of queries, Board desires that, Appraising Officer raises query in a clear and holistic manner giving reference to supporting details/documents with respect to Valuation/Classification etc., so that the importer does not have any doubt and is in a position to reply categorically for early completion of verification.
 - The option to `set-aside` 5 (five) Bills of Entry, which is already available with the Appraiser/Superintendent would henceforth not require an approval of the Deputy/Assistant Commissioners of Customs. It is expected that the Appraiser/Superintendent would utilize the facility to set aside certain BEs (upto the limit) to address some genuine issues.
- ix. Monitoring clearance of time-sensitive cargo: The Port of Import should monitor clearance of time-sensitive/urgent consignments such as lifesaving drugs, security/defence related consignments etc. imported by Government and its agencies/PSUs etc. so that these are not delayed. When required, the Port of Import should coordinate their early assessment with NAC concerned and then grant quick clearance. The trade may also be advised to indicate end use of such consignments in the B/E for easier identification of such consignments. DG Systems will facilitate this by enabling a dashboard alerting the officers if such consignments are pending beyond 4 hours. This dashboard would be accessible to both PAG and FAG.
- DG Systems has enabled dashboards for monitoring of pending FAG B/E, their disposal, and other relevant reports. These dashboards are required to be pro-actively utilised by the NAC/PAG and Principal Commissioners/Commissioners in charge of the Port of Import.

The NAC Commissioners shall ensure that the B/Es are assessed and disposed promptly and monitor this via the dashboard for a particular Appraising Group. Likewise, the Principal Commissioner/ Commissioner in charge of the Port of Import shall monitor the disposal of the B/E pending with the PAG and at the stage of examination for their timely disposal.

When required, the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner in charge of the Port of Import shall co-ordinate with the NAC Commissioners for prompt disposal of pending B/Es pertaining to his/her Port of Import.

One of the five Working Groups established under the NACs is responsible for timely assessments including resolving related IT issues. In the event of increase in the pendency for a particular NAC/FAG, the NAC Commissioners heading this Working Group shall take urgent measures for co-ordination with

other NAC Commissioners/DG Systems for early disposal and/or resolution of the issues.

- x. **Submission of original copy of Certificate of Origin:** The Board has been receiving feedback that there is a need for clarity with respect to requirement of submission of original hard copy of a Certificate of Origin (COO) issued under various Free Trade Agreements. As seen in para 4 of Circular No.42/2019-Customs, dated 29.11.2019, which states that “the field offices must ensure that no physical copy of any supporting document is submitted and every relevant document is submitted only electronically via e-sanchit either by the beneficiary or by the Participating Government Agency”. Likewise, para 3.1 of Circular No.32/2020-Customs, dated 06.07.2020 states: “(i) The document verification by Customs officers at Assessment and Customs Compliance Verification (CCV) stages would normally be based on the documents uploaded in the e-Sanchit, not requiring physical submission of documents. However, if in any exceptional situation the physical submission of documents is required by Customs, for defacement or validation, such submission would be made only at the TSKs.
- (i) Documents requiring verification during examination for validation with goods would continue to be done during examination, as at present.
 - (ii) One or more TSKs may be set up for the convenience of the trade.
 - (iii) Suitable procedures are to be devised for handling & safe keeping of the documents produced at TSKs. Ideally these documents should also be kept in electronic form.”
- xi. **Uploading of Documents in e-Sanchit:** Where the Faceless Assessment Group is of the opinion that additional information or documents are required for proceeding with the verification of assessment, the Faceless Assessment Group shall raise query electronically for additional information or seek additional documents, preferably in a consolidated manner, through ICEGATE portal. The importer shall respond to the query electronically and/or provide additional documents through e-Sanchit. After scrutinizing the same, the Faceless Assessment Group shall:
- a) Return the bill of entry to the importer for payment of duty after verification; or
 - b) Not agree with the self-assessment and re-assess the bill of entry. In this case, if the importer does not agree with the re-assessment, the Faceless Assessment Group shall issue a speaking order, as prescribed in Section 17(5) of the Customs Act, 1962 following the procedure referred to in paragraph 5.4 of this instruction.

Since, documents are essential for carrying out verification of self-assessment by the FAG and their non-submission at the stage of filing the Bill of Entry delays the verification/assessment process. Therefore, these supporting documents are mandatorily required to be uploaded in e-Sanchit by the

importers/Customs Brokers, in such situations. The illustrative list of the required documents along with their document code and description is at Annexure B of Circular 55/2020-Customs 17.12.2020.

- xii. **Raising of Queries by FAG Officers:** There is a need to ensure that queries are minimized to the extent absolutely necessary for carrying out the assessment. In this regard the NACs have to get the analysis done in respect of the queries being raised on commodities pertaining to Chapters/Articles under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 and while weeding out avoidable queries, to the extent possible standardize the queries across Customs formations. This would also pave the path for incorporating these standard queries in the CCR instructions centrally inserted by RMD. Based on this exercise, the NACs are also requested to have Public Notices/Trade Notices issued by Jurisdictional Principal Commissioners/Commissioners to apprise the trade about the details/information needed for the assessment, thereby obviating the need to raise queries and resultantly reduce the time for clearance. A copy of the Public Notices/Trade Notices should be sent to Joint Secretary, Customs, CBIC.
- (i) Queries should not be raised in piecemeal manner and to the extent possible multiple and repeat queries are to be avoided. The jurisdictional Principal Commissioners/Commissioners shall regularly monitor and review the queries to ensure this. In this regard reference may also be made to Circular No. 22/2015-Customs, dated 03.09.2015 directing that genuine clarifications sought by officers from importers/exporters are to be raised at one go and not in a piecemeal manner.
 - (ii) Trade needs to be sensitized/informed to/of the advantages of providing at the first instance only, the complete details and description of the commodity, brand name, model and any other specifications essential for the assessment. Further, trade may be asked to upload at the first instance only, supporting documents like product/technical literature and mandatory documents, certificates, which would help avoid queries and delays.
 - (iii) At times, the documents are uploaded on e-Sanchit but are not linked to B/E, leading to a situation where Appraising/Assessing officer is unable to view the document and is thus compelled to raise a query. The trade needs to be advised to avoid such situation by linking every uploaded document to the relevant B/E.
 - (iv) Some instances have been noticed, where confirmation of compliance to prohibitions and restrictions are being sought during assessment including submission of certain certificates, details etc. leading to delay in the assessment. It is clarified that the verification of statutory compliances is to be checked only during Customs Compliance Verification (CCV) stage at the Port of Import.

- (v) While Appraising/Assessment officer can make a suitable remark in the system for such verification by the Port of Import, the B/E shall not be kept pending for assessment. The Working Group on Prohibitions/Restrictions are advised to identify the item wise CCV requirements for uniformity in the FAG and also communicate the same to RMCC for their central enforcement. Once this is done, the Appraising/Assessment officer would no longer need to insert a remark to this effect in the system.
- xiii. **First Checks:** The Faceless Assessment Group may order for first check examination or testing of the goods with specific directions or testing parameters to the shed officers at the port of import. The responsibility for sending the samples to the appropriate laboratory with the requisite test memo, if ordered by Faceless Assessment Group would lie with the shed officers at the port of import.

Upon review of the practice of the FAG officers resorting to First Check, it is clear that this practice needs to be streamlined both for purposes of uniformity across the country and different FAGs and also to address associated delays in assessment. Board has thus identified the following imports/situations where First Check (this term as well as the term Second Check is being used as it is well known in the field and trade) shall ordinarily be resorted to by the FAG officers for carrying out assessment:

- (a) Old and used machinery/capital goods provided the Inspection/Appraisal report from the country of export is not available in the format prescribed or is not produced at all or is insufficient as per Circular No.07/2020-Customs, dated 05.02.2020.
- (b) Old and used goods where the examination is essential to determine valuation, classification, and other parameters. This does not include the cases covered under 2nd proviso to Section 46(1) of the Customs Act, 1962.
- (c) Articles of jewellery, precious metals, imitation jewellery where valuation must be ascertained by a jewellery expert.
- (d) Cases of re-import of goods under various exemption notification, which requires establishment of identity to the satisfaction of Deputy Commissioner/Assistant Commissioner of Customs.

Further, the NAC must review and streamline the examination orders/instructions in cases pertaining to para 2.3 (i) (a) to (d) above, to avoid divergent practices. NACs shall send the compilation of such streamlined orders/instructions to Joint Secretary (Customs) and the same shall be forwarded to RMCC for incorporating the same as a part of RMS Instructions.

On receipt of such compilation, RMCC in co-ordination with DG Systems shall effect changes in the system such that, those cases which are determined for verification under First Check are routed directly to the shed with RMS generated examination orders thus obviating the requirement of a FAG officer

at this initial juncture in the flow of B/E. Based on the examination report, the B/E would be assigned to FAG for completion of the assessment.

All other instances, including the FOC (Free of Charge) and temporary import consignments, must ordinarily be resorted to only Second Check. However, in the exceptional instance when the FAG has genuine reasons to believe that a First Check examination report is required for completion of assessment i.e., determination of valuation, classification, rate of duty, and other parameters relevant for determination of Customs duty, the same may be ordered only with the approval of Joint Commissioner/Additional Commissioner in the Customs Automated System. It is clarified that this would include the cases where importer himself requests for First Check.

NAC on fortnightly basis has to review First Checks ordered with the approval of Joint Commissioner/Additional Commissioner to assess if the same can either be avoided altogether or made a part of the standard RMS Examination Order generated by RMCC or converted to Second Check. These instances would be required to be informed to Joint Secretary (Customs), CBIC for further action.

Where an importer requests First Check on a regular basis, the FAG officers and the NAC must take due care that this request is genuine and is not being routinely used to avoid self-assessment.

- xiv. **Second Check Examination:** The Faceless Assessment Group may, whether in course of accepting the self- assessment or re-assessing the bill of entry, order for second check examination of the goods including the directions to the shed officers at the port of import to verify original documents, deface documents, take custody of the document, NOC from PGAs, verification of Country of Origin Certificate etc. Further, it is clarified that, wherever situation warrants that the authenticity of any document submitted through e-Sanchit has to be verified through any external agency, such communication shall be made by the port of import.
- i. Where the Faceless Assessment Group is of the opinion that examination and/or testing of goods is required for proper verification of the assessment, based on own assessment or on the request from importer:
- xv. **Role of RMCC/LRM in Facilitation:** Since, examination orders given by different officers in the same situation are at variance or not clear. It is also seen that at time these examination orders merely duplicate the instruction given by RMCC. The FAG officers shall not duplicate the RMCC instructions, rather only supplement the same to provide additional directions based on local inputs. The Examination orders would be made available shortly through the ICETAB, obviating the need for printing in the paper. Further, the Principal Commissioner/ Commissioner may review the additional directions

supplemented by the FAG officers every fortnight, for standardisation across NACs.

RMCC shall also work towards generation of the centralised examination orders based on various parameters and rollout the same in phases to enhance uniformity. RMCC and the NACs shall co-ordinate for the implementation of the same.

To bring uniformity in LRM instructions across the country, to the extent possible, NACs may review the local risk targets related to assessment. Those targets that merit PAN India applicability would be referred to RMCC for examination and further necessary action. The balance targets would be either weeded out if found redundant or continue, if found otherwise. However, all local alerts shall be reviewed periodically and continued, only if found absolutely necessary. LRM is also advised to use ICES to insert general instructions and Alerts rather than through the RMS.

- xvi. **Examination Report:** The shed officers/Centralised Cell, as the case may be at the port of import would feed the examination and/or the test report, when it is received from the laboratory, in the system and refer the bill of entry back to Faceless Assessment Group, and thereupon, Faceless Assessment Group shall follow the procedure as laid down in paragraph (IV) to (VI) of 5.3.1, as applicable.
- xvii. **Provisional Assessment:** If the Faceless Assessment Group concludes that the prior testing of goods is going to take considerable time and the bill of entry should be assessed provisionally, they may refer the bill of entry to the PAG at the port of import, following the procedure stipulated for the same clearly specifying the reasons thereof. In such cases, the bill of entry would be assessed by PAG at the port of import, after the receipt of the examination/test report.
- xviii. **Action under Section 124:** If the imported goods are found to be subject to some restriction or prohibition or mis-declared, on the basis of said test and/or examination report fed by the shed officers at the port of import, the Faceless Assessment Group shall refer the bill of entry to PAG at the port of import for action including action under Section 124 of the Customs Act, 1962 or any time after the bill of entry is returned from Faceless Assessment Groups to the port of import, if the import of goods are found to be subject to some restriction or prohibition or mis-declared, PAG may carry out re-assessment and initiate action as prescribed under section 124 of the Customs Act, 1962, if required.
- xix. **Amendment u/s 149 and Re-assessment of B/E:**
Several representations have been received regarding dealing with amendments under section 149 of Customs Act, 1962 and consequent

reassessment of B/E, based on the request of the importers to change the elements of assessment. This is typically the case when the importer claims that he has forgotten to claim an exemption or is in possession of some document that requires an element such as freight etc. to be changed. The various scenarios and the prescribed routes for carrying out reassessment are detailed at SI No. 2.5 of Circular 45/2020 dated 12.10.2020.

The Board emphasizes that the process of re-assessment must be in accordance with the provisions of Sub Sections (4) and (5) of Section 17 of Customs Act, 1962. In order to lend clarity and streamline this process, the procedure to be adopted by the FAGs for carrying out re-assessment, wherever required is as follows:

- (i) During verification of the assessment, if there are reasons to believe that the self-assessment is not done correctly, or additional details are required to complete the verification, necessary clarifications should be sought from the importer/Customs Broker through the query module of ICES.
 - (ii) While raising the query, all the aspects of additional information required for finalization should be covered and clearly worded. Also, as far as possible, multiple queries need to be avoided and all the information may be solicited in one-go and not in a piece-meal manner.
 - (iii) Pr. Commissioners / Commissioners across the NACs may ensure that minimal queries are raised by the concerned FAGs and may devise their own mechanism to regularly monitor the same, in a manner that needless and repeated queries, which have the effect of delaying assessments, are avoided.
 - (iv) Based on the reply to the query, the FAG may either accept the self-assessment or proceed to re-assess the Bill of Entry.
 - (v) While re-assessing the Bill of Entry, it must be ensured that the importer is given an opportunity to justify the self-assessment either in writing or in person through Video Conferencing. The importer, can, if he so desires, waive off this requirement in writing. No re-assessment, which would lead to change in classification, valuation and/or applicability of notification etc, should be carried out, unless an opportunity is provided to the importer for presenting his/her viewpoint.
 - (vi) Where the assessing officer re-assesses the Bill of Entry and where the importer does not accept the change in assessment in writing, through the query module in ICES, the proper officer shall mandatorily issue a speaking order without delay and in accordance with Sub-Section (5) of Section 17 of Customs Act, 1962.
- xx. **Speaking Order:** For any re-assessment done by the Faceless Assessment Group, which is at variance with the self-assessment done by the importer and in cases other than those where the importer confirms his acceptance of the said re-assessment electronically in reply to the query raised by the assessing officer, the Faceless Assessment Groups shall pass a speaking order on the

re-assessment, within fifteen days from the date of re-assessment of the bill of entry, as prescribed in section 17(5).

The Faceless Assessment Groups shall provide an opportunity to be heard to the importer, in accordance with the principles of natural justice, before proceeding with the re-assessment of the bill of entry. In the event a personal hearing is sought by the importer, the same can be conducted through video conferencing or other reliable technological means at the option of the importer. In this regard, the Board's guidelines vide F.No. 390/Misc/3/2019-JC dated 27th April 2020 may also be referred to.

- xxi. **Appellate Proceedings:** Any appeal against any speaking order on re-assessment passed by Faceless Assessment Groups shall lie before the Commissioner (Appeals) as per Notification No.51/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 05.06.2020. Thus, an appeal against an order passed by the proper officer of the Faceless Assessment Group as per Section 17(5) and/or Section 18, would lie with the Commissioner of Customs (Appeals) having jurisdiction over the port of import.
- xxii. **Review Proceedings:** The review of any speaking order on re-assessment passed by a proper officer of Faceless Assessment Groups, under sub-section (2) of Section 129D of the Customs Act, 1962, shall lie with the reviewing authority having administrative control over the that proper officer of the Faceless Assessment Group.
- xxiii. **Demands under Section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962:** Issuing of demands under Section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962, adjudication thereof and handling of audit objections shall be done by the officers of the port of import. In matters where clarifications and inputs are required to be given by the Faceless Assessment Groups to port of import in such matter, the nodal Commissionerates as in para 4 above shall co-ordinate with the ports of import.
- xxiv. **Provisional Assessment**
 - i. If the requisite approval for provisional assessment as per the Customs Act, 1962 and departmental guidelines has already been obtained, the Faceless Assessment Group may assess the bill of entry provisionally. The bond and bank guarantee for the same are to be registered with the Turant Suvidha Kendra at the port of import, as referred to in paragraph 5.2.2 of this instruction.
 - ii. If the Faceless Assessment Group concludes that the prior testing of goods is going to take considerable time and the bill of entry should be assessed provisionally, they may refer the bill of entry to the PAG at the port of import, following the procedure stipulated in 5.3.2 and clearly

specifying the reasons thereof. In such cases, the bill of entry would be assessed by PAG at the port of import, after the receipt of the examination/test report.

- iii. After receipt of the required test reports etc from the shed officers at the port of import, the finalisation of provisional assessment shall be done by the officers of PAG of the port of import.

xxv. **Amendment of Bills of Entry**

- i. Directorate General of Systems has enabled a facility whereby requests for amendments can be made online via ICEGATE Portal.
- ii. Once the amendments are filed online, System would queue them before the proper officer of the Faceless Assessment Group if the bill of entry is pending for verification. In all other cases, the request would be queued to the proper officer of the Port Assessment Group.
- iii. The facility of online levy of Amendment fees as per Levy of Fees (Customs Documents) Regulations, 1970 has also been enabled. The applicable fee would be included in the duty challan for payment.

xxvi. **Storage of goods u/s 49:** It is clarified that, irrespective of pending verification at Faceless assessment Group, if the importer requests for storage of the imported goods in warehouse pending clearance under Section 49 of the Customs Act, 1962, such request shall be processed by officers of the port of import promptly.

xxvii. **Adherence to CCR of RMS:** The shed officers at the port of import would carry out the necessary verification or examination or other tasks, as required by the Faceless Assessment Groups or required as per Compulsory Compliance Requirements of the Risk Management System.

II. **Procedure to be Adopted by Faceless Assessment Groups in Exceptional Circumstances.**

In certain exceptional circumstances (listed below) the proper officer of the Faceless Assessment Groups may, with the approval of a senior officer not below the rank of Joint Commissioner/Additional Commissioner, transfer the bill of entry using the Customs Automated System to PAG at the port of import for assessment, without completion of verification of assessment.

The Faceless Assessment Groups may also transfer a bill of entry to the PAG in any other exceptional circumstances, but in this case, this would be done after due approval from the Commissioner supervising the proper officer.

(a) Where the Faceless Assessment Groups has reasons to believe that the imported goods may be liable for confiscation as per the provisions of Section 111 of the Customs Act, 1962. In such circumstance, the reasons for such a

transfer shall be duly recorded in the Customs Automated System. However, such cases may be referred to only in genuinely exceptional circumstances.

(b) In respect of `related party` transactions warranting investigation by SVB (other than cases that are already covered by an earlier order of the SVB such as in the case of continuing imports which have earlier been taken up for investigation by the SVB). In this case the port of import would refer the case to its jurisdictional Special Valuation Branch (SVB) for further investigation.

(c) Even after various several electronic query-based interactions with importer, the Faceless Assessment Groups is not able to complete the verification for want of additional documents, test reports etc.

III. Procedure to be Adopted by Port of Import in Exceptional Circumstances

Notwithstanding anything mentioned above, the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs at port of import may, at any stage pending at Faceless Assessment Groups, direct the PAG to pull the bill of entry from Faceless Assessment to the PAG in the following situations:

- a) Where specific alert or intelligence is available pertaining to the said bill of entry or class of bill of entry; and
- b) Where the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs has ordered to do so for the reasons to be recorded in writing.

12. Automated generation of examination orders: In order to enhance uniformity and streamline the examination orders, the Board introduced RMS generated uniform examination orders at all Customs stations across the country. Further, the imports of items which ordinarily warrant First Check as per para 2.3 of Circular No.45/2020-Customs dated 12.10.2020 are directly routed to the shed for First Check examination. Such First Check Bills of Entry will now be referred to the FAG for assessment only after a First Check examination report has been uploaded by the Shed Officers in the Customs system.

13. Standard Examination Orders through RMS

Vide Para 2.3 (ii) of Circular No. 45/2020-Customs dated 12th October 2020, had requested the National Assessment Centres (NACs) to review the examination orders given by different FAG officers in the same situation and streamline and standardize them, so as to avoid needless variations in practice and thereby obviate delays.

Based on the inputs by NAC, National Customs Targeting Centre (NCTC) (former RMCC) has developed system generated centralized examination orders for Bills of Entry (BE), in coordination with DG Systems and National Assessment Centers (NACs), based on various parameters, to enhance the uniformity in examination, and lower the time taken in the process as well as reduce associated costs.

- i. To harmonise the examination orders across FAGs, the Board implemented system-generated centralized examination orders in a

- phased manner, in case of risk-based selection for examination after assessment.
- ii. To that end, NCTC, in consultation with DG Systems and the respective NACs, developed a system wherein standardized examination orders are centrally generated by RMS and populated on the corresponding Bill of Entry, based on a host of risk parameters concerning goods, entities, and countries, relating to that bill.
 - iii. The standardized examination orders thus generated by RMS are visible to Assessing Officers during the assessment. While these RMS-generated standardised examination orders are the new norm, the Assessing officer have the option of adding any additional examination instruction/order to the pre-populated RMS-generated examination order, if necessary.
 - iv. According to the new procedure, after processing BE data, RMS generates a consolidated examination order for each selected BE based on potential risks. An RMS-generated examination order includes the following main points: (i) % of containers to be examined, (ii) selected area/part (s) in a given container and % of goods in the selected area/part (s) to be examined, (iii) Item level instructions and (iv) additional examination instruction, if any.

Standardized Examination Order Format:

While the BE is selected for examination depending on risk associated with various items in a BE, the examination depends on the nature of the cargo and mode of packing. Hence, some standardization is adopted for different situations.

FCL Cargo:

For FCL cargo, selection for the examination is at two levels. First, the selection of the containers and then the area/part selected within those selected containers. For the sake of uniformity, the container has been divided into five areas/parts, for an easy identification and selection of areas for examination, as depicted below:

Front of Container	1	2	3	4	5	Back of container	Front of container
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One area/part 1 (i.e. front) and other area/part (s) (i.e., 2,3,4 & 5), as may be applicable in each case based on potential risks, is selected randomly by system. A specified % examination, based on potential risks, is required to be done from these two or more areas/parts of the container. Only in the case of 100 % examination order, the whole container is examined.

To illustrate, a typical system-generated examination order that is displayed on BE is as below:

“Check Seal No. of all containers and cut the seal of selected containers in your presence. Examine 10 % of the respective areas/parts indicated in respect of each selected container and follow CCRs, where necessary (other than ISO Liquid/Gas container and Dangerous cargo). Verify declared description, quantity and specification. Selected Container: KOCU4150113-Selected Area: 1 & 4”

In this example, one container i.e. KOCU4150113 has been selected for examination; two areas/parts within this container (i.e. 1 and 4) have been selected for 10% examination by shed/examining officers in each of the two areas/parts.

For LCL cargo bulk cargo, and shipments through air and land, where container number is not available, only the percentage of goods to be examined is communicated to shed/examining officers for physical examination, along with item specific examination order.

Furthermore, a container selected for scanning through CSM (Container Scanning Module) and marked suspicious by the Container Scanning Division (CSD) has a separate related examination order as per the extant practice/order of the local customs station. CSM-related examination order will complement the RMS generated examination order for a consignment.

Bill of Entry flow :

The flow of a Bill of Entry, where examination is required, and the associated RMS-generated examination order in different scenarios are outlined below, in case of selection of a BE for second check examination :

- a. In case of a ‘Assessment and Examination’ - an examination order is generated by RMS but the Bill of Entry is routed to the shed through an FAG. While the assessing officer has the flexibility to add any other relevant examination order/instruction, any such additional examination instructions are given only in exceptional cases when deemed necessary, with the approval of the respective DC/AC.
- b. In case of a ‘Examination only’ - the Bill of Entry is directly sent to a shed/examining officer for necessary examination as per RMS-generated examination order.
- c. In case of a ‘Assessment only’ - the assessing officer has the possibility to give an examination order only in exceptional cases, when deemed necessary, with the approval of the AC/DC.

Manner of implementation by field officers:

The officers in the field formations have been directed to follow the below instructions in respect of examination of goods:

- i. FAG officers will give any additional examination order/instruction, if necessary, to complement the RMS generated examination order, only in

- exceptional cases. As this model will be implemented in a phased manner, FAG officers will need to see whether there is already an RMS-generated examination order for a Bill of Entry and proceed accordingly.
- ii. Shed/examining officers will strictly follow the RMS-generated examination orders and physically examine the selected containers and the relevant selected areas/parts as specified in the examination order. Additionally, Shed/examining officers may also examine any other goods or area/part of the container, as may be necessary, as per other examination orders/instructions given by the FAG officer and/or CSD officer or for the verification of CCRs, in appropriate cases or based on the nature, package and size of cargo.
 - iii. Any deviation from RMS-generated examination orders will require the prior approval of the Joint Commissioner/Additional Commissioner designated by the Commissioner concerned, except for the situations described herein above, and such deviation will have to be recorded in the examination report fed by the examining officers in the System. The Commissioners have to regularly monitor such cases at their level, so as to ensure that such deviations are minimal and justified in their nature.

The above procedure was implemented for Second Check Bill of Entry in a phased manner, starting with one group of commodities and thereafter extended to all other goods incrementally, by adopting a modular approach. Accordingly, the above procedure came into effect for goods covered under Assessment Group 4 in all the Customs Stations from the 5th of September, 2022.

[Refer Circular No. 16/2022 – Customs dated 29.08.2022]

Extension of Standard Examination Orders through RMS

To harmonize the examination orders across FAGs, the Board decided to implement system-generated centralized examination orders in a phased manner. The Phase 1 referred to case of risk-based selection for examination after assessment (second check examination). Initially, in Part 1 of this phase, the goods under Assessment Group 4 in all Customs Stations were covered. Based on the feedback received, from the National Customs Targeting Centre (NCTC), regarding the readiness for further rollout of the implementation of Standard Examination Orders through the Risk Management System, the Board decided that, the goods under Assessment Group 5 (Chapter 84) shall also be covered. Subsequently, the Board vide Circular No. 02/2023-Customs dated 11.01.2023 implemented the SEOs through the RMS across all other assessment groups.

[Refer Circular No. 23/2022-Customs dated 03.11.2022 and Circular No. 02/2023-Customs dated 11.01.2023]

List of circulars consolidated in this chapter			
Sr. No.	Circular No.	Date	Subject
1	Circular No.28/2020-Customs	05.06.2020	1st phase of All India roll-out of Faceless Assessment
2	Instruction No. 09/2020-Customs	05.06.2020	1st phase of All India roll-out of Faceless Assessment
3	Circular No.34/2020-Customs	30.07.2020	2nd phase of All India roll-out of Faceless Assessment
4	Circular No.40/2020-Customs	04.09.2020	All India roll-out of Faceless Assessment
5	Circular No. 45/2020-Customs	12.10.2020	Faceless Assessment - Measures for timely assessment of Bills of Entry and clarification on defacement of physical documents
6	Circular No.55/2020-Customs	17.12.2020	Faceless Assessment- Clarifications on the Issues raised by Stakeholders
7	Circular No.14 /2021-Customs	07.07.2021	Improvements in Faceless Assessment - Measures for expediting Customs clearances
8	Circular No.16/2022-Customs	29.08.2022	Faceless Assessment – Standard Examination Orders through RMS - Phase 1, Part 1
9	Circular No.23 / 2022-Customs	03.11.2022	Faceless Assessment - Anonymized Escalation Mechanism & extension of Standard Examination Orders through RMS (Phase 1, Part 2)
10	Circular No. 02/2023-Customs	11.01.2023	Faceless Assessment – Standard Examination Orders through RMS - Phased implementation of Standardized Examination Orders through RMS
11	Circular No.13/2023-Customs	31.05.2023	Faceless Assessment – Re-organisation of National Assessment Centres and Faceless Assessment Groups

Annexure to Circular No.13/2023-Customs**(Revision of Annexure I of Circular No.14/2021-Customs dt.07.07.2021)****National Assessment Centres (Revised)**

National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)	Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)
<p>Primary Products</p> <p>Convenor- Kolkata</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Bhubaneshwar 4. Chennai 5. Delhi 6. Kolkata 7. Mumbai II 8. Thiruvananthapuram 9. Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) 10. Vishakhapatnam 	<p>1 (01-15) – Primary Products 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INIXY1, Ahmedabad 2. INKRI1, Vishakhapatnam 3. INCCU1, Kolkata 4. INNSA1, Mumbai II 5. INMAA1, Chennai 6. INNML1, Bengaluru <p>1B (16-26) – Primary Products 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INDAH1, Ahmedabad 2. INNSA1, Mumbai-II 3. INVTZ1, Vishakhapatnam 4. INPRT1, Bhubaneshwar 5. INMAA1, Chennai 6. INCCU1, Kolkata 7. INTKD6, Delhi 8. INTUT1, Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) 9. INCOK1, Thiruvananthapuram
<p>Mineral Products</p> <p>Convenor- Bengaluru</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Bhubaneshwar 4. Chennai 5. Mumbai I 6. Thiruvananthapuram 7. Vishakhapatnam 	<p>1A (27) – Mineral Products</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INVAD1, Ahmedabad 2. INBOM1, Mumbai I 3. INNML1, Bengaluru 4. INVTZ1, Vishakhapatnam 5. INPRT1, Bhubaneshwar 6. INMAA1, Chennai 7. INCOK1, Thiruvananthapuram

<p>National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)</p>	<p>Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)</p>
<p>Chemicals</p> <p>Convenor-Mumbai II</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Bhubaneshwar 4. Chennai 5. Delhi 6. Kolkata 7. Meerut 8. Mumbai I 9. Mumbai II 10. Mumbai III 11. Pune 12. Thiruvananthapuram 13. Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) 14. Vishakhapatnam 	<p>2 (28) – Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INIXY1, Ahmedabad 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INKAK1, Vishakhapatnam 4. INMAA4, Chennai 5. INPRT1, Bhubaneshwar 6. INDEL4, Delhi 7. INCCU1, Kolkata 8. INBOM4, Mumbai III <p>2A (29) – Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - II</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INIXY1, Ahmedabad 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INMAA1, Chennai 4. INBOM1, Mumbai I 5. INVTZ1, Vishakhapatnam 6. INCCU1, Kolkata <p>2B (30-31) – Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - III</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 2. INKAK1, Vishakhapatnam 3. INBOM4, Mumbai III 4. INNSA1, Mumbai II 5. INPRT1, Bhubaneshwar 6. INJGD1, Pune 7. INTUT1, Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) <p>2C (32-34) - Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - IV</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMAA1, Chennai

National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)	Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)
	3. INTKD6, Delhi 4. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 5. INBOM4, Mumbai III 6. INCCU1, Kolkata
	2D (35-36) – Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - V 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMAA1, Chennai 3. INDEL4, Delhi 4. INBOM4, Mumbai III 5. INMUN1, Ahmedabad
	2E (37) – Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - VI 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMAA1, Chennai 3. INTKD6, Delhi 4. INCCU1, Kolkata
	2F (38) – Products of Chemical or Allied Industries - VII 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INIXY1, Ahmedabad 3. INCCU1, Kolkata 4. INMAA1, Chennai 5. INBOM4, Mumbai III 6. INDEL4, Delhi
	2G (39) – Plastic Products 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 3. INMAA1, Chennai 4. INDEL4, Delhi 5. INCCU1, Kolkata 6. INAPL6, Meerut 7. INWFD6, Bengaluru
	2H (40) – Rubber Products

National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)	Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMAA1, Chennai 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 4. INTKD6, Delhi 5. INCOK1, Thiruvananthapuram 6. INCCU1, Kolkata
	<p>2I (41-43) – Leather Products</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMAA1, Chennai 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INDEL4, Delhi 4. INCCU1, Kolkata 5. INWFD6, Bengaluru
	<p>2J (44-46) – Wood</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INIXY1, Ahmedabad 2. INTUT1, Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) 3. INNSA1, Mumbai II 4. INMAA1, Chennai 5. INCCU1, Kolkata 6. INTKD6, Delhi
	<p>2K (47-49) – Products made of Wood</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INDEL4, Delhi 2. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 3. INBOM4, Mumbai III 4. INNSA1, Mumbai II 5. INMAA1, Chennai 6. INCCU1, Kolkata 7. INMBD6, Meerut 8. INTUT1, Tiruchirappalli (Preventive)

<p>National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)</p>	<p>Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)</p>
<p>Textile Products</p> <p>Convenor- Delhi</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Chennai 4. Delhi 5. Kolkata 6. Mumbai II 7. Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) 	<p>3 (50-70) – Textile Products</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMAA1, Chennai 3. INDEL4, Delhi 4. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 5. INCCU1, Kolkata 6. INTUT1, Tiruchirappalli (Preventive) 7. INWFD6, Bengaluru <hr/> <p>3A (71) – Gems & Jewellery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INDEL4, Delhi 2. INHIR6, Ahmedabad 3. INMAA4, Chennai
<p>Metal Products</p> <p>Convenor-Ahmedabad</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bhubaneshwar 3. Chennai 4. Delhi 5. Delhi (Preventive) 6. Kolkata 7. Meerut 8. Mumbai I 9. Mumbai II 10. Mumbai III 	<p>4 (72-73)- Ferrous base metals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 2. INMAA1, Chennai 3. INNSA1, Mumbai II 4. INBOM1, Mumbai I 5. INGHR6, Delhi 6. INPRT1, Bhubaneshwar 7. INCPR6, Delhi (Prev) 8. INBNG6, Mumbai III 9. INCCU1, Kolkata <hr/> <p>4A (74-83) – Non-ferrous Base Metals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INSAJ6, Ahmedabad 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INMAA1, Chennai 4. INGHR6, Delhi 5. INKKU6, Delhi (Preventive) 6. INDER6, Meerut 7. INCCU1, Kolkata

<p>National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)</p>	<p>Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)</p>
<p>Mechanical Machineries</p> <p>Convenor-Mumbai III</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Chennai 4. Delhi 5. Kolkata 6. Mumbai I 7. Mumbai II 8. Mumbai III 	<p>5 (8401-8469) – Machinery & Mechanical Appliances - I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMAA1, Chennai 3. INDEL4, Delhi 4. INBOM4, Mumbai III 5. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 6. INCCU1, Kolkata 7. INBLR4, Bengaluru 8. INBOM1, Mumbai I <hr/> <p>5E (8470-8473) Machinery & Mechanical Appliances - II</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INBOM4, Mumbai III 2. INMAA4, Chennai 3. INNSA1, Mumbai II 4. INBLR4, Bengaluru 5. INDEL4, Delhi <hr/> <p>5N (8474-8487) – Machinery & Mechanical Appliances - III</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INNSA1, Mumbai II 2. INMAA1, Chennai 3. INDEL4, Delhi 4. INMUN1, Ahmedabad 5. INBOM4, Mumbai III 6. INBLR4, Bengaluru 7. INCCU1, Kolkata
<p>Electric Machineries</p> <p>Convenor-Chennai</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p>	<p>5A (8501-8516) Electrical machinery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMAA1, Chennai 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INDEL4, Delhi 4. INBLR4, Bengaluru

National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)	Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Chennai 4. Delhi 5. Mumbai II 6. Mumbai III 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. INBOM4, Mumbai III 6. INMUN1, Ahmedabad <hr/> <p>5C (8517-8531)-Communication and related equipment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMAA4, Chennai 2. INDEL4, Delhi 3. INBLR4, Bengaluru 4. INBOM4, Mumbai III 5. INNSA1, Mumbai II <hr/> <p>5M (8532-8548)- Micro-electronics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INDEL4, Delhi 2. INMAA4, Chennai 3. INBLR4, Bengaluru 4. INNSA1, Mumbai II 5. INBOM4, Mumbai III
<p>Automobile Instruments & Miscellaneous Products</p> <p>Convenor-Mumbai I</p> <p>Nodal Commissioners - Zones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ahmedabad 2. Bengaluru 3. Chennai 4. Delhi 5. Hyderabad 6. Kolkata 7. Mumbai I 8. Mumbai II 9. Mumbai III 10. Pune 11. Thiruvananthapuram 	<p>and 5B (86-87)-Vehicles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INMAA1, Chennai 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INGHR6, Delhi 4. INBRC6, Ahmedabad 5. INBOM1, Mumbai I 6. INWFD6, Bengaluru 7. INTLG6, Pune <hr/> <p>5F (88) – Aircrafts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INCOK1, Thiruvananthapuram 2. INDEL4, Delhi 3. INBOM4, Mumbai III 4. INBLR4, Bengaluru 5. INMAA4, Chennai 6. INNSA1, Mumbai II

<p>National Assessment Centre (Pr. CC/CC of the Zone) (Revised) & Nodal Commissioners (1)</p>	<p>Faceless Assessment Groups (Chapters covered by Customs Tariff Act, 1975) & FAG from Zones (Revised) Port Code, Zone (2)</p>
<p>12. Vishakhapatnam</p>	<p>5S (89) – Vessels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INKAK1, Vishakhapatnam 2. INBOM1, Mumbai I 3. INALA1, Ahmedabad
	<p>5I (90-92) – Instruments & Apparatus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INDEL4, Delhi 2. INBOM4, Mumbai III 3. INMAA4, Chennai 4. INBLR4, Bengaluru 5. INNSA1, Mumbai II 6. INHYD4, Hyderabad
	<p>6 (93-98) – Miscellaneous Products/Project Imports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INCOK1, Thiruvananthapuram 2. INNSA1, Mumbai II 3. INCCU1, Kolkata 4. INBOM1, Mumbai I 5. INDEL4, Delhi 6. INMAA1, Chennai 7. INHYD4, Hyderabad 8. INBOM4, Mumbai III 9. INBLR4, Bengaluru

5

Classification of Goods



Chapter 5: Classification of Goods

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Import and export of goods are required to be assessed to duty which may include an assessment of nil duty. For this purpose, it is necessary to determine the classification of the goods, which basically means the categorization of the goods in a specific heading of the Schedules to the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.
- 1.2 Classification of imported/export goods is governed by the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 which contains two Schedules. The First Schedule specifies the nomenclature that is based on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System generally referred to as “Harmonized System” or simply “HS”, developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO) which is applied uniformly by more than 200 countries the world over. The Second Schedule contains description of goods chargeable to export duty. As the nomenclature also specifies the Customs duty rates (Tariff) it is called the “Indian Customs Tariff” or “Tariff Schedule”

2. Methodology of classification:

- 2.1 In the Tariff Schedule, commodities/products are arranged in a fixed pattern with the duty rates specified against each of them. The pattern of arrangement of goods in the Tariff is in increasing degree of manufacture of commodities/products in the sequence of natural products, raw materials; semi-finished goods and fully finished goods/article / machinery, etc. The Indian Customs Tariff has 21 Sections and 98 Chapters. Section is a group consisting of a number of Chapters which codify a particular class of goods. The Section notes explain the scope of chapters / Headings, etc. The Chapters consist of chapter notes, brief description of commodities arranged at four-digit, six digit and eight digit levels. Every four-digit code is called “heading” and every six-digit code is called a “subheading” and 8-digit code is called a “Tariff Item”
- 2.2 The Harmonized System (HS) provides commodity/product codes and description up to 4-digit (Heading) and 6-digit (Sub-heading) levels only and member countries of WCO are allowed to extend the codes up to any level subject to the condition that nothing changes at the 4-digit or 6- digit levels. India has developed 8-digit level classification to indicate specific statistical codes for indigenous products and also to monitor the trade volumes.
- 2.3 The HS is amended periodically in a review cycle of 4/6 years, taking note of the trade flow, technological progress, etc. After the HS came into effect on 1.1.1988, it was amended in 1992, 1996, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2022. Member countries including India are under obligation in terms of International Convention on Harmonized System to amend their Tariff Schedules in alignment with HS. Therefore, the classification of some commodities/products may change over a period of time. Those involved in the negotiation of international commercial arrangements, multilateral tariff agreements etc. should refer to correlation tables showing the transposition of sub-headings from older version to the newer and

the newer to the older version of the HS.

- 2.4 For purposes of uniform interpretation of the HS, the WCO has published detailed Explanatory Notes to various headings/subheadings. This forms the basis for interpreting the HS. The WCO, in its various committees discusses the classification of individual products and gives classification opinion on them. Such information, though not binding in nature provides a useful guideline for classifying goods.
- 2.5 The process of arriving at a particular heading/subheading code, either at four-digit, six Digit or eight-digit level for a commodity in the Tariff Schedule is called “classification”. The titles of Sections, Chapters and Sub-chapters are provided for ease of reference only. For legal purposes the texts of the Section Notes, Chapter Notes, Subheading Notes, Supplementary Notes, Headings, Subheadings, and the General Rules for Interpretation of Import Tariff (GIR) should be relied upon to determine the classification of an item. Classification helps in determining the rate of duty leviable. The Indian Customs Tariff provides specific headings for goods imported under Project Import Scheme, goods imported by post and goods imported as baggage in Chapter 98 under which they will be classified straightaway even though they may be covered elsewhere.
- 2.6 The GIR is a set of 6 rules for classification of goods in the Tariff Schedule. These rules have to be applied sequentially. Rule 1 gives precedence to the Section notes/Chapter notes while classifying a product. Rule 2(a) applies to goods imported in incomplete / finished condition and assembled / unassembled condition. Rule 2(b) is applicable to ‘mixtures’ and ‘composite goods’. Goods which cannot be classified by application of Rule 2(b), will be classified by application of Rule 3 i.e. by application of “most specific description” as per Rule 3(a) or by ascertaining the “essential character” of the article as per Rule 3(b) or by taking into consideration the heading that occurs last in the numerical order as per Rule 3(c). Rule 4 states that goods which cannot be classified by application of the preceding rules may be classified under the heading appropriate to the goods to which they are most akin. Rule 5 applies to packing materials / articles in which the goods are carried. Rule 6 is applied to arrive at the appropriate subheading within a heading and for that purpose the provisions of Rules 1 to 5 apply mutatis mutandis on the understanding that subheadings at the same levels are comparable. For the purpose of Rule 6, the relative Section and Chapter Notes also apply unless the context otherwise requires.
- 2.7 While classifying goods, the foremost consideration is the “statutory definition” and any guideline provided by HS Explanatory Notes. In their absence, the cardinal principle would be the way goods are known in “common parlance”. Many times, statutes contain definitions and meanings of only a restricted number of words, expressions or phrases. Therefore, while interpreting the common words used in the statute, giving more than due importance to common dictionary meanings may be misleading, as therein all shades of meaning of a particular word are given. Similarly, meanings assigned in technical dictionaries will have limited application.
- 2.8 For purpose of classification the “trade meaning” is given due importance unless the Tariff itself requires the terms to be interpreted in a strict technical sense in which case technical dictionaries should be used. If any scientific test is to be

performed, the same must be carried out as prescribed to arrive at the classification of goods. The common dictionary meaning of technical words should not be accepted in such cases since normally, the common parlance understanding is indicative of the functional character of the goods. Further, in matters of classification the quality of goods, whether prime or defective is not material. There is no prohibition on revising the classification once decided. However, revision should be only done for good and sufficient reasons. In case of difficulty in understanding the scope of the headings / subheadings, reference should invariably be made to supplementary texts like the Explanatory Notes to the HS.

- 2.9 The rate of duty specified in the Tariff Schedule is called “Tariff rate of duty”. Goods which are not levied concessional rate of duty or exempted from duty by an exemption notification issued under the Customs Act, 1962 are levied the Tariff rate of duty. The Export Tariff Schedule mentions only the commodities on which export tariff is levied. Likewise, the Central Excise Tariff prescribed Excise duties against each subheading, which is relevant for the purpose of computing the Additional Duty of Customs. The rates of Integrated GST, which is to be levied on the imported goods, are also aligned at 4 digit level of Tariff Schedule.
- 2.10 Board issues Tariff Advice in the form of circulars/instructions to ensure uniformity in classification of goods at an All-India level. Such issues also get discussed and resolved in the periodic Conferences of Chief Commissioners/Commissioners of Customs on Tariffs and Allied Matters. An Advance Ruling Authority gives binding tariff advice to applicants.
- 2.11 Board, vide Circular 55/2020-Customs dated 17.12.2020 advised importers to voluntarily declare the complete description of imported goods and provide certain additional parameters for imported items such as scientific names, IUPAC names, brand name etc. as applicable, to aid reducing queries and improve the efficiency of assessment.

[Circular No. 55/2020-Customs dated 17.12.2020]

- 2.12 In furtherance to this, Board introduced additional qualifiers/identifiers as mandatory declarations in respect of certain goods on the request of the respective line ministries and with due stakeholders’ consultations. The declaration of the additional qualifiers, which are alphanumeric codes, helps in better identifying the product and capturing its statistical data which can be useful in effective policy interventions. Till date additional qualifiers have been introduced for Ayush products, Telecom products, different grades of Coal, Chemicals, Lab grown diamonds.

[Circulars No. 15/2023-Customs dated 07.06.2023, No. 23/2023-Customs dated 30.11,2023, No. 21/2024-Customs dated 30.10.2024, No. 24/2024- Customs dated 20.11. 2024]

- 2.13 Permissibility of import and export of goods is governed by the DGFT’s ITC(HS) Classification of Import and Export Goods. This nomenclature arranges goods as in the HS to regulate the Foreign Trade Policy and collating the statistical analysis of the imports and exports of the country.

6

Classification/Assessment of Projects Imports, Baggage and Postal Imports



Chapter 6: Classification/Assessment of Projects Imports, Baggage and Postal Imports

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 For the sake of convenience, a special classification has been introduced in the Customs Tariff for project imports, baggage and postal imports. By virtue of this classification, the diverse goods that are imported for the purpose of execution of projects or as baggage and postal imports are classified under one heading and subjected to a uniform rate of duty. This facilitates assessment and ensures faster clearances since the alternative would be to classify each item distinctly and subject the same to the applicable duty.

2. Project imports:

- 2.1 'Project Imports' is an Indian innovation to facilitate setting up of and expansion of industrial projects. Normally, imported goods are classified separately under different tariff headings and assessed to applicable Customs duty, but as a variety of goods are imported for setting up an industrial project their separate classification and valuation for assessment to duty becomes cumbersome. Further, the suppliers of a contracted project, do not value each and every item or parts of machinery which are supplied in stages. Hence, ascertaining values for different items delay assessment leading to demurrage and time and cost overruns for the project. Therefore, to facilitate smooth and quick assessment by a simplified process of classification and valuation, the goods imported under Project Import Scheme are placed under a single Tariff Heading 9801 in the Customs Tariff Act, 1975. The Central Government has formulated the Project Import Regulations, 1986 prescribing the procedure for effecting imports under this scheme.
- 2.2 The Project Import Scheme seeks to achieve the objective of simplifying the assessment in respect of import of capital goods and related items required for setting up of a project by classifying all goods under heading 9801 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 and prescribing a uniform Customs duty rate for them even though other headings may cover these goods more specifically.
- 2.3 The different projects to which heading 9801 applies are; irrigation project, power project, mining project, oil/mineral exploration projects, etc. Such an assessment is also available for an industrial plant used in the process of manufacture of a commodity. The Central Government can also notify projects in public interest keeping in view the economic development of the country to which this facility will apply. Thus, a number of notifications have been issued notifying a large number of projects for assessment under Tariff Heading 9801. However, this benefit is not available to hotels, hospitals, photographic studios, photographic film processing laboratories, photocopying studios, laundries, garages and workshops. This benefit is also not available to a single or composite machine.
- 2.4 Goods that can be imported under Project Import Scheme are machinery, prime movers, instruments, apparatus, appliances, control gear, transmission equipment, auxiliary equipment, equipment required for research and

development purposes, equipment for testing and quality control, components, raw materials for the manufacture of these items, etc. In addition, spare parts, consumables up to 10% of the assessable value of goods can also be imported under Project Import.

- 2.5 The purposes for which such goods can be imported under the Project Import Scheme are for “initial setting up” or for “substantial expansion” of a unit of the project. The “unit” is any self- contained portion of the project having an independent function in the project. A project would fall under the category of “substantial expansion” if the installed capacity of the unit is increased by not less than 25%, as per the Project Import Regulations, 1986.

2.6 The scope of the items eligible for import under the Project Import Regulations 1986, shall cover construction equipment as auxiliary equipment; if essentially required for initial setting up or substantial expansion of registered projects. The construction equipment may be permitted to be transferred to other registered project under CTH 9801, after completion of its intended use, on recommendations of sponsoring authority. The “Plant Site Verification Certificate” required to be submitted for finalization of project as per Circular No. 14/2006-Cus., dated 17-4-2006 shall incorporate the details of construction equipment imported and used for the project, to ensure proper utilization of goods imported.

[Refer Circular No. 49/2011-Cus. dated 04.11.2011]

3. Registration of contracts:

- 3.1 In terms of Regulation 4 of the Project Import Regulations, 1986 (PIR), the basic requirement for availing the benefit of assessment under Tariff Heading No. 98.01 is that the importer should have entered into one or more contracts with the suppliers of the goods for setting up a project. Such contracts should be registered, prior to clearance, in the Customs House through which the goods are expected to be imported. The importer shall apply for such registration in writing to the proper officer of Customs.
- 3.2 Regulation 5 provides in the manner of registering contracts, which is as follows:
- (i) Before any order is made by the proper officer of Customs permitting the clearance of the goods for home consumption;
 - (ii) In the case of goods cleared for home consumption without payment of duty subject to re- export in respect of fairs, exhibitions, demonstrations, seminars, congresses and conferences, duly sponsored or approved by the Government of India or Trade fair Authority of India, as the case may be, before the date of payment of duty.
- 3.3 To expedite registration, the importers are advised to submit the following documents along with the application for registration:
- (i) Original deed of contract together with true copy thereof.
 - (ii) Industrial License and letter of intent, SSI Certificate granted by the appropriate authority with a copy thereof.

- (iii) Original Import licence, if any, with a list of items showing the dimensions, specifications, quantity, quality, value of each item duly attested by the Licensing Authority and a copy thereof.
- (iv) Recommendatory letter for duty concession from the concerned Sponsoring Authority, showing the description, quantity, specification, quality, dimension of each item and indicating whether the recommendatory letter is for initial set-up for substantial expansion, giving the installed capacity and proposed addition thereto.
- (v) Continuity Bond with cash security deposit equivalent to 2% of CIF value of contract sought to be registered subject to the maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs and the balance amount by the bank Guarantee backed by an undertaking to renew the same till finalization of the contract. The said Continuity Bond should be made out for an amount equal to the CIF value of the contract sought to be registered.
- (vi) Write up, drawings, catalogues and literature of the items under import.
- (vii) Process flow chart, plant layout, drawings showing the arrangement of imported machines along with an attested copy of the Project Report submitted to the Sponsoring authorities, Financial Institution, etc.
- (viii) Two attested copies of foreign collaboration agreement, technical agreement, knowhow, basic/detailed engineering agreement, equipment supply agreement, service agreement, or any other agreement with foreign collaborators/suppliers/ persons including the details of payment actually made or to be made.
- (ix) Such other particulars, as may be considered necessary by proper officer for the purpose of assessment under Heading No. 9801.

3.4 In regard to the requirement of registration of the contract (or contracts) and production of the "original deed of contract", the Board noted that as per Section 10 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872 a valid contract contains certain essential elements viz. (a) it is entered into by free consent of parties competent to contract; (b) there should be lawful consideration; (c) there should be a lawful object; and (d) it is not expressly declared to be void under the statute. It is therefore decided that a purchase order that contains all the essential ingredients of a valid contract must be treated as one under the Indian Contract Act, 1872. Thus, such a purchase order can be accepted as a "deed of contract" for the purpose of Regulation 5 of Project Import Regulations, 1986.

[Refer Circular No. 31/2013-Cus. dated 06.08.2013]

3.5 After satisfying that goods are eligible for project imports benefit and importer has submitted all the required documents, the contract is registered by the Custom House and as a token of registration the provisional duty bond is accepted by the Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner of Customs, Project Import Group. The details of the contracts are entered in the register kept for the purpose and a Project Contract Registration Number is assigned and communicated to the importer. The importer is required to refer to this number in all subsequent correspondence.

4. Clearance of goods after registration:

4.1 Earlier, on every Bill of Entry filed for clearance of goods under the Project Import Scheme, the importer/Customs Broker was required to indicate the Project Contract Registration Number allotted to it. After noting, the Bill of Entry was sent to the Project Import Group, which was required to check the description, value and quantity of the goods imported vis-a-vis the description, value and quantity registered. In case these particulars were found in order, the Bill of Entry was assessed provisionally and handed over to the importer or his agent for payment of duty. The Project Import Group kept a note of the description of the goods and their value in the Project Contract Register and in the file maintained in the Group for each project.

4.2 Roll out of Project Import Module in ICES:

To overcome the difficulties faced due to manual processing, Project Imports module has been developed in ICES. ICES Advisory 13/2019 dated 29.05.2019 has been issued in this regard wherein processes relating to Project Import Module were explained. Project import module covers the following processes:

- (a) Registration of a Project and generation of a Project number.
- (b) Bond Registration for Project Imports.
- (c) Filing of provisional BEs with project number and bond details. Item wise debits in the project/bond for every BE.
- (d) Finalization of the Provisional BEs and re-crediting of the Bond

[Refer Circular No. 27/2019-Customs dated 03.09.2019]

5. Finalization of contract:

5.1 Under Regulation 7 of the PIR, 1986 the importer is required to submit, within three months from the date of clearance of the last consignment or within such extended time as the proper officer may allow, the following documents for the purpose of finalization of the assessment:

- (i) A reconciliation statement i.e. a statement showing the description, quantity and value of goods imported along with a certificate from a registered Chartered Engineer certifying the installation of each of the imported items of machinery;
- (ii) Copies of the Bills of Entry, invoices, and the final payment certificate is insisted upon only in cases where the contract provides that the amount of the transaction will be finally settled after completion of the supplies.

5.2 To ensure that the imported goods have actually been used for the projects for which these were imported, plant site verification may be done in cases where value of the project contract exceeds Rs.1 crore. In other cases, plant site verification is normally done selectively.

- 5.3 In the normal course, after submission of the reconciliation statement and other documents by the importers, the provisional assessments are finalized within a period of three months where plant site verification is not required and within six months where plant site verification is required. In cases where a demand has been issued and confirmed on such finalization and importer has not paid the duty demanded, steps are taken as per law to realize the amount.

6. Baggage:

- 6.1 All goods imported by a passenger or a member of crew in his baggage are classifiable under Tariff Heading 9803 and levied to a single rate of duty. Such goods need not be classified separately in the Tariff. However, Tariff Heading 9803 does not apply to motor vehicles, alcoholic drinks, and goods imported through courier service. Such assessment will also not apply to goods imported by a passenger or a member of the crew under an import license or a customs clearance permit.

7. Postal imports for personal use:

- 7.1 All goods imported by Post or Air for personal use are classifiable under a single Tariff Heading 9804 and levied to duty accordingly. This heading has been subdivided into two subheadings, one applicable to drugs and medicines and the other, to the balance of items so imported. Such goods will however be governed by the FTP as far their importability is concerned. Motor vehicles, alcoholic drinks and goods imported through courier service can, however, not be classified under this heading. Goods imported under an import license or a customs clearance permit will however not be classified under this tariff heading.



7

Customs Valuation

10

Chapter 7: Customs Valuation

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The rates of Customs duties leviable on imported goods and export goods are either specific or on ad valorem basis or at times on specific cum ad valorem basis. When Customs duties are levied at ad valorem rates, i.e., based on the value of the goods, it becomes essential to lay down in the law itself the broad guidelines for such valuation to avoid arbitrariness and to ensure that there is uniformity in approach at different Customs formations. Accordingly, Section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962 lays down the basis for valuation of import and export goods. The present version of the said Section 14 is applicable with effect from October 2007.

2. Tariff value:

- 2.1 Board is empowered to fix values, under Section 14(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 for any item, which are called "Tariff Values". If tariff values are fixed for any goods, ad valorem duties thereon are to be calculated with reference to such tariff values. The tariff values may be fixed for any class of imported or export goods having regard to the trend of value of such or like goods and the same have to be notified in the official gazette. Tariff values have presently been fixed in respect of import of Crude Palm Oil, RBD Palm Oil, Other Palm Oils, Crude Palmolein, RBD Palmolein, Other Palmoleins, Crude Soyabean Oil, Brass Scrap (all grades), Areca Nuts, Gold and Silver.

[Refer Notification No.36/2001-Cus. (N.T.), dated 03.08.2001]

3. Valuation of imported/exported goods in general:

- 3.1 Section 2(41) of the Customs Act, 1962 defines 'Value' in relation to any goods to mean the value thereof determined in accordance with the provisions of Section 14(1) of the Act *ibid*. In turn, Section 14(1) of the Act *ibid* states that the value of the imported goods and export goods shall be "*the transaction value of such goods, that is to say, the price actually paid or payable for the goods when sold for export to India for delivery at the time and place of importation, or as the case may be, for export from India for delivery at the time and place of exportation, where the buyer and seller of the goods are not related and price is the sole consideration for the sale subject to such other conditions as may be specified in the rules made in this behalf*". It is also provided that in the case of imported goods such transaction value shall include "*in addition...any amount paid or payable for costs and services, including commissions and brokerage, engineering, design work, royalties and licence fees, costs of transportation to the place of importation, insurance, loading, unloading and handling charges to the extent and in the manner specified in the rules made in this behalf*."
- 3.2 In accordance with the provisions of Section 14(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 the rules specified for the purpose of valuation may provide for:
- (i) The circumstances in which the buyer and the seller shall be deemed to be related;

(ii) the manner of determination of value in respect of goods when there is no sale, or the buyer and the seller are related, or price is not the sole consideration for the sale or in any other case; and

(iii) The manner of acceptance or rejection of value declared by the importer or exporter, as the case may be, where the proper officer has reason to doubt the truth or accuracy of such value, and determination of value for the purposes of this section.

3.3 The price paid or payable shall be calculated with reference to the rate of exchange as in force on the date on which a Bill of Entry is presented under Section 46, or a Shipping Bill or Bill of Export, as the case may be, is presented under Section 50 of the Customs Act, 1962.

3.4 Exchange Rate Automation Module (ERAM) automates the process of notifying exchange rates for imported/exported goods, replacing the manual system. Starting 4th July 2024, SBI will transmit exchange rate data to ICEGATE, with rates published online and effective from midnight of the following day, ensuring transparency and accessibility.

[Refer Circular No. 7/2024- Customs dated 25.06.2024]

3.5 When compared to the earlier provisions Section 14(1), the present provisions have discarded the concept of “demand value” and adopted the concept of “transaction value”.

Also, the present Section 14 contains therein provisions for specific rules to be made for determination of value and also for specific additions to value on account of cost and services. Some provisions deleted from the earlier Section 14 include:

(i) Reference to such or like goods. Thus, the value (transaction value) shall be the price actually paid or payable for the goods under consideration.

(ii) The reference to price of the goods ordinarily sold or offered for sale.

(iii) The price of the goods when sold for export to India is to be considered and not the price in the course of international trade.

3.6 As provided in Section 14(1), the Custom Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 and the Custom Valuation (Determination of Value of Export Goods) Rules, 2007 have been framed for valuation of imported goods and export goods, respectively.

3.7 The provisions of Section 14(1) and the Custom Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 are based on the provisions of Article VII of GATT and the Agreement on implementation of Article VII of GATT. The methods of valuation prescribed therein are of a hierarchical (sequential) order.

3.8 The importer is required to truthfully declare the value in the import declaration and also provide a copy of the invoice and file a valuation declaration in the prescribed form to facilitate correct and expeditious determination of value for

assessment purposes.

4. Methods of valuation of imported goods:

- 4.1 According to the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007, the Customs Value should be the "Transaction Value", i.e., the price actually paid or payable after adjustment by Valuation Factors and subject to (a) compliance with the Valuation Conditions and (b) satisfaction of the Customs authorities with the truth and accuracy of the Declared Value.

5. Transaction value:

- 5.1 Rule 3(1) of the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 states that subject to rule 12, the value of imported goods shall be the transaction value adjusted in accordance with the provisions of its Rule 10.
- 5.2 The price actually paid or payable is the total payment made or to be made by the buyer to the seller or for the benefit of the seller for the imported goods. It includes all payments made as a condition of sale of the imported goods by the buyer to the seller or by the buyer to a third party to satisfy an obligation of the seller.
- 5.3 If objective and quantifiable data do not exist with regard to the valuation factors, if the valuation conditions are not fulfilled, or if Customs authorities have doubts concerning the truth or accuracy of the declared value in terms of Rule 12 of the said Valuation Rules, 2007 the valuation has to be carried out by other methods in the following hierarchical order:
- (i) Comparative Value Method - Comparison with transaction value of identical goods (Rule 4);
 - (ii) Comparative Value Method - Comparison with transaction value of similar goods (Rule 5);
 - (iii) Deductive Value Method - Based on sale price in importing country (Rule 7);
 - (iv) Computed Value Method - Based on cost of materials, fabrication and profit in country of production (Rule 8); and
 - (v) Fallback Method - Based on earlier methods with greater flexibility (Rule 9).

6. Valuation factors:

- 6.1 Valuation factors are the various elements which must be taken into account by addition (factors by addition) to the extent these are not already included in the price actually paid or payable or by deduction (factors by deduction) from the total price incurred in determining the Customs value, for assessment purposes.
- 6.2 Factors by addition are the following charges:

- (i) Commissions and brokerage, except buying commissions;
- (ii) The cost of containers, which are treated as being one with the goods in question for Customs purposes;
- (iii) The cost of packing whether for labour or materials;
- (iv) The value, apportioned as appropriate, of the following goods and services where supplied directly or indirectly by the buyer free of charge or at reduced cost for use in connection with the production and sale for export of the imported goods, to the extent that such value has not been included in the price actually paid or payable, namely:
 - a) Material, components, parts and similar items incorporated in the imported goods;
 - b) Tools, dies, moulds and similar items used in the production of the imported goods;
 - c) Materials consumed in the imported goods; and
- (v) Engineering, developing, artwork, design work, and plans and sketches undertaken elsewhere than in the importing country and necessary for the production of the imported goods;
- (vi) Royalties and license fees related to imported goods being valued that the buyer must pay either directly or indirectly, as a condition of sale of the goods being valued, to the extent that such royalties and fees are not included in the price actually paid or payable;
- (vii) The value of any part of the proceeds of any subsequent resale, disposal or use of the imported goods that accrues directly or indirectly to the seller;
- (viii) Advance payments;
- (ix) The cost of transport, loading, unloading and handling charges associated with the delivery of the imported goods to the place of importation wherein the cost of transportation includes ship demurrage charges on chartered vessels, lighterage and barge charges; and
- (x) The cost of insurance to the place of importation.
- (xi) All other payments actually made or to be made as a condition of sale of the imported goods, by the buyer to the seller, or by the buyer to a third party to satisfy an obligation of the seller to the extent that such payments are not included in the price actually paid or payable. {This sub-clause is not included in the draft text but is a part of Rule 10 (1) (e)} wherein the “place of importation” means the customs station, where the goods are brought for being cleared for home consumption or for being removed for deposit in a warehouse.

[Refer Notification No. 91/2017-Cus (N.T.) dated 26.09.2017 and Circular No. 39/2017 dated 26.09.2017]

- 6.3 As regards (v) and (vi) above, an explanation to Rule 10(1) clarifies that the royalty, licence fee or any other payment for a process, whether patented or otherwise, is includible referred to in clauses (c) and (e), such charges shall be added to the price actually paid or payable for the imported goods, notwithstanding the fact that such goods may be subjected to the said process after importation of such goods.

[Refer Circular No. 38/2007-Cus, dated 9.10.2007]

- 6.4 Factors by deduction are the following charges provided they are separately declared in the commercial invoices:
- (i) Interest charges for deferred payment;
 - (ii) Post-importation charges (e.g., inland transportation charges, installation or erection charges, etc.); and
 - (iii) Duties and taxes payable in the importing country.

7. Cases where transaction value may be rejected:

- 7.1 The transaction value may not be accepted in the following categories of cases as provided in Rule 3(2) of the said Valuation Rules, 2007:

- (i) If there are restrictions on use or disposition of the goods by the buyer. However, the transaction value not to be rejected on this ground if restrictions:
 - (a) Are imposed by law or public authorities in India;
 - (b) Limit geographical area of resale; and
 - (c) Do not affect the value of the goods substantially.
- (ii) If the sale or price is subject to a condition or consideration for which a value cannot be determined. However, conditions or considerations relating to production or marketing of the goods shall not result in rejection.
- (iii) If part of the proceeds of the subsequent resale, disposal or use of the goods accrues to the seller, unless an adjustment can be made as per valuation factors.
- (iv) Buyer and seller are related; unless it is established by the importer that:
 - (a) The relationship has not influenced the price; and
 - (b) The importer demonstrates that the price closely approximates one of the test values.

- 7.2 The transaction price declared can be rejected in terms of Rule 12 of the said Valuation Rules, 2007, when the proper officer of Customs has reason to doubt the truth or accuracy of the value declared and if even after the importer furnishes

further information/documents or other evidence, the proper officer is not satisfied and has reasonable doubts about the value declared. An Explanation to Rule 12 clarifies that this rule does not, as such, provide a method for determination of value, and that it merely provides a mechanism and procedure for rejection of declared value in certain cases. It also clarifies that where the proper officer is satisfied after consultation with the importer, the declared value shall be accepted. This Explanation also gives certain illustrative reasons that could form the basis for doubting the truth of accuracy of the declared value.

- 7.3 The interpretative notes are specified in the schedule of the said valuation rules and are to be applied for interpretation of the rules.

8. Provisional clearance of imported goods:

- 8.1 Section 18 of the Customs Act, 1962 allows an importer to provisionally clear the imported goods from Customs pending final determination of value by giving a guarantee in the form of surety, security deposit or bank guarantee. Rules 4(1)(a) and 5(1) of the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 concerning identical goods and similar goods, respectively provide that the value of the goods provisionally assessed under Section 18 of the Customs Act, 1962, shall not be the basis for determining the value of any other goods.

9. Valuation of imported goods in case of related party transaction:

- 9.1 Rule 2(2) of the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 enumerates the persons who shall be deemed to be “related”. It has been made clear by Explanation II thereto that the sole agent, sole distributor or sole concessionaire shall be deemed to be related only if they fall within the criteria of this sub-rule. Further, Rule 3(3) provides that where buyer and seller are related, the transaction value can be accepted if the examination of circumstances of the sale of the imported goods indicate that the relationship did not influence the price or if the importer demonstrates that the declared value of the goods being valued, closely approximates to one of the test values namely transaction value of identical/similar goods, in sales to unrelated buyers in India, deductive value for identical/similar goods or computed value for identical/similar goods ascertained at or about the same time can be used.
- 9.2 In related party transactions, the importer is required to fill a questionnaire and furnish a list of documents so that it can be ascertained whether the said case requires investigation by SVB or not. The proper officer shall examine the information provided by the importer in terms of Rule 3(3)(b) of the CVR, 2007 and shall submit the findings to the Commissioner for a decision as to whether the case is fit for being referred to the SVB for investigation. The Commissioner shall after due consideration of the preliminary findings, take a considered view whether:
- (a) the matter be referred to the SVB for further investigations and the goods be provisionally assessed to duty in terms of section 18 of the Customs Act, 1962, or

- (b) the transaction does not merit investigation by the SVB, and that assessment be finalized on the basis of enquiries to be conducted by the proper officer in terms of Rules 4 to 9 of the CVR 2007, or
 - (c) the transaction be assessed in terms of Rule 3 of the CVR 2007.
- 9.3 In cases, where the Commissioner concerned finds it fit that the transaction requires investigation to be conducted by SVB, the Investigations are carried out by Special Valuation Branches (SVB) located presently in the major Custom Houses at Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi. As and when imports requiring investigation by SVBs are noticed at any customs formation, the concerned Commissionerate shall after following the laid down procedure, transfer all records to the jurisdictional SVBs for investigations.
- 9.4 With effect from 09.02.2016, the functional and supervisory control over the SVBs has been divested from DGOV and the same has been vested with the jurisdictional Chief Commissioner/ Principal Commissioner/ Commissioner. DGOV will continue to support the SVBs by issuing advisories on legal issues & guidance notes. DGOV shall also qualitatively monitor investigation orders issued by SVBs.
- 9.5 The provision of taking Extra Duty Deposit @ 1% of declared assessable value for four months, during which he is supposed to submit requisite documents and information to SVBs, has been withdrawn and in order to reduce the transaction cost it has been mandated that no security in the form of EDD shall be obtained from the importer. However, if the importer fails to provide the documents and information required for SVB inquiries, within 60 days of such requisition, security deposit at a rate of 5% of the declared assessable value shall be imposed by the Commissioner for a period not exceeding the next three months.
- 9.6 Only cases with significant revenue implications are taken up for SVB investigations. The following cases are not to be taken up for SVB investigations:
- (i) Import of samples and prototype from related sellers
 - (ii) Imports from related sellers where duty chargeable (including additional duty of customs etc.) is unconditionally fully exempt or NIL.
 - (iii) Any transaction where the value of imported goods is less than Rs.1 Lac but cumulatively these transactions do not exceed Rs 25 lac in any financial year.
- 9.7 Apart from investigation of transactions involving related parties, cases involving possible additions to declared transaction value also need to be examined to determine whether SVB investigations are necessary. Accordingly, transactions where any payments are sought to be made which are in the nature of instances given below shall also be examined with respect to the need for SVB investigations:
- (i) 'royalty' and 'licence fee' under Rule 10(1)(c) of CVR,2007, or

- (ii) where the value of any part of proceeds of any subsequent resale, disposal or use of imported goods accrues to the seller i.e. Rule 10 (1)(d) of CVR, 2007 or
- (iii) Where any other payments are made or are contemplated to be made in future by buyer to seller as a condition of sale of imported goods etc. Rule 10 (1)(e) of CVR, 2007.

[Refer Circulars No.11/2001-Cus, dated 23.2.2001 and No. 5/2016 dated 09.02.2016]

10. Methods of valuation of export goods:

- 10.1 The provisions of Section 14(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 specifically cover the valuation of export goods. Also, the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Export Goods) Rules, 2007 have been framed to provide a sound legal basis for the valuation of export goods and check deliberate overvaluation of export goods and mis-utilization of value-based export incentive schemes.
- 10.2 Rule 3 of the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Export Goods) Rules 2007 that are framed in a format similar to the said Valuation Rules, 2007 for the imported goods emphasizes for acceptance of the transaction value, which is the primary basis for valuation of export goods. In cases where the transaction value is not accepted, the valuation shall be done by application of Rules 4 to 6 sequentially. As per Rule 7, exporter has to file Export Value Declaration relating to the value. Also, the value of the export goods declared by the exporter can be rejected under Rule 8.
- 10.3 Wherever there are doubts about the declared value of export goods and an investigation/enquiry is being undertaken to determine whether or not the Declared Value should be accepted, the export consignments should not be ordinarily detained. Due process envisaged under Rule 8, for rejection of declared value and consequent redetermination of value may be undertaken by applying valuation Rules sequentially.
- 10.4 The explanation to Section 14 provides for the determination of rate of exchange for the conversion of Indian currency into foreign currency and foreign currency into Indian currency which will be used by the assessing officer to arrive at the value of exported and imported goods respectively. Currently, such values are notified for 20 currencies. For the purpose of valuation of goods, "foreign currency" and "Indian currency" have the same meanings assigned to them in terms of clause (m) and clause (q) of section 2 of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (42 of 1999) respectively.]

11. Rights of appeal:

11.1 The principles of natural justice are required to be followed in valuation matters also. When the Customs authorities do not accept the declared value and re-determine the Customs value, the importer or his representative is normally required to be given a written notice followed by a personal hearing. An adjudication order giving in detail the basis of determination of the value can be obtained if the importer is aggrieved with the re-determination of value. Under the Customs Act, 1962, an importer can appeal against a decision on valuation to the Commissioner of Customs (Appeals) in the first instance. A second appeal lies to the Tribunal (CESTAT) consisting of administrative and judicial members. A third appeal lies to the Supreme Court of India. The importer is informed regarding his rights of appeal by each of the adjudicating and appellate authorities.

12. Customs (Assistance in Value Declaration of Identified Imported Goods) Rules, 2023 (CAVR, 2023)

12.1 To address the issue of undervaluation in imports the Board has framed Customs (Assistance in Value Declaration of Identified Imported Goods) Rules, 2023. These rules provide for the additional obligations of the importer in respect of a class of imported goods whose value is not being declared correctly, the criteria of selection of such goods, and the checks in respect of such goods. The Rules shall enter into force on 11th February 2023. Any person having information on undervaluation prevailing for any class of goods may refer the matter to CBIC for examination on cbic-valuation@gov.in.

12.2 The CAVR, 2023 can be applied only by following the processes referred in the rules. The written reference must have been made to the Board which, if found suitable by Screening Committee for detailed examination, must have been comprehensively examined by Evaluation Committee which should have concluded the likelihood that the value of the relevant class of goods may not be declared truthfully, having regard to the trend of the declared value or other relevant criteria. Thereafter, the Screening Committee's recommendation confirming the completeness of such report must have been made to the Board. If satisfied that the recommended report should be accepted, the Board may specify the identified goods.

12.3 The rules provide for the processes to be followed before the Board may specify a class of imported goods, for which there is a reason to believe that the value may not be declared truthfully or accurately but below it, as identified goods. The rules also provide for the procedures to be followed by an importer of identified goods, once the relevant class of goods have been specified as identified goods by the Board. These include declaring certain aspects while filing the bill of entry. Further, if required by the Customs Automated System, such importer shall also fulfil the specified additional obligations, and specified checks shall be performed so as to enable and assist the importer to demonstrate the truthfulness and accuracy of the declared value.

12.4 The circumstances, and manner, in which an Order may be withdrawn, or its parameters altered, as also the manner of review of Order, are described in the rules.

8

Provisional Assessment



Chapter 8: Provisional Assessment

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The Finance Act, 2011 introduced self-assessment under which importers and exporters are mandatorily required to self-assess the duty in terms of Section 17 of the Customs Act, 1962. This self-assessment is subject to verification by the proper officer of the Customs and may lead to reassessment by the proper officer of Customs if it is found to be incorrect. However, in terms of Section 17(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 in case an importer or exporter is not able to make self-assessment, he may, request in writing to the proper officer for assessment. Also, in terms of Section 18 of the Customs Act, 1962, in case, the proper officer is not able to verify the self- assessment or make re- assessment of duty or he deems it necessary to subject any imported or export goods to any chemical or other tests or where necessary documents have not been produced or information has not been furnished and it is necessary to make further enquiry, he may direct that the duty leviable on such goods be assessed provisionally.

2. Conditions for provisional assessment:

- 2.1 For making provisional assessment the proper officer is required to estimate the duty to be levied i.e. the provisional duty. Wherever, duty is to be assessed provisionally, in terms of section 18, the importer or exporter shall:
- (a) for the purposes of undertaking to pay on demand the deficiency, if any, between the duty as may be finally assessed or re-assessed and the duty provisionally assessed, execute a bond, in the prescribed form and;
 - (b) furnish such security for the payment of duty deficiency as prescribed.
- 2.2 The security to be obtained shall be in the form of bank guarantee or a cash deposit, as convenient to the importer.
- 2.3 CBIC has issued comprehensive guidelines for provisional assessment vide Circular No. 38/2016- Customs dated 22.08.2016. This circular has been revised after the implementation of the Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020 (referred to as the CAROTAR, 2020) issued vide Notification No. 81/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 21st August, 2020. The latest standing CBIC Circular prescribing guidelines for provisional assessment are provided in Circular 19/2021 Customs dated 16.08.2021.

3. Finalization of provisional assessment:

- 3.1 The assessments should be finalized expeditiously. Customs (Finalisation of Provisional Assessment) Regulations, 2018, have been notified on 14.8.2018 to prescribe the timelines and manner for finalization of provisional assessments. However, in cases involving project imports, assessments should be finalized as per Project Import Regulations, 1986 as amended.

[Refer Clarification issued vide F. No. 353/91/74-Cus dated 28.01.1977; Instructions F.No.511/7/77-Cus.VI, dated 09.01.1978; Project Import

Regulations, 1986; Circular No.38/2016 dated 22.08.2016 as amended by
Circulars No. 42/2020 dated 29.09.2020 and No.19/2021 dated 16.08.2021;
Customs (Finalisation of Provisional Assessment) Regulations, 2018;
[Customs (Provisional Duty Assessment) Regulations, 2011, rescinded by
Notification No.113/2016-Cus (N.T.) dated 22.08.2016]



9

Import/Export Restrictions and Prohibitions

Chapter 9: Import / Export Restrictions and Prohibitions

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Deliberate evasion of duty or violation of prohibition/restriction imposed upon import of export of specified goods invites penal action under the Customs Act, 1962 or any of the allied legislations that are enforced by the Customs in terms of the said Act. Thus, importers and exporters and other connected with international trade require to be well conversant with the provisions of Customs Act, 1962, the Foreign Trade Policy, as well as other relevant allied Acts and make sure that before any imports are effected or export planned, they are aware of any prohibition/restrictions and requirements subject to which alone goods can be imported/exported.

2. Legal provisions governing restrictions/prohibitions:

- 2.1 Some of the relevant legal provisions that come into play when there is violation of the Customs Act, 1962 or any Allied Acts are as follows:
- (a) “Prohibited Goods” are defined in Section 2(33) of the Customs Act, 1962 as meaning “any goods the import or export of which is subject to any prohibition under the Customs Act or any other law for the time being in force”. Thus, a prohibition under any other law can be enforced under the Customs Act, 1962. For instance, under Sections 3 and 5 of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, the Central Government can make provisions for prohibiting, restricting or otherwise regulating the import of export of the goods, which finds reflected in the Foreign Trade Policy, laid down by the DGFT, Department of Commerce. Some of the goods are absolutely prohibited for import and export whereas some goods can be imported or exported against a licence and/or subject to certain restrictions.
 - (b) One example is provided at Para 5 of the General Notes regarding Import Policy under Schedule 1 – Import Policy of the ITC(HS), 2022 in terms of which all such packaged products, which are subject to provisions of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 (as amended from time to time) when produced/ packed/ sold in domestic market, shall be subject to compliance of all the provisions of the said rules, when imported into India. Thus, all such packaged commodities imported into India shall carry the name and address of the importer, Generic or common name of the commodity packed, net quantity in terms of standard unit of weights measures, Month and year of packing in which the commodity is manufactured or packed or imported, maximum retail sale price including other taxes, local or otherwise and Consumer Care details, etc. In case any of the conditions is not fulfilled, the import of packaged products shall be held as prohibited, rendering such goods liable to confiscation.
 - (c) Another example is that certain products are required to comply with the mandatory Indian Quality Control Orders (QCOs) and for this purpose exporters of these products to India are required to register themselves with

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Non-fulfilment of the above requirement shall render such goods prohibited for import. Action on such goods and persons involved can be taken under the Customs Act, 1962.

- (d) Under Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962 the Central Government has the power to issue notification under which export or import of any goods can be declared as prohibited. The prohibition can either be absolute or conditional. The specified purposes for which a notification under Section 11 can be issued are maintenance of the security of India, prevention and shortage of goods in the country, conservation of foreign exchange, safeguarding balance of payments etc.
- (e) Section 111(d) and Section 113(d) of the Customs Act, 1962 provide that any goods which are imported or attempted to be imported and exported or attempted to be exported, contrary to any prohibition imposed by or under the said Act or any other law for the time being in force shall be liable to confiscation.
- (f) Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for penalty for improper importation and Section 114 of the said Act provides for penalty for attempt to export goods improperly. In respect of prohibited goods, the adjudicating Officer may impose penalty upto five times the value of the goods. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for the trade to know what the prohibitions or restrictions in force are before they contemplate to import or export any goods.

3. Prohibitions/restrictions under Foreign Trade Policy/ other Allied Acts:

- 3.1 Apart from collection of duty, Customs has also been entrusted with the responsibility to ensure compliance with prohibitions or restrictions imposed on the import and export of goods under the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) and other Allied Acts. The Customs has a pivotal role to play because, it is the agency stationed at the border to enforce the rules, regulations and orders issued by various administrative Ministries. For instance, import and export of specified goods may be restricted/prohibited under other laws such as Environment Protection Act, Wildlife Act, Arms Act, etc. and these will apply to the penal provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 rendering such goods liable to confiscation under Sections 111(d) - for import - and 113(d) - for export - of the said Act. Thus, for the purpose of the penal provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 it is relevant to appreciate the provisions of these allied legislations.

4. Food Safety and Standards Authority Act, 2006:

- 4.1 As per the Food Safety and Standards Authority Act, 2006 (FSSA), any product not fulfilling the statutory provisions is not allowed to be imported into the country. Likewise, there are several rules, regulations, orders, notifications, etc. issued by the Government, laying down procedures as to how the imports of above products are to be dealt with. The FSSAI has been established to lay down standards and regulate/monitor the manufacturing, import, processing, distribution and sale of food.

4.2 Operationalization of SWIFT:

- I. Board Circular Nos. 03/2016-Customs dated 03.02.2016 and 10/2016-Customs dated 15.03.2016 were issued for operationalization of the Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT) from 01st April 2016 at all EDI locations throughout India.
- II. As on date, Instruction No. 17/2024-Customs dated 05.07.2024 was issued for clearance of food consignments by Customs officers at locations where FSSAI has provided delegation. FSSAI has now issued Notifications dated 03.05.2024 and 21.06.2024 issued from File No. 1-1715/FSSAI/Imports/2017 (Pt.1) notifying Customs officer as 'Authorized officers' under food safety laws. This order is in supersession of all previous notifications/ orders with regard to authorizing Customs officials to handle food import clearance. This order is also available at <http://www.fssai.gov.in/home/imports/orderguidelines.html>.
- III. In SWIFT, the system automatically refers food-related consignments to the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) through a message exchange system established between ICEGATE and the Food Import Clearance System (FICS) operated by FSSAI. This automatic reference of imported food consignments is done in locations where FSSAI has its offices. For the remaining Customs EDI locations, the system generates instructions directing that Customs 'Authorized Officers' may clear the consignment (wherever, such 'Authorized Officer' are present) and in other locations where 'Authorized Officers' are not present, the consignments were to be referred to Port Health officer for an NOC.
- IV. In respect of the above notified locations, Commissioners of Customs are requested to suitably guide the officers responsible for clearance of food consignments. There should not be any Customs location which is not covered either by FSSAI officials or by the 'Authorized Officers' of Customs. Therefore, Commissioners of Customs are also required to identify Customs locations, in their jurisdiction which are not notified under the said order and bring the same to the notice of the CBIC/ Single window.
- V. FSSAI has also issued a list of accredited laboratories for the testing of all food-related consignments vide order F. No. QA-12012/1/2021-RARD-FSSAI dated 12.12.2024. This list can be accessed at <http://www.fssai.gov.in/home/food-testing/Orders---Notice.html>. Prior to clearance, the Customs officers posted in the shed should record in the system the acceptance or rejection of the consignments as part of the examination report as this would help in carrying out risk analysis.

[Refer Circulars No. 03/2016-Customs dated 03.02.2016, No. 10/2016-Customs dated 15.03.2016 and Instruction No. 17/2024-Customs dated 05.07.2024]

- 4.3 FSSAI lays down detailed guidelines for examination and testing of food items prior to Customs clearance. It is, thus, provided that the Customs shall undertake the following general checks and if the product does not satisfy these

requirements, clearance shall not be allowed:

- (i) All consignments of high-risk food items, as listed in DGFT Policy Circular No. 37(RE- 2003)/2002-2007 dated 14.06.2004 (as may be modified from time to time), shall be referred to Authorised Representative of FSSAI or PHOs, as the case may be, for testing and clearance shall be allowed only after receipt of the test report as per the instructions contained in the Customs Circular No. 58/ 2001-Cus., dated 25-10-2001.
- (ii) All consignments of perishable items like fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, cheese, etc., will continue to be handled in terms of the guidelines contained in Para 2.3 of the Board's Circular No.58/2001-Customs dated 25.10.2001.
- (iii) In respect of food items not covered under (a) and (b) above, the following procedure would be adopted in addition to the general checks prescribed under Para 2.1 of the Circular No. 58/2001-Cus dated 25.10.2001 (amended by Circular No. 03/2011-Cus):
 - (a) Samples would be drawn from the first five consecutive consignments of each food item, imported by a particular importer and referred to Authorised Representative of FSSAI or PHOs, as the case may be, for testing to ascertain the quality and health safety standards of the consignments.
 - (b) In the event of the samples conforming to the prescribed standards, the Customs would switch to a system of checking 5% - 20% of the consignments of these food items on a random basis, for checking conformity to the prescribed standards. The selection of food items for random checking and testing would be done by the Customs taking into consideration factors like the nature of the food products, its source of origin as well as track record of the importers as well as information received from FSSAI from time to time.
 - (c) In case, a sample drawn from a food item in a particular consignment fails to meet the prescribed standards, the Customs would place the import of the said consignment on alert, discontinue random checking for import of such food items and revert to the procedure of compulsory checking. The system of random sampling for import of such food items would be restored only if the test results of the samples drawn from the 5 consecutive consignments re-establish that the food items are in conformity with the prescribed standards.

- 4.4 The 'general checks' include checking the condition of the hold in which the products were transported to see whether they meet the requirements of storage, as per the nature of the product, and does not in any way cause deterioration or contamination of the products. Also, physical/ visual appearance in terms of possible damage - whether it is swollen or bulged in appearance; and also, for rodent/insect contamination or presence of filth, dirt etc. should be checked. Finally, it should be checked that the product meets the labelling requirements under Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 and the Packaged Commodities Rules. This includes ensuring that the label is written not only in any foreign language, but also in English. The details of ingredients in

descending order, date of manufacture, batch no., best before date etc. are mandatory requirements. All products will also have to indicate details of best before on all food packages.

- 4.5 Authorised Officers of FSSAI will ascertain that for the imported pre-packaged good items, the language and other major requirements of the label like mention of best before date, nutrition information etc. should comply the labeling provisions under Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020, failing which sample may not be drawn from such consignment for testing.

[Refer Circulars No. 03/2016-Customs dated 03.02.2016, No. 10/2016-Customs dated 15.03.2016 and Instruction No. 17/2024-Customs dated 05.07.2024]

- 4.6 As per Para 4(B) of Chapter IA (General Notes Regarding Import Policy) of the ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import items, import of all such edible /food products, domestic sale and manufacture of which are governed by Food Safety & Standards (Import) Regulation, 2017 shall also be subject to the condition that, at the time of importation, the products are having a valid shelf life of not less than 60% of its original shelf life or three months before expiry, whichever is less at the time of import. Shelf life of the product is to be calculated, based on the declaration given on the label of the product, regarding its date of manufacture and the due date for expiry. Therefore, Customs shall ensure that this condition is complied with before allowing clearance of such consignments.

- 4.7 At certain ports / airports / ICDs / CFSs where Authorised officers under FSS Act, 2006 are not available, the samples will be drawn by Customs and these may be got tested from the nearest Central Food Laboratory or a laboratory authorized for such testing by DGHS or FSSAI. As a measure of trade facilitation, while the CRCL labs are being upgraded, the Board identified laboratories where field formations may directly forward samples of certain goods to outside laboratories. However, field formations shall first ensure with their respective laboratories that the testing facilities for any particular items listed in the relevant Circulars are not available with them before forwarding such samples to outside Laboratory(s).

[Refer Circulars No.58/2001-Cus., dated 25.10.2001, No.43/2005-Cus., dated 24.11.2005, No.3/2011-Cus., dated 6.1.2011, No. 43/2017-Customs dated 16.11.2017, 11/2018- Customs dated 17.05.2018 and No. 28/2018- Customs dated 30.08.2018.]

5. Labeling of the goods imported into India - Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011:

- 5.1 Para 5 of the General Notes regarding Import Policy under Schedule 1 – Import Policy of the ITC(HS), 2022 provides that all such packaged products, which are subject to provisions of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 (as amended from time to time) when produced/ packed/ sold in domestic market, shall be subject to compliance of all the provisions of the said rules, when imported into India. This provision mandates that compliance of labeling conditions have to be ensured before the import consignment of such

commodities are cleared by Customs for home consumption. All prepackaged commodities, imported into India, shall in particular carry the following declarations:

- (a) Name and address of the importer;
- (b) Generic or common name of the commodity packed;
- (c) Net quantity in terms of standard unit of weights and measures. If the net quantity in the imported package is given in any other unit, its equivalent in terms of standard units shall be declared by the importer;
- (d) Month and year of packing in which the commodity is manufactured or packed or imported;
- (e) Maximum retail sale price at which the commodity in packaged form may be sold to the ultimate consumer. This price shall include all taxes local or otherwise, freight, transport charges, commission payable to dealers, and all charges towards advertising, delivery, packing, forwarding and the like, as the case may be.
- (f) Consumer Care details, etc.

- 5.2 In order to redress the issue and to remove the difficulties faced by importers on account of space constraints at CFSs/ Port / ICDs and the nature of goods, etc., the Board has allowed the labeling on imported goods in Bonded warehouses subject to certain procedural conditions. It is clarified that the importers should first ascertain that for such marking / labeling facility, space, is available in warehouse prior to exercising this option. In such cases, importers may file Warehousing Bill of Entry and the Assessing Group will give suitable directions to Dock staff to allow bonding of the goods without labeling and with endorsement on the Warehousing Bill of Entry that verification of compliance of Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 is to be done prior to de-bonding by Bond Superintendent. The goods will then be labeled in the bonded premises and compliance of said Rules will be ensured at the time of ex-bonding of the goods, by the Bond Officer, by examining the goods again and endorsing the Examination Report on the Ex-bond Bill of Entry. 100% examination at the time of Ex-bond clearance of goods should be done to ensure compliance of the said DGFT Notification. The Examination Report can be endorsed on hard copy of Ex-bond Bill of Entry where EDI facility is not extended, and on hard copy as well as EDI system where EDI facility is extended to Bonded Warehouses. It is also clarified that this facility is applicable only to goods that cannot be easily labeled in ports / CFS, having regard to their size and other factors such as sensitivity to temperature and dust.

6. The Livestock Importation Act, 1898:

- 6.1 The import of livestock and livestock products is regulated by the Livestock Importation Act, 1898. The objective of this Act and the notifications/orders issued therein is to regulate the import of livestock products in such a manner that

these imports do not adversely affect the country's human and animal health population.

- 6.2 The livestock products are allowed to be imported into India only through the sea ports or airports located at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, where the Animal Quarantine and Certification Services Stations are located. In addition, import of perishable fish items, exclusively meant for human consumption but excluding seed material for breeding or rearing purposes, is allowed at Petrapole, District North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, through land route. On arrival at the port/seaport, the livestock product is required to be inspected by the officer in-charge of the Animal Quarantine and Certification Services Station or any other veterinary officer duly authorized by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. After inspection and testing, wherever required, quarantine clearance is accorded by the concerned quarantine or veterinary authority for the entry of the livestock product into India. If required in public interest, the quarantine or veterinary authority may also order the destruction of the livestock product or its return to the country of origin. The Customs will have to ensure that the livestock products are granted clearance for home consumption only after necessary permission is granted by the quarantine or veterinary authorities.
- 6.3 Wherever any disinfection or any other treatment is considered necessary in respect of any livestock product, it is the importer who has to arrange the same at his cost under the supervision of a duly authorized quarantine or veterinary officer.

[Refer Circulars No.43/2001-Cus, dated 06.08.2001, No.48/2005-Cus, dated 28.11.2005 and No. 13/2007-Cus, dated 02.03.2007 and Instructions F.No.450/132/2004-Cus.IV,dated 04.01.2005 and F.No.450/122/2005-Cus.IV, dated 13.10.2005]

7. Destructive Insects & Pests Act, 1914, PFS Order, 1989 and Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003:

- 7.1 Import of plants and plant materials into the country is regulated under the Destructive Insects & Pests (DIP) Act, 1914 and PFS Order, 1989 and Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003. As per the requirements of these enactments, subject to exemptions, as may be applicable, no consignment shall be imported even for consumption unless it is accompanied by an Import Permit and an Official Phytosanitary Certificate. However, cut flowers, garlands, bouquets, fruits and vegetables weighing less than 2 kgs. that are imported for personal consumption is allowed without a Phytosanitary Certificate or an Import Permit. Likewise, the requirement of Import Permit is relaxed for import of (a) mushroom spawn culture by EOUs and (b) tissue culture materials of any plant origin and flower seeds.
- 7.2 The Department of Agriculture and Co-operation has issued detailed guidelines for inspection and clearance of plant/plant materials, the basic features of which are as follows:
- (i) Registration of application: The importer or his authorized representative is required to file an application at the Plant Quarantine Station in respect of

each consignment immediately upon arrival at the port. In case of perishable consignments, such application can be filed in advance to enable the Plant Quarantine authorities to organize inspection/testing on priority. Along with application for registration, copies of documents namely, import permit, Phyto- sanitary certificate issued at the country of origin, copy of bill of entry, invoice, packing list and fumigation certificate, etc. are required to be submitted. The Plant Quarantine Officer shall register the application and the assessed inspection fee is required to be paid by the importer or his agent. No such application is required to be filed in the case of import of plant and plant materials through passenger baggage and post parcels.

- (ii) Sampling/inspection/fumigation of consignments: The importer or his agent is required to arrange for inspection/sampling of the consignment. In the event of live insect infestation having been noticed, the importer or his agent shall arrange for fumigation of consignment by an approved pest control operator at his own cost under the supervision of the Plant Quarantine officer.
- (iii) Release/detention of consignments: A release order is issued to Customs if a consignment on inspection is found to be free from pests. However, in case it is found infested with live pests, the same is permitted clearance only after fumigation and reinspection. The detention order is issued, if the consignment is imported in contravention of the PQ Regulations, for arranging deportation failing which the same shall be destroyed at the cost of importer under the supervision of the Plant Quarantine Officer, in presence of Customs Officers after giving due notice in advance i.e. for perishable plant material 24-48 hours and 7 days for other plant material. The Customs will ensure that plant/plant material (primary agricultural products) are granted clearance for home consumption only after necessary permission is granted by the concerned Plant and Quarantine Officer.

7.3 In terms of Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003, no article, packed with raw or solid wood packaging material shall be released by the Customs unless the wood packaging material has been appropriately treated and marked as per International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 15 or accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate with the treatment endorsed. The proper officer of Customs shall grant release of such articles packed with untreated wood packaging material only after ensuring that the wood packaging material has been appropriately treated at the point of entry under the supervision of Plant Quarantine Officer. The Customs Officers are required to report the non-compliant cases to the concerned Plant Quarantine Station / authorities for necessary action.

8. Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945:

8.1 In terms of Rule 133 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, no cosmetics shall be imported into India except through the points of entry specified in Rule 43A of the said Rules. Further, under Schedule "D" to the said Rules read with Rule 43, an exemption is provided to certain categories of substances from the restrictions under Chapter III of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 relating to import of drugs and cosmetics. Further, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has

clarified that under Schedule "D" to the said Rules, an exemption has been provided for substances not intended for medical use from the provisions of Chapter III of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules made thereunder. The Act provides for separate definition for 'cosmetic' and drug under Sub-Section 3(aaa) and 3(b), respectively. Hence, the phrase substances not intended for medical use" would only relate to substances which would otherwise fall under the definition of the term drug under Section 3(b) of the Act, but are being imported not for medicinal use or for some other purposes or are of commercial quality and are being labeled indicating that they are not for the- medicinal use or for some other purposes or are of commercial quality and are being labeled indicating that they are not for medicinal use. Accordingly, DCGI had clarified that this exemption does not extend to other categories of products defined under the Act including cosmetics. For the purpose of import of cosmetics, provision of Rule 133 therefore remains applicable.

- 8.2 The points of entry specifically mentioned in Rule 43A are Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Nhava Sheva, Cochin, Kandla, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Ferozpur Cantonment, Amritsar, Ranaghat, Bongaon and Mohiassan Railways Stations.
- 8.3 As per rule 43A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, drugs can be only imported into India through specified places. Accordingly, import of drugs at any other place may not be permitted. Further, whenever in doubt, field formations may seek necessary clarification about the generic name versus chemical name of medicines before clearance. The specified places are:
- (i) Ferozepore Cantonment and Amritsar Railway Stations (for drugs imported by rail across the frontier with Pakistan)
 - (ii) Bongaon, Mohiassan and Ranaghat Railways Stations (for drugs imported by rail across the frontier with Bangladesh)
 - (iii) Raxaul (for drugs imported by road and railway lines connecting Raxaul in India and Birganj in Nepal)
 - (iv) Chennai, Cochin, Kandla, Kolkata, Mumbai and Nhava Sheva (for drugs imported by sea)
 - (v) Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai (for drugs imported by airports)
- 8.4 Import consignments of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) including eCigarettes, Heat- Not- Burn devices, Vape, e-Sheesha, e- Nicotine Flavoured Hookah, and the like devices/ products may be referred to Assistant/ Deputy Drugs Controller for checking compliance.

[Refer Circular No. 46/ 2018- Customs dated 27.11.2018]

- 8.5 The MoH&FW vide Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Second Amendment Rules, 2018 notified by G.S.R. 331 (E) dated 03.04.2018 has specified a new set of health warnings w.e.f.01.09.2018. In addition to the existing statutory requirements, compliance of the amendments

in health warning specifications prescribed by the COTP Amendment Rules, 2018 are to be ensured before clearance of import consignments or disposal of seized/confiscated tobacco products, including Cigarettes.

[Refer Circulars No. 20/2018-Customs dated 20.06.2018, No. 09/2017-Customs dated 29.03.2017, No. 27/2017-Customs dated 05.07.2017 and Instructions vide F. No. 450/160/2009-Cus.IV dated 29.12.2009]

- 8.6 Single Window Project - Simplification of procedure in SWIFT for clearance of consignments related to drugs & cosmetics: Several items falling under different Customs Tariff Heads which have been mapped are chemicals and not drugs. These are being routed for ADC's clearance by virtue of the Customs Tariff Heads under which they are declared, and the ADC's office routinely declares them as "out of scope". In this regard, a list of such items has been prepared and published on the ICEGATE website as part of PGA Exemption Category (PEC). Importers of such goods should identify their items on this PEC list and include them as part of the Integrated Declaration in order to avoid unnecessary references to the ADC. The PEC will be duly updated after holding consultations in the Working Group and with the approval of the concerned PGAs (DCGI - in case of drugs and cosmetics items).

[Refer Circular No. 28/2016 dated 14.06.2016]

9. Import of hazardous substances:

- 9.1 As per Chapter 1A of General Notes regarding Import Policy (ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items, Schedule I, imports of Hazardous Waste shall also be subject to the provisions of Chapter III of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016. Accordingly, hazardous waste (including substances containing or contaminated with such hazardous wastes) as specified in Schedule VI of Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 shall be 'Prohibited' for imports, notwithstanding anything contained in this ITC (HS).
- 9.2 Wastes arising out of the operation from ships beyond five kilometers of the relevant baseline as covered under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (44 of 1958) and the rules made thereunder and as amended from time to time; The utilization of waste oil/sludge derived from the normal course of a ship's operation as a resource or after pre-processing either for co-processing or for any other use, including within the premises of the generator (if it is not part of process), shall be carried out only after obtaining authorisation from the State Pollution Control Board in respect of waste on the basis of standard operating procedures or guidelines provided by the Central Pollution Control. Such waste oil/sludge will conform to the definition in Schedule IV of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016
- 9.3 Import of Hazardous Chemicals permitted is permitted in accordance with the provisions of the Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules 1989 (as amended) made under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986). Besides other conditions mentioned in the Rules, the importer shall, before 30

days but not later than the date of import, furnish the details specified in Rule 18 to the Authority specified in Schedule 5 of the said Rules.

9.4 Import of products, equipment containing Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) will be subject to Rule 10 of the Ozone Depleting Substances Rules, 2000. In terms of these Rules no person shall import or cause to import any product specified in column (2) of Schedule VII, which was made with or contains Ozone Depleting Substances specified in column (3), unless a license is obtained from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

9.5 Import of Genetically Modified Food, Feed, Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs) and Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) will be subject to the following conditions :

- i. The import of GMOs / LMOs for the purpose of (i) R & D; (ii) food; (iii) feed; (iv) processing in bulk; and (v) for environment release will be governed by the provisions of the Environment Protection Act, 1986 and Rules 1989.
- ii. The import of any food, feed, raw or processed or any ingredient of food, food additives or any food product that contains GM material and is being used either for industrial production, environmental release, or field application will be allowed only with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC).
- iii. Institutes / Companies who wish to import Genetically Modified material for R&D purposes will submit their proposal to the Review Committee for Genetic Modification (RCGM) under the Department of Bio-Technology. In case the Companies / Institutes use this Genetically Modified material for commercial purposes approval of GEAC is also required.
- iv. At the time of import all consignments containing products which have been subjected to Genetic Modification will carry a declaration stating that the product is Genetically Modified. In case a consignment does not carry such a declaration and is later found to contain Genetically Modified material, the importer is liable to penal action under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

9.6 As per Chapter 1A of General Notes regarding Import Policy (ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items, Schedule I, import of textile and textile articles is permitted subject to the condition that they shall not contain any of the hazardous dyes whose handling, production, carriage or use is prohibited by the Government of India under the provisions of clause (d) of subsection (2) of Section 6 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986) read with the relevant rule(s) framed thereunder. For this purpose, the import consignments shall be accompanied by a pre-shipment certificate from a textile testing laboratory accredited to the National Accreditation Agency of the Country of Origin. In cases where such certificates are not available, the consignment will be cleared after getting a sample of the imported consignment tested & certified from any of the agencies:

- (i) Textiles Committee of Ministry of Textiles and its various testing facilities,

(ii) Central Silk Technological Research Institute (CSRTI) (located at Bengaluru, Karnataka) and Eco Testing Laboratory Central Silk Technological Research Institute (located at Bhagalpur, Bihar, and Varanasi Uttar Pradesh); of the Central Silk Board.

The sampling will be based on the following parameters:

- a) At least 25% of samples are drawn for testing instead of 100%.
- b) While drawing the samples, it will be ensured by Customs that majority samples are drawn from consignments originating from countries where there is no legal prohibition on the use of harmful hazardous Dyes.
- c) The test report will be valid for a period of six months in cases where the textile/textile articles of the same specification/quality are imported and the importer, supplier and the country of origin are the same.

However, the above procedure at 2. I and II, regarding testing of Textiles and Textile Articles for presence of Azo Dyes, will not be applicable for imports originating from the countries as listed in Appendix-2X of Appendices and Aayat Niryat Forms of FTP 2015-20, where the use of Azo Dyes in Textiles and Textile Articles is banned.

10. Clearance of imported metal scrap:

10.1 In terms of the relevant provisions of the Foreign Trade Policy, the following procedure is prescribed for clearance of imported metal scrap.

- (i) Import of any form of metallic waste, scrap will be subject to the condition that it will not contain hazardous, toxic waste, radioactive contaminated waste / scrap containing radioactive material, any type of arms, ammunition, mines, shells, live or used cartridge or any other explosive material in any form either used or otherwise.
- (ii) In 'Freely' Importable metallic waste and scraps (shredded) as listed in Para 2.51 of the Handbook of Procedure (HBP), 2023, shall be permitted through all ports of India subject to following conditions:
 - a. At the time of the clearance of goods, importer shall furnish to the Customs pre-shipment inspection certificate as per the format to Appendix 2H from any of the Inspection & Certification agencies given in Appendix-2G, to the effect that the consignment was checked for radiation level and scrap does not contain radiation level (gamma and neutron) in excess of natural background. The certificate shall give the value of background radiation level at that place as also the maximum radiation level on the scrap; and
 - b. Importer shall also furnish copy of the contract with the exporter stipulating that the consignment does not contain any radioactive contaminated material in any form.
- (iii) Import of un-shredded compressed and loose form of metallic waste, scrap listed in paragraph 2.51(a) of the Handbook of Procedure (HBP), 2023 shall

be subject to the following conditions: -

- (a) At the time of the clearance of goods, importer shall furnish to the Customs pre-shipment inspection certificate as per the format in Appendix 2H from any of the Inspection & Certification agencies given in Appendix-2G to the effect that the consignment does not contain any type of arms, ammunition, mines, shells, cartridges, or any other explosive material in any form either used or otherwise, and that the consignment was checked for radiation level and it does not contain radiation level (gamma and neutron) in excess of natural background. The certificate shall give the value of background radiation level at that place as also the maximum radiation level on the scrap.
- (b) The imported item (s) is actually a metallic waste/ scrap /seconds /defective as per the internationally accepted parameters for such a classification.
- (c) Copy of the contract between the importer and the exporter stipulating that the consignment does not contain any type of arms, ammunition, mines, shells, cartridges, radioactive contaminated, or any other explosive material in any form either used or otherwise.
- (d) Import of scrap would take place only through following designated ports and no exceptions would be allowed even in case of EOUs, SEZs:-
 1. Chennai, 2. Cochin, 3. Ennore, 4. JNPT, 5. Kandla, 6. Mormugao, 7. Mumbai, 8. New Mangalore, 9. Paradip, 10. Tuticorin, 11. Vishakhapatnam, 12. Pipava 13. Mundra, 14. Kolkata 15. Krishnapatnam and 16. Kattupalli 17. Hazira 18. Kamarajar and 19. Adani Gangavaram.
- (e) Only entry sea ports will be designated and notified for import of un-shredded Metallic Waste and Scrap subject to the following:
 - Any sea port to be designated for import of un–shredded metallic scrap will be required to install Radiation Portal Monitors and Container Scanner with adequate security.
 - Any ICD can handle clearance of un–shredded metallic scrap provided the same passes through any of the designated sea ports as mentioned above or any new ports to be notified/designated from time to time, where Radiation Portal Monitors and Container Scanner are in operation and the consignment is subjected to risk-based scanning/ monitoring as per the protocol laid down by Customs.
 - Import consignments of metallic waste and scrap shall be subject to pre-shipment inspection certificate (PSIC) from the country of origin. However, metallic waste and scrap (both shredded and unshredded) imported from safe countries / region i.e., the USA, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the EU will not require PSIC if consignments are cleared through eleven (11) ports namely, Chennai, Tuticorin, Kandla, JNPT, Mumbai Krishnapatnam, Mundra, Kattupalli, Hazira, Kamarajar and Adani Gangavaram. Consignments from these six countries / regions will be accompanied by certificate from the

supplier / scrap yard authority to the effect that it does not contain any radioactive materials / explosives. These will however be subject to radiation and explosive checks through portal monitors and container scanner at these ports. Trans-shipments through these countries / regions will not be allowed this facility. Import through remaining eight (8) other ports (for both shredded and unshredded scrap / waste), irrespective of country of origin, will be subject to PSIS

11. International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM-15):

11.1 International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) are prescribed as per IPPC convention of FAO to reduce the risk of introduction / or spread of quarantine pest associated with wood packaging material (including dunnage) made of coniferous and non-coniferous raw wood, in use in international trade.

11.2 DGFT, vide Notification No 54/2009-2014 dated 3.8.2010 has made it mandatory that export of goods including plant and plant products using wood packaging materials such as pallet, dunnage, crating, packing blocks, drums, cases load boards, pellet collars shall be allowed subject to compliance of ISPM-15.

11.3 On export side, a large number of consignments are intercepted abroad for non-compliance of ISPM-15 Standards relating to wood packaging materials used for export of materials, as informed by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Thus, the Board has decided that export / imported consignment with wood packaging material is to be inspected by Customs and if any export / imported consignment is found without ISPM15 mark or with doubtful marking, it should be reported to Plant Quarantine Officer / authorities for taking necessary action. It is also clarified that exporters should specifically indicate in the Shipping Bill, the description of packaging material so as to ensure whether any consignment with wooden packaging material warrants mandatory compliance with ISPM-15 standards or not.

11.4 Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has informed that all the agencies authorized to provide ISPM Certification on wood packaging material have been duly accredited by Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine & Storage. These agencies issue ISPM-15 certification after providing treatment with Methyl Bromide or Forced Hot Air as per prescribed norms. The list of these accredited agencies is available at www.plantquarantineindia.org.

[Refer Circular No.13/2011-Cus., dated 28.02.2011]

11.5 Cases of non-adherence/infringement of prescribed phytosanitary standards have been reported by other Customs administrations especially EU. Ministry of Agriculture has repeatedly expressed concerns over increasing number of such cases and desired remedial action be taken to check export of consignments not meeting required phytosanitary specifications i.e. ISPM 15. Board has reiterated that no export consignments packed with raw or solid wood packaging material that is found deficient in meeting phytosanitary requirements ISPM 15 shall be allowed clearance.

[Refer Instruction F.No.450/19/2005-CusIV., dated 16.09.2013]

12. Export of Leather:

12.1 In order to put in place a robust system of inspection with presence of officials from CLRI at identified Customs stations to check the unauthorised export of semi-finished leather in the guise of finished leather (with intent to evade applicable export duty), Board in consultation with CLE (Council for Leather Exports) has prescribed the following arrangement w.e.f. 15.4.2013:

- (a) Officials of CLRI shall be deployed at Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata ports and Kanpur and Tughlakabad ICDs and the cost thereof shall be borne by CLE.
- (b) The officials of CLRI shall assist Customs officers in examination of export consignments of leather. Where required, samples shall be drawn by Customs in presence of officials of CLRI. Samples so drawn by Customs shall be sent to CLRI or approved labs for testing.

[Refer Instruction F.No.450/39/2012-Cus IV., dated 16.04.2013]

13. Compliance of mandatory Indian Quality Standards :

13.1 As per Para 2(A) of General Notes regarding Import Policy (ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items, Schedule I, quality of the products that are subject to mandatory Indian Standards, as applicable to domestic goods, shall be required to comply with quality specified for the product as per same Indian Standards. For compliance of this requirement, all manufactures/exporters of these products to India shall be required to obtain BIS license for using Standards mark on their product. The present list of 'Items under mandatory BIS certification' is given in Appendix – III of Schedule-I to ITC(HS), 2022. As and when BIS notifies the quality specifications for new product(s) as an Indian Standards, the said Indian Standard would be deemed to be part of Appendix – III from the date of implementation of the said Indian Standards for the said product(s) and the import of that product(s) shall conform to that specified Indian Standard from the date of implementation as specified for the said product(s) by BIS. Non-fulfillment of the above requirement shall render such goods prohibited for import.

14. Compliance of provisions of the Steel and Steel Products (Quality Control) Order 2024

14.1 Import of Steel and Steel Products in contravention of the Steel and Steel Products (Quality Control) Order, 2024 notified on 30.08.2024 as amended shall not be allowed. Field formations should ensure that the provisions are strictly complied with and import of substandard and steel products in contravention of aforementioned Orders are not permitted.

14.2 The DGFT Notification No.17/2015-2020 dated 05.09.2019 amends the import policy for certain goods falling under Chapter 72, 73 and 86 of ITC (HS), 2017 as annexed to the said notification from 'free' to 'free subject to compulsory registration under **Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS)**'. The Steel Import

Monitoring System (SIMS) shall require importers to submit an advance information on an online system for import of items in the Annex and obtain an advance automatic registration number by paying the prescribed registration fee. 3. The necessary changes related to SIMS have been operationalized in ICES. Bills of Entry for import of goods falling under the above said notification of DGFT shall mandatorily be filed in accordance with ICES Advisory 25/2019 issued by Directorate of Systems from 21.11.19. The above changes have been separately communicated to the various Customs Brokers Associations and RES software providers by Directorate of Systems. Points to be noted:

- (a) SIMS registration will not be applicable on air-freighted goods as this mode is used for emergency/small volume-high value goods required at short notice.
- (b) Once SIMS registration has been obtained, any number of consignments can be imported by a single SIMS registration within the validity of the registration.
- (c) SIMS is applicable to imports through Advance Authorisation, DFIA and imports to SEZs.
- (d) SIMS shall not be applicable to returnable steel racks imported on temporary import and on FOC basis as they are not meant for domestic consumption.

[Refer Circular No. 38/2019-Customs dated 21.11.2019]

14.3 As a part of the Ease of Doing Business initiative, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has eased the manner of licence processing for import of wireless equipment by Telecom Service Providers. As per the modified procedure, importers shall apply to DoT thirty days prior to the arrival of shipment. On such application, the licence can be automatically generated on self-declaration basis by the importer through a portal developed by DoT named "Saralsanchar"

[Refer Instruction No. 23/2021-Customs dated 23.11.2021]

14.4 Wireless Planning & Coordination Wing has issued compendium with regard to Import licensing requirement from WPC Wing for import of wireless equipment. WPC Wing vide OM R-11017/01/2018-PP (part-1) dated 09-09-2024 has also conveyed that all the applications of Equipment Type Approval (ETA) for wireless equipment devices, which have been license-exempt through various Gazette notifications issued from time to time, shall be granted to the applicant on a self-declaration basis.

[Refer Instruction No. 16/2022-Customs dated 21.07.2022, 24/2024-Customs dated 22.10.2024]

14.5 For import of Telecom equipment, Importers must declare an alphanumeric code (against tariff items 8517 62 90 and 8517 69 90) in the bill of entry for telecom products under specific tariff items. This requirement aims to ensure accurate classification from the time of filing import declarations, enhancing clarity and compliance.

[Refer Circular No. 8/2023 – Customs dated 13.03.2023]

10
Warehousing



Chapter 10: Warehousing

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 There are instances when the importer does not want clearance of the imported goods immediately due to factors such as market price, salability, requirement in the factory of production, paucity of funds etc. The importer would prefer to warehouse such goods till they are required. Some imported goods are also warehoused for supplies to EOU/EHTP/STP/SEZ units. Goods imported for sale in Duty Free Shops at International Airports are also warehoused before being sold to international travelers. Thus, the Customs Act, 1962 contains specific provisions that facilitate the warehousing of imported goods. The imported goods after landing may be allowed to be removed to a warehouse without payment of duty and duty is paid at the time of clearance from the warehouse. Provisions lay down the time period up to which the goods may remain in a warehouse, without incurring any interest liability and thereafter, with interest liability.

2. Legal provisions:

- 2.1 The facility of warehousing of the imported goods in Custom Bonded Warehouses, without payment of Customs duty is permitted in terms of Chapter IX of the Customs Act, 1962.

3. Appointment of Public Warehouses:

- 3.1 Section 57 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may subject to such conditions as may be prescribed license a public warehouse where dutiable goods may be deposited.
- 3.2 All the applications for licensing of Public Warehouses shall be carefully scrutinized and due consideration shall be given to the following criterion for their appointment:
- (a) is a citizen of India or is an entity incorporated or registered under any law for the time being in force;
 - (b) submits an undertaking to comply with such terms and conditions as may be specified by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be;
 - (c) furnishes a solvency certificate from a scheduled bank for a sum of two crore rupees: Provided that the condition of furnishing a solvency certificate shall not be applicable to an undertaking of the Central Government or State Government or Union territory or to ports notified under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 (38 of 1963);

[Refer Notification No. 70/2016- Customs (N.T.) dated 14.05.2016]

4. Appointment of Private Warehouses:

- 4.1 As per Section 58 of the Customs Act, 1962, The Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, license private warehouse wherein dutiable goods imported by or on behalf of the licensee may be deposited.
- 4.2 The main conditions for granting Private Bonded Warehouse licences are:

Where, after inspection of the premises, evaluation of compliance to the conditions under regulation 3 and conducting such enquiries as may be necessary, the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be, is satisfied that licence may be granted, he shall require the applicant to -

- (a) provide an all-risk insurance policy, that includes natural calamities, riots, fire, theft, skillful pilferage and commercial crime, in favour of the President of India, for a sum equivalent to the amount of duty involved on the dutiable goods proposed to be stored in the private warehouse at any point of time;
- (b) provide an undertaking binding himself to pay any duties, interest, fine and penalties payable in respect of warehoused goods under sub-section (3) of section 73A or under the Warehouse (Custody and Handling of Goods) Regulations, 2016;
- (c) provide an undertaking indemnifying the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be, from any liability arising on account of loss suffered in respect of warehoused goods due to accident, damage, deterioration, destruction or any other unnatural cause during their receipt, delivery, storage, dispatch or handling; and
- (d) appoint a person who has sufficient experience in warehousing operations and customs procedures as warehouse keeper.

[Refer Not. No.71 /2016- Customs (N.T.) dated 14.05.2016]

5. Appointment of Special Warehouses:

- 5.1 As per Section 58A of the Customs Act, 1962 the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, licence special warehouse wherein dutiable goods may be deposited and such warehouse shall be caused to be locked by the proper officer and no person shall enter the warehouse or remove any goods therefrom without the permission of the proper officer.
- 5.2 The Board may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify the class of goods which shall be deposited in the special warehouse licensed under sub-section (1) of Section 58A of Customs Act 1962.]

[Refer Notification No. 72 /2016 - Customs (N.T.) dated 14.05.2016]

- 5.3 The class of goods specified under sub-section (2) of section 58A has been notified by Board vide Notification No. 66/2016-Customs (N.T.) dated 14.05.2016 (amended vide Notification No. 61/2020- Customs (N.T.) dated 27.07.2020)

6. Cancellation of Licence:

- 6.1 Section 58B of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that

- (1) Where a licensee contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder or breaches any of the conditions of the licence, the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may cancel the licence granted under section 57 or section 58 or section 58A: Provided that before any licence is cancelled, the licensee shall be given a reasonable opportunity of being heard.
- (2) The Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may, without prejudice to any other action that may be taken against the licensee and the goods under this Act or any other law for the time being in force, suspend operation of the warehouse during the pendency of an enquiry under sub-section (1).
- (3) Where the operation of a warehouse is suspended under sub-section (2), no goods shall be deposited in such warehouse during the period of suspension: Provided that the provisions of this Chapter shall continue to apply to the goods already deposited in the warehouse.
- (4) Where the licence issued under section 57 or section 58 or section 58A is cancelled, the goods warehoused shall, within seven days from the date on which order of such cancellation is served on the licensee or within such extended period as the proper officer may allow, be removed from such warehouse to another warehouse or be cleared for home consumption or export:

Provided that the provisions of this Chapter shall continue to apply to the goods already deposited in the warehouse till they are removed to another warehouse or cleared for home consumption or for export, during such period.

7. Warehousing Bond:

- 7.1 Section 59 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that-
- The importer of any goods in respect of which a bill of entry for warehousing has been presented under section 46 and assessed to duty under section 17 or section 18 shall execute a bond in a sum equal to thrice the amount of the duty assessed on such goods, binding himself
- (a) to comply with all the provisions of the Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder in respect of such goods;

- (b) to pay, on or before the date specified in the notice of demand, all duties and interest payable under sub-section (2) of section 61; and
- (c) to pay all penalties and fines incurred for the contravention of the provisions of this Act or the rules or regulations, in respect of such goods.

7.2 For the purposes of sub-section (1), the Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs may permit an importer to execute a general bond in such amount as the Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs may approve in respect of the warehousing of goods to be imported by him within a specified period.

7.3 The importer shall, in addition to the execution of a bond under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2), furnish such security as may be prescribed.

7.4 Any bond executed under this section by an importer in respect of any goods shall continue to be in force notwithstanding the transfer of the goods to another warehouse.

7.5 Where the whole of the goods or any part thereof are transferred to another person, the transferee shall execute a bond in the manner specified in sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) and furnish security as specified under sub-section (3).

8. Permission for removal of goods for deposit in warehouse:

8.1 Section 60 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that when the provisions of section 59 have been complied with in respect of any goods, the proper officer may make an order permitting removal of the goods from a customs station for the purpose of deposit in a warehouse.

Provided that such order may also be made electronically through the customs automated system on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria.

8.2 Where an order is made under sub-section (1), the goods shall be deposited in a warehouse in such manner as may be prescribed.

9. Period for which goods may remain warehoused:

9.1 As per section 61 of the Customs Act, 1962,

- (1) Any warehoused goods may remain in the warehouse in which they are deposited or in any warehouse to which they may be removed,
 - (a) in the case of capital goods intended for use in any hundred per cent export-oriented undertaking or electronic hardware technology park unit or software technology park unit or any warehouse wherein manufacture, or other operations have been permitted under section 65, till their clearance from the warehouse;

- (b) in the case of goods other than capital goods intended for use in any hundred per cent. export oriented undertaking or electronic hardware technology park unit or software technology park unit or any warehouse wherein manufacture, or other operations have been permitted under section 65, till their consumption or clearance from the warehouse; and
- (c) in the case of any other goods, till the expiry of one year from the date on which the proper officer has made an order under sub-section (1) of section 60

Provided further that where such goods are likely to deteriorate, the period referred to in the first proviso may be reduced by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs to such shorter period as he may deem fit.

10. Extension of warehousing period:

10.1 Section 61 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that in the case of any goods referred to in this clause, the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may, on sufficient cause being shown, extend the period for which the goods may remain in the warehouse, by not more than one year at a time.

11. Interest for storage beyond permissible period:

11.1 As per Section 61(2) of the Customs Act, 1962, in the event where any warehoused goods specified in clause (c) of sub-section (1) of Section 61 of Customs Act 1962 remain in a warehouse beyond a period of ninety days from the date on which the proper officer has made an order under sub-section (1) of section 60, interest shall be payable at such rate as may be fixed by the Central Government under section 47, on the amount of duty payable at the time of clearance of the goods, for the period from the expiry of the said ninety days till the date of payment of duty on the warehoused goods.

12. Waiver of interest:

12.1 Section 61(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that if the Board considers it necessary so to do, in the public interest, it may, -

- (a) by order, and under the circumstances of an exceptional nature, to be specified in such order, waive the whole or any part of the interest payable under this section in respect of any warehoused goods;
- (b) by notification in the Official Gazette, specify the class of goods in respect of which no interest shall be charged under this section;
- (c) by notification in the Official Gazette, specify the class of goods in respect of which the interest shall be chargeable from the date on which the proper

officer has made an order under sub-section (1) of section 60.

13. Owner's right to deal with warehoused goods:

13.1 The owner of any warehoused goods may, after warehousing the same,

- (a) inspect the goods;
- (b) deal with their containers in such manner as may be necessary to prevent loss or deterioration or damage to the goods;
- (c) sort the goods; or
- (d) show the goods for sale.

14. Transfer of goods from one warehouse to another:

14.1 A licensee shall allow transfer of warehoused goods to another warehouse with the permission of the bond officer under section 67 on the Form for transfer of goods from a warehouse. Where an owner of the warehoused goods produces the Form for transfer of goods from a warehouse bearing the orders of the bond officer, the licensee shall, -

- (a) allow removal of the goods and their loading onto the means of transport;
- (b) affix a one-time-lock to the means of transport;
- (c) endorse the number of the one-time-lock on the Form for transfer of goods from a warehouse and retain a copy thereof;
- (d) endorse the number of the one-time-lock on the transport document and retain a copy thereof;
- (e) take into record the removal of the goods; and
- (f) cause to be delivered, copies of the retained documents to the bond officer.

14.2 Upon receipt of goods from another warehouse, a licensee shall

- (a) verify the one-time-lock on the means of transport carrying the goods to the warehouse;
- (b) inform the bond officer immediately if the one-time-lock is not found intact, and refuse the unloading of the goods;
- (c) allow unloading, provided the one-time-lock is found intact, and verify the quantity of goods received by reconciling with the Form for transfer of goods from a warehouse bearing the orders of the bond officer;
- (d) report any discrepancy in the quantity of goods to the bond officer within twenty-four

hours;

- (e) endorse the Form for transfer of goods from a warehouse with quantity received and retain a copy thereof;
- (f) acknowledge the receipt of the goods by endorsing the transportation document presented by the carrier of the goods and retain a copy thereof;
- (g) take into record the goods received; and
- (h) cause to be delivered, copies of the retained documents to the bond officer and to the warehouse keeper of the warehouse from where the goods have been received.

15. Clearance of warehoused goods for home consumption:

15.1 Any warehoused goods may be cleared from the warehouse for home consumption, if:

- (a) a bill of entry for home consumption in respect of such goods has been presented in the prescribed form;
- (b) the import duty, interest, fine and penalties payable in respect of such goods have been paid; and
- (c) an order for clearance of such goods for home consumption has been made by the proper officer:

Provided that the order referred to in clause (c) may also be made electronically through the customs automated system on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria: Provided further that the owner of any warehoused goods may, at any time before an order for clearance of goods for home consumption has been made in respect of such goods, relinquish his title to the goods upon payment of penalties that may be payable in respect of the goods and upon such relinquishment, he shall not be liable to pay duty thereon: Provided also that the owner of any such warehoused goods shall not be allowed to relinquish his title to such goods regarding which an offence appears to have been committed under this Act or any other law for the time being in force.

15.2 At the time of actual removal of the goods from the warehouse, the declared description of the goods recorded on warehousing bill of entry, should be tallied with the description declared on the ex-bond bill of entry.

15.3 As per provisions of Section 15 of the Customs Act, 1962, the rate of duty and tariff value for clearance of the goods from a bonded warehouse shall be the rate of duty and tariff value on the date on which a Bill of Entry for home consumption is presented under Section 68 of the Customs Act, 1962. The value of the goods is taken as the same as assessed on the into-bond Bill of Entry at the time of warehousing the goods.

15.4 A licensee shall not allow goods to be removed from the warehouse for home

consumption, unless the bond officer permits the removal of the goods. Upon the owner of the goods producing an order made by the proper officer under section 68, the bond officer shall permit removal of the goods and the licensee shall,

- (a) deliver the quantity of goods as mentioned in the bill of entry for home consumption to the owner of the goods and retain a copy of the bill of entry; and
- (b) take into record the goods removed.

16. Clearance of warehoused goods for Export:

16.1 Any warehoused goods may be exported to a place outside India without payment of import duty if

- (a) a shipping bill or a bill of export or the form as prescribed under section 84 has been presented in respect of such goods;
- (b) the export duty, fine and penalties payable in respect of such goods have been paid; and
- (c) an order for clearance of such goods for export has been made by the proper officer.

Provided that the order referred to in clause (c) may also be made electronically through the customs automated system on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria.

Upon the bond officer permitting the removal of the goods from the warehouse, the licensee shall, in the presence of the bond officer, cause the goods to be loaded onto the means of transport and affix a one-time-lock to the means of transport.

16.2 Warehoused goods shall be allowed to be re-exported on the following terms: (a) The import in the first instance was not un-authorized or in contravention of the FTP;

- a) The re-export shall not be allowed against Indian Rupees, if the goods were imported by payment in freely convertible foreign currency; and
- b) On re-export, the exporter realizes full export value indicated in the Export Declaration Form, within time limit specified in Regulation 9 of Foreign Exchange (Exports of Goods and Services) Regulations, 2015.

16.3 Section 69 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that if the Central Government is of opinion that warehoused goods of any specified description are likely to be smuggled back into India, it may, by notification in the Official Gazette, direct that such goods shall not be exported to any place outside India without payment of duty or may be allowed to be so exported subject to such restrictions and conditions as may be specified in the notification. In terms of Section 69 of the Customs Act, 1962, the following notifications have been issued:

- (i) Notification No. 45-Customs, dated 1-2-1963, amended vide Notification No. 185/89- Customs, dated 16.06.1989, provides that the warehoused goods shall not be exported to Bhutan, Nepal, Burma, Sikang, Tibet or Sinkiang, However, the warehoused goods can be exported to Nepal in the following circumstances:
 - (a) If goods are exported against an irrevocable letter of credit in freely convertible currency;
 - (b) If goods are exported for supplies to projects financed by any UN Agency or IBRD Association or ADB or any other multilateral agency of the like nature and for which payments are received in freely convertible currency; and
 - (c) If the specified capital goods are supplied against a global tender invited by HMG of Nepal for which payment is received in Indian Rupees. These goods can be exported only from Jogbani or Raxaul LCS on production of bank certifies of receipt of the payment in freely convertible currency or Indian Rupees, as the case may be.
- (ii) As per Notification No.46-Cus, dated 1-2-1963, export of warehoused goods without payment of import duty in a vessel of capacity less than 1000 tons gross is permitted subject to the condition that the exporter or agent of the vessel executes a bond for an amount equal to the import duty leviable on such goods backed by surety or security and produces a certificate within 3 months from the Customs authorities at port of destination that the goods have been landed at the port of destination.
- (iii) Notification No.47-Cus, dated 1-2-1963 bans export of warehoused (a) Alcoholic liquors, (b) Cigarettes, (c) Cigars, and (d) Pipe Tobacco without payment of import duty as stores on board a vessel of capacity less than 200 tons gross.

16.4 Implementation of ex-bond Shipping Bill:

Format for ex-bond SB has been developed in ICES for processing of export of warehoused goods from abandoned warehouse. clarifies that this type of (ex-bond) shipping bill (which is now being implemented) can only be used for export of warehoused goods, and not for other goods. It is also not meant for the export of goods resulting from manufacturing or other operations under section 65 in a bonded warehouse. However, if the goods imported in a warehouse where permission has been granted under section 65, are exported as such then the above-mentioned ex-bond SB can be filed. It further clarifies that no export incentive such as Drawback, RoDTEP/RoSCTL benefit, advance authorisation/EPCG etc. shall be available for such cargo and the Shipping Bill would be a free Shipping Bill. All the stakeholders may further refer to the Circular No. 22/2023- Customs and other advisories for further details about the design & workflow and also the functionality in ICES 1.5 to file an ex-bond Shipping Bill.

[Refer Circular No. 22/2023-Customs dated 19.09.2023]

17. Allowance in case of volatile warehoused goods:

17.1 Section 70 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that when any warehoused goods at the time of delivery from a warehouse are found to be deficient in quantity on account of natural loss, the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs may remit the duty on such deficiency.

17.2 Notification No. 03/2016 -Customs (N.T.) dated 11.01.2016 issued under Section 70 (20) of the said Act specifies the goods on which duty may be remitted on account of natural loss, having regard to the volatility of the goods and the manner of their storage. These goods are:

- (i) aviation fuel, motor spirit, mineral turpentine, acetone, methanol, raw naptha, vaporizing oil, kerosene, high speed diesel oil, batching oil, diesel oil, furnace oil and ethylene dichloride, kept in tanks;
- (ii) wine, spirit and beer, kept in casks:
- (iii) liquid helium gas kept in containers; and
- (iv) crude stored in caverns.

18. Maintenance of records in relation to warehoused goods:

18.1 A licensee shall, -

- (a) maintain detailed records of the receipt, handling, storing, and removal of any goods into or from the warehouse, as the case may be, and produce the same to the bond officer, as and when required;
- (b) keep a record of each activity, operation or action taken in relation to the warehoused goods;
- (c) keep a record of drawl of samples from the warehoused goods under the Act or any other law for the time being in force; and
- (d) keep copies of the bills of entry, transport documents, Forms for transfer of goods from a warehouse, shipping bills or bills of export or any other documents evidencing the receipt or removal of goods into or from the warehouse and copies of the bonds executed under section 59.

18.2 The records and accounts required to be maintained under sub- regulation (1) shall be kept updated and accurate and preserved for a minimum period of five years from the date of removal of goods from the warehouse and shall be made available for inspection by the bond officer or any other officer authorised under the Act.

18.3 A licensee shall also preserve updated digital copies of the records specified

under subregulation (1) at a place other than the warehouse to prevent loss of records due to natural calamities, fire, theft, skillful pilferage or computer malfunction.

18.4 A licensee shall file with the bond officer a monthly return of the receipt, storage, operations and removal of the goods in the warehouse, within ten days after the close of the month to which such return relates.

18.5 Where the period specified in section 61 for warehousing of goods is expiring in a particular month, the licensee shall furnish such information to the bond officer on or before the 10th day of the month immediately preceding the month of such expiry.

18.6 The data prescribed for maintenance of records, shall be stored electronically. The software for maintenance of electronic records must incorporate the feature of audit trail which means a secure, computer generated, time-stamped electronic record that allows for reconstruction of the course events relating to the creation, modification, or deletion of an electronic record and includes actions at the record or system level, such as, attempts to access the system or delete or modify a record.

19. Recovery of duty from bonded warehouses:

19.1 In any of the following cases, that is to say, -

- (i) where any warehoused goods are removed from a warehouse in contravention of section 71;
- (ii) where any warehoused goods have not been removed from a warehouse at the expiration of the period during which such goods are permitted under section 61 to remain in a warehouse;
- (iii) where any goods in respect of which a bond has been executed under section 59 and which have not been cleared for home consumption or export are not duly accounted for to the satisfaction of the proper officer, -

19.2 The proper officer may demand, and the owner of such goods shall forthwith pay, the full amount of duty chargeable on account of such goods together with interest, fine and penalties payable in respect of such goods.

19.3 If any owner fails to pay any amount demanded under sub-section (1), the proper officer may, without prejudice to any other remedy, cause to be detained and sold, after notice to the owner (any transfer of the goods notwithstanding) such sufficient portion of his goods, if any, in the warehouse, as the said officer may deem fit.

20. Cancellation and return of warehousing bond:

20.1 When the whole of the goods covered by any bond executed under section 59 have been cleared for home consumption or exported or transferred or are

otherwise duly accounted for, and when all amounts due on account of such goods have been paid, the proper officer shall cancel the bond as discharged in full, and shall on demand deliver it, so cancelled, to the person who has executed or is entitled to receive it.

20A Custody and removal of warehoused goods-

20A.1 Section 73A of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that all warehoused goods shall remain in the custody of the persons who has been granted a licence under section 57 or section 58 or section 58A until they are cleared for home consumption or are transferred to another warehouse or are exported or removed as otherwise provided under this Act.

20A.2 The responsibilities of the person referred to in sub-section (1) who has custody of the warehoused goods shall be such as may be prescribed.

20A.3 Where any warehoused goods are removed in contravention of section 71, the licensee shall be liable to pay duty, interest, fine and penalties without prejudice to any other action that may be taken against him under this Act or any other law for the time being in force.

20A.4 The Warehoused Goods (Removal) Regulations, 2016 amended vide Warehoused Goods (Removal) Amendment Regulations, 2019, the Warehouse (Custody and Handling of Goods) Regulations, 2016 amended vide Warehouse (Custody and Handling of Goods) Amendment Regulations, 2019 and the Special Warehouse (Custody and Handling of goods) Regulations, 2016 amended vide Special Warehouse (Custody and Handling of goods) Regulations, 2020 exclude their application for such warehouses operating under section 65. The said regulations will continue to be applicable for warehouses, not operating under Section 65.

[Refer Notification No. 70/2019-Cus (N.T.) dated 01.10.2019, 71/2019-Cus (N.T.) dated 01.10.2019 and 77/2020-Cus (N.T.) dated 17.08.2020]

21. Manufacture and other operations in relation to goods in a warehouse:

Section 65 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for manufacture as well as carrying out other operations in a bonded warehouse under sections 58 or 58A.

21.1 Manufacture and Other Operations in Private Warehouse (section 58 warehouse) Under section 65, the Board has prescribed "Manufacture and Other Operations in Warehouse(no.2) Regulations, 2019" amended vide "Manufacture and Other Operations in Warehouse(no.2) Regulations, 2020" to carry manufacture and other operations in a private warehouse (section 58). These regulations provide for eligibility conditions for grant of licence, conditions of the bond to be executed by the licensee, maintenance of accounts, appointment of warehouse keeper, provision for facilities, equipment and personnel, conditions for transport and receipt of goods from custom station, from another warehouse, domestically procured goods, transfer of goods from a warehouse, removal of resultant goods for home consumption and export, maintenance of records and

conduct of audit etc. The form of application to be filed by an applicant before the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner / Commissioner of Customs, the form of accounts and the bond to be executed to be maintained by a private warehouse (section 58) operating under section 65 is prescribed under Circular No. 34/2019-Customs dated 01.10.2019.

- 21.2 If the resultant product manufactured or worked upon in a bonded warehouse is exported, the licensee shall have to file a shipping bill and pay any amounts due. A GST invoice shall also be issued for such removal. In such a case, no duty is required to be paid in respect of the imported goods contained in the resultant product as per the provisions of section 69 of the Customs Act.
- 21.3 If the resultant product whether emerging out of manufacturing or other operations in the warehouse) is cleared for domestic consumption, such a transaction squarely falls within the ambit of "supply" under Section 7 of the Central Goods and Services Act, hereinafter referred to as the "CGST Act". It would therefore be taxable in terms of Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017 section 9 of the CGST Act, 2017 or section 5 of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 depending upon the supply being intra-state or inter-state. The resultant product will thus be supplied from the warehouse under the cover of GST invoice on the payment of appropriate GST and compensation cess, if any. As regards import duties payable on the imported goods contained in so much of the resultant products are concerned, same shall be paid at the time of supply of the resultant product from the warehouse for which the licensee shall have to file an ex-bond Bill of entry and such transactions shall be duly reflected in the accounts prescribed under Annexure B of Circular No.34/2019-Custom dated 01.10.2019.
- 21.4 It may be noted that units operating under section 65 read with section 58 of the Customs Act, are entitled to import capital goods, machinery, inputs etc. by following the provisions under Ch IX. In so far as domestic procurement is concerned, applicable rates of taxes shall be payable and exemptions, if any, can also be availed. By virtue of simply being a unit operating under section 65, they shall not be entitled to procure goods domestically, without payment of taxes. The records in respect of such domestically procured goods shall be indicated in the form for accounts as prescribed.
- 21.5 Since the warehouse operating under section 65 also functions as a warehouse licensed under section 58, the licensees can import goods and clear them as such, for home consumption under section 68 on payment of import duties, along with interest as per subsection (2) of section 61 of the Act or clear them as such for export under section 69 of the Act. The licensees shall also be required to submit monthly returns in "Form B" as prescribed under Circular No. 25/2016-Cus dated 8th June 2016 in case the warehouse is used for such purposes i.e. non-section 65 purposes.
- 21.6 Given the continuous nature of operations in warehouses under section 65, and the potential need to clear resultant goods expeditiously, the requirement to obtain prior permission of the proper officer for each clearance could pose a challenge to making clearances on time to meet delivery schedules. Therefore

to facilitate such timely clearances and for convenience of the trade, recourse has been taken to the powers vested under Section 143 AA, and it has been provided under regulation 13, 14 and 15 of MOOWR 2019 that while a licensee shall file the due documentation (such as the Form for transfer of goods from a warehouse, bill of entry and shipping bill, respectively) and pay the duties due, prior permission of the proper officer is not an essential condition for removal of the warehoused goods (as part of the resultant goods). The licensees who wish to avail self-sealing facility for exports can avail the facility made available under circular 26/2017 customs dated 01.07.2017 and its linked circulars.

- 21.7 Goods (only inputs) can be removed from a Section 65 unit for job work and received after job work. Capital goods can be sent outside the Section 65 unit for repair, with the permission of the bond officer. The form for maintaining the account of job work by a Section 65 unit is prescribed in Annex B of Circular No. 34/2019-Customs dated 01.10.2019. Further, Section 65 unit, being a GST registered unit, can perform job work operations and should maintain due accounting of such job work as per the provisions of GST law.

[Refer to Circular No. 48/2020-Customs dated 27.10.2020]

- 21.8 Any manufacture and other operations are allowed under Section 65, subject to any notification/instruction issued in this regard under Section 65(1) of Customs Act, 1962. A Notification No. 86/2024-Customs (N.T.) dated 16.12.2024 has been issued vide which "Goods imported for solar power generation projects which supply electricity" shall not be permitted in a warehouse.

[Refer Notification No. 86/2024-Customs (N.T.) dated 16.12.2024]

- 21.9 To facilitate ease of doing business, CBIC has digitized key Customs Bonded Warehouse procedures via the Warehouse Module on ICEGATE, enabling online application for warehouse licenses, bond-to-bond movement requests, and monthly return submissions. Detailed user manuals and step-by-step workflows for these processes are available on ICEGATE for guidance.

[Refer Circulars No. 19/2024- Customs dated 30.09.2024 and No. 48/2020-Customs dated 27.10.2020]

22. Manufacture and Other Operations in Special Warehouse (section 58A warehouse):

- 22.1 Under section 65, the Board has prescribed "Manufacture and Other Operations in Special Warehouse Regulations, 2020". These regulations provide for eligibility conditions for grant of licence under Section 58A of the Act for warehousing of specified goods, notified by Board under sub-section (2) of section 58A (refer Para 5.3), along with permission for undertaking manufacturing or other operations in the warehouse under section 65 of the Act, conditions of the bond to be executed by the licensee, maintenance of accounts, appointment of warehouse keeper, provision for facilities, equipment and personnel, maintenance and operation of strong room, conditions for transport and receipt

of goods from custom station, from another warehouse, domestically procured goods, transfer of goods from a warehouse, removal of resultant goods for home consumption and export, maintenance of records and conduct of audit etc.

- 22.2 The form of application to be filed by an applicant before the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner /Commissioner of Customs, the form of accounts and the bond to be executed to be maintained by a special warehouse (section 58A) unit operating under section 65 is prescribed under Circular No. 36/2020-Customs dated 17.08.2020. The Circular also covers the procedure for, receipt, storage and removal of goods, maintenance of accounts, conduct of audit etc. in a section 58A unit undertaking manufacturing or other operations under section 65.

The licensees manufacturing or carrying out other operations in a bonded warehouse shall be required to maintain records as per the form prescribed under the circular (Annexure B). Regulation 4 of the MOOSWR, 2020, provides that the applicant under section 65 shall undertake to execute a bond in such format as specified. Further, Section 59 of the Customs Act requires the importer of the warehoused goods to furnish security and execute a triple duty bond for the warehoused goods. Thus, the bond prescribed under the Circular as per Annexure C serves the requirements of both MOOSWR, 2020 and Section 59 of the Customs Act. Additionally, the licensee will furnish security by way of a bank guarantee equivalent to the duty involved on the warehoused goods.

[Refer to Notification No. 75/2020-Cus (N.T.) dated 17.08.2020 and Circular No. 36/2020-Customs dated 17.08.2020]

- 22.3 To bring in greater regulatory clarity and certainty for members of the trade and industry Board has clarified the following, detailed in the circular referred below.

- (a) Job work for a section 65 unit.
- (b) Job work for others by a Section 65 Unit
- (c) Whether a section 65 unit can procure goods from FTWZ

[Refer to Circular No. 48/2020-Customs dated 27.10.2020]

- 22.4 Centralised system for antecedent verification of the applicants of license under the Public Warehousing Licensing Regulations,2016, the Private Warehousing Licensing Regulation, 2016 or the special warehousing licensing Regulations, 2016 has been provided. To ensure that this task is completed in time-bound manner, time-period of 45 days from the receipt of the application for completion of antecedent verification has been stipulated.

[Refer Circular No.5/2023-Customs dated 21.02.2023]



11 Transshipment of cargo

Chapter 11: Transshipment of Cargo

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 A number of ports, airports, Inland Container Depots (ICD), Container Freight Stations (CFS) having Customs clearance facilities have been developed in the country to reduce congestion at the gateway ports/airports and to allow importers and exporters to take Customs clearance of imported and export goods at their doorsteps. The objectives of bringing the Customs facility to doorstep of importing community and decongesting the gateway ports/airports requires the movement of imported cargo or export cargo between a port/airport and other ports/airports/ICDs/CFSs in India or a port/airport abroad.
- 1.2 As per the Customs Act, 1962 duty becomes payable immediately after imported goods are landed at a port or airport. To avoid payment of duty at the port of landing in cases where goods are to be carried to another port/airport or ICD/CFS or to a port/airport abroad, the Customs Act, 1962 provides a facility of transshipment of cargo without payment of duty. The goods can be transshipped from one port/airport to another port/airport/ICD/CFS either by vessel, air, rail or road or by combination of more than one such mode of transport.
- 1.3 The procedure for transshipment provided in Section 54 of the Customs Act, 1962 is applicable for imported cargo only. The imported cargo unloaded at a port is allowed to be transshipped to another port/ICD/CFS or a port abroad, if the cargo is mentioned in the import manifest for such transshipment. In regard to export cargo cleared from a port/ACC or ICD/CFS and exported through some gateway port/airport, a similar procedure is being followed to allow carriage of Customs cleared export cargo from port/airport/ICD/CFSs to another port/airport.

2. Transshipment of imported containerized cargo from gateway port to another port/ICD/CFS in India:

- 2.1 The transshipment procedure of imported cargo is governed by Section 54 of the Customs Act, 1962 read with Goods Imported (Conditions of Transshipment) Regulations, 1995 as well as relevant Board's circulars and instructions.
- 2.2 Transshipment Permit is the permission granted by the Customs, at the port/airport of unloading of imported goods, to shipping agents for carriage of goods to another port/airport/ICD/CFS in India. The shipping agent submits an application along-with transshipment forms (5 copies), sub-manifest and a copy of IGM to the Customs. The Customs scrutinizes the details furnished by the shipping agents in the application for transshipment. In case, the documents are in order and there is no alert notice against the shipping agent, permission for transshipment is granted.
- 2.3 To ensure that imported cargo, on which duty has not been paid, are not pilfered en-route to another port/airport/ICD/CFS and reach safely, a bond with bank guarantee is executed by the carrier engaged for the transshipment of the goods.

The quantum of bank guarantee for transshipment to be furnished by different categories of carriers is as below:

- (i) The carriers in public sector (Central/State Government Undertakings) are exempt.
- (ii) All carriers (shipping lines/ICDs/CFSSs/other carriers) of containerized cargo handling more than 1000 TEUs as import containers in a financial year, are exempt, irrespective of the fact whether movement is by road or coastal shipping or rail. Further, request of carriers having annual transshipment volume below the limit of 1000 TEUs but having good track record may be considered for exemption from BG on merit by the jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs.
- (iii) The custodians of ICDs/CFSSs operating as carriers of transshipment cargo between gateway ports and their ICDs/CFSSs shall in their terms and conditions of their bank guarantees executed with Customs for custodianship of ICDs/CFSSs cover safety and security of cargo being transshipped by them. The details of such bank guarantee shall be informed to the Commissioner of Customs having jurisdiction over the gateway port. The custodians of ICDs/CFSSs shall be allowed to transship the cargo against the said bank guarantee and they will not be required to execute a separate bank guarantee for transshipment.
- (iv) The remaining carriers are required to furnish bank guarantee @ 15% of the bond amount.

2.4 The terms of the bond is that if the carrier produces a certificate from Customs of the destination port/airport/ICD/CFSS for safe arrival of goods there, the bond stands discharged. In case such certificate is not produced within a month or within such extended period as the proper officer of Customs may allow, an amount equal to the value, or as the case may be, the market price of the imported goods is forfeited.

2.5 The bond value should be equal to the value of the goods. However, considering the difficulties of shipping agents in producing documents for determination of value of the goods sought to be transshipped, the bond value is determined on the basis of notional value of the goods, which is an average value of cargo per container transshipped in the past.

2.6 To avoid multiplicity of bonds, the carriers are allowed to execute a running mother bond instead of individual bonds. The value of mother bond can be arrived on the basis of the average number of containers carried per trip, the average time taken for submission of proof of safe landing of containers at the destination ICDs/CFSSs, frequency of such transshipment as well as notional value of cargo per container. As mother bond is a running bond, its amount may be high. If a running bank guarantee @ 15% of total bond amount is taken, it may block huge sum of money. To avoid blockage of money of carriers, an option has been given to furnish either a running bank guarantee or individual bank guarantee for each transshipment, the latter being released as soon as the landing certificates from destination Customs are produced.

- 2.7 The bond or mother bond and bank guarantee are debited at the time of transshipment of import/export containers at the port of origin, and credited on receipt of proof of safe landing of containers at the port/ICD/CFS of destination. Further, EDI system has a 'bond module' which will be fully utilized once 'message exchange facility' is operationalised between two ports. In an online environment, bond re-credit is done automatically in the EDI system on receipt of electronic message between Gateway port and destination port or between two Customs stations.
- 2.8 On lines of similar provision for waiver of bank guarantee in case of transshipment of cargo from the gateway port to feeder ports/ICDs/CFSs and vice versa, bank guarantee is waived for air cargo transshipment. Accordingly, airlines/other carriers having annual transshipment volume above 2500 MT to/from any airport are exempt from Bank Guarantee for carriage of transshipment goods. Further, in deserving cases the jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs may consider giving waiver of bank guarantee.

[Refer Circular No. 24/2006-Cus. dated 25.8.2006]

- 2.9 After issuance of transshipment permit and execution of bonds, containers are sealed with 'one time bottle seal' by the Customs. In case, containers are already sealed with 'one time bottle seal' by the shipping agents, there is no requirement of sealing again by the Customs. In such cases, shipping agents are required to inform the serial number of seals to Customs, which is just verified by the Customs.
- 2.10 After sealing and/or checking of seals by Customs, containers are moved from the gateway port and carried by the shipping agents to destination port/ICD/CFS by vessels, rail or road. Transshipment formalities in all these modes are similar.
- 2.11 To optimize the capacity utilisation of vessels, Indian flag foreign going vessels operating in routes covering more than one Indian port to a port outside India and vice versa, have been allowed to carry coastal containers along with imported/export cargo between two Indian ports. Further, coastal vessels have also been allowed to carry coastal containers along-with imported/export cargo between two Indian ports.

However, to guard against the possibility of replacement of transshipment goods with domestic containerised cargo, some safeguards have been prescribed. All the transshipment containers as well as domestic containers are required to be sealed by 'one time bottle seal' at the port of loading. The domestic containers are required to be suitably painted with bold letters 'For Coastal Carriage only' for their identification. Carriers are also required to file a manifest for domestic containers. Provisions of sections 30 & 41 of the Customs Act, 1962 have been made applicable to Coastal vessels loading or unloading coastal goods at EXIM berths. The Master of the vessel or his agent shall submit the following:

- (a) a coastal arrival manifest for the goods which are unloaded or meant to be carried forward to other destination ports
- (b) coastal departure manifest for the goods loaded including goods on board for other destinations

The arrival and departure coastal manifests shall be prepared in duplicate. The original shall be submitted to the proper officer and duplicate would be retained by the Master of the vessel or his agent. The arrival manifest is to be submitted before the arrival of the vessel and the departure manifest is to be submitted before the departure of the vessel. There shall be no examination of the coastal goods, the container shall be sealed with tamper-proof one-time bottle seal and then the same can be loaded on to the vessel. Noncontainerized cargo shall also be allowed to be loaded on to the vessel provided it is clearly marked on the packing 'For Coastal Carriage Only' to make it easily identifiable. The preventive officers with the prior approval of Additional Commissioner/ Joint Commissioner (preventive wing) may from time to time carry out random checks so as to ensure that no export goods or imported goods are inadvertently or by intention loaded onto such coastal vessels.

[Refer Circular No. 14/2016- Customs dated 27.04.2016]

- 2.12 At the destination, carrier is required to present the sealed cover containing a copy of transshipment permit to Customs. The Customs checks the particular of containers, seals etc. with reference to transshipment permit. The carrier is required to obtain a certificate regarding landing of container from the Customs.
- 2.13 In case, the seals are found to be broken at the time of examination of containers by the Customs, a survey of contents of the containers is conducted in presence of Customs officer, carrier, importer or his representative and representative of insurance company. Shortage if any, noticed is recorded and is signed by all those present. The carriers are required to pay the duty for pilferage in terms of the condition of bond executed by them with the Customs at the port of loading. This is apart from other action which can be taken under Section 116 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- 2.14 The carriers have to obtain the landing certificates of containers from the Customs at the destination port/ICD/CFS and submit the same to the Customs at the originating port. The Customs reconciles its record and closes IGMs on the basis of these certificates.
- 2.15 After safe landing of containers at the destination port/ICD/CFS, the importers or their authorised agents are required to follow all Customs formalities such as filing of Bill of Entry, assessment, examination of goods etc., for clearance of the goods.

3. Duty free import of containers:

- 3.1 As the containers themselves are liable to duty, Customs duty exemption is provided vide Notification No.104/94-Cus, dated 16.3.1994 which, inter-alia,

facilitates them being taken out of the port without duty payment subject to execution of bond. The shipping agents are required to file this bond with the container cell of the Custom House, binding themselves to re-export containers within six months of their import into India. The period of six months may be extended by the Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs for a further period of three months and thereafter by the Commissioner of periods not exceeding six months at one time, in terms of the said Notification.

3.2 The procedure for clearance of containers imported temporarily is as follows:

- (a) The nature of bond should be “continuity bond”
- (b) No Bank Guarantee / Security is required is furnished along with the bond.
- (c) Bond should be executed by shipping line, Non-Vessel Owning Common Carrier (NVOCC), Steamer agents or their authorised representatives.
- (d) The bond amount should cover only the duty element of the imported containers and not the cargo it is carrying.
- (e) The validity period of the bond should be for a year, extendable till further such period as requested by the person executing the bond.
- (f) Till module for automatic matching of imported and export containers within permissible time is rolled out at all Customs ports, the process of monitoring of period of temporary importation would be done manually.

[Refer Circulars No.83/1998-Cus, dated 5.11.1998 and No.31/2005-Cus, dated 25.07.2005]

4. Transshipment of imported containerized cargo from gateway port to a foreign port:

4.1 For transshipment of containers from a port in India to a foreign port abroad, shipping agents have to file transshipment application along with relevant documents to Customs for grant of permission to transship the cargo, which is the transshipment permit. In such cases, execution of bond or bank guarantee is not required. After issuance of transshipment permit, goods are allowed to be loaded on to the ship under the Customs supervision. The Preventive Officer supervising the loading is to acknowledge loading of such cargo. The record is reconciled on the basis of endorsement of the Preventive Officer and copy of EGM showing details of such transshipment. Transshipment facility for imported goods in Less than Full Container Load (LCL) is allowed at identified Custom Houses.

4.2 The procedure for international transshipment of LCL containers is as under:

- (i) The application for international transshipment of FCL cargo can be made by master of the vessel or his authorized agent, Non-Vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC) or any person duly authorized by the foreign

supplier.

- (ii) No goods for international transshipment should be unloaded from the vessel until the permission for the same is given by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs authorized in this behalf by the Commissioner of Customs, on the basis of manifested details in IGM.
- (iii) The ITP (international transshipment) container details such as Container Number, broad description of goods etc. shall be mentioned in the IGM. In the electronic IGM, cargo movement, there are three codes which need to be filled correctly with port of destination. These are as follows:
 - 'LC' - Local Cargo: This refers to the port code where cargo is delivered. It is the same as the port of arrival
 - 'TC' - Transshipment Cargo: This refers to international cargo and the port of destination shall be the port code where transshipment cargo is destined to or delivered.
 - 'TL'- Transshipment to ICD: This is the local cargo where the cargo meant for transshipment to hinterland port i.e. ICD. The port of destination is the port code of the ICD.
 - In electronic manifest message, there is a field to specify that whether the cargo is FCL or LCL or 'EMPTY'. This field is called 'Container Status'. The line and the sub- line numbers provide the inter-linkage between the cargo details and the container details.
- (iv) The unloading of ITP containers at gateway port would be in presence of Customs Officers and the containers would be taken to approved place / premises under Customs escort. Custodian of such premises would provide a segregated secure space for ITP containers.
- (v) Customs Officers would examine the seal of the ITP containers and if found tampered, such container should be immediately resealed with the Customs seal 77 in the presence of the custodian / shipping agent and same should be recorded. Such containers will be examined 100% by the Customs Officers and findings recorded thereof and put up to the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs in charge for further action.
- (vi) LCL cargo meant for a foreign port outside India would be de-stuffed in the presence of Customs Officer and stored in a secured area as provided by custodian. LCL cargo may contain consignments meant for transshipment to any port outside India (foreign port) as well as consignments for home consumption or transshipment to ICDs. This would necessitate segregation of the two types of cargo at the time of de-stuffing and moving them to respective storage areas under Customs escort. Till such time, sufficient precaution should be taken to avoid duplication / mixing up or manipulation of cargo meant for transshipment / home consumption.

- (vii) Whenever the LCL cargo are required to be exported to foreign destination, The restuffing of such LCL cargo meant for the foreign port along with the export cargo and its sealing would be done under the supervision of a Customs officer.
- (viii) The details of LCL cargo would be entered in Export General Manifest (EGM).
- (ix) Custodian would maintain the record of ITP LCL cargo, both loaded and unloaded, and submit a monthly summary to Customs. He shall execute a general bond for an amount equal to the approximate value of goods expected to be imported in 30 days for the purpose of international transshipment. In such bond, custodian should undertake to export transshipment cargo within 30 days or within extended period as Commissioner may allow and follow all the relevant Acts, Rules and Regulations in force.
- (x) Custodian would be responsible for safe handling of the LCL cargo and ensure that there is no intermixing of ITP LCL cargo with other cargo lying with the custodian.
- (xi) International transshipment of cargo needs to be effected within 30 days of Entry Inward of the importing ship. The provisions of Section 48 relating to the procedure in case of goods not transshipped within 30 days after unloading shall apply to the goods meant for transshipment as these are covered under the scope of "imported goods".
- (xii) The permission for transshipment would not be given to cargo having arms, ammunition, explosives and other cargo considered as constituting a threat to the security/safety and integrity of the country and other goods attracting prohibition under Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962. However, goods 'restricted' as per the FTP may be permitted for transshipment to destination abroad. Further, transshipment shall not be allowed to any port destination, in respect of which any order or prohibition is in force for the time being. Commissioners may also prescribe any additional safeguard for securing safe transshipment.

4.3 In order to introduce international transshipment of LCL containers, the Custom Houses need to identify suitable premises within the approved place for the purpose of safe custody of imported goods and other authorized operations. Commissioners should adopt consultative approach with the stakeholders / operators to identify particular premises for such international transshipment taking into account the following factors:

- (a) Location of the premises.
- (b) Availability of adequate infrastructure - modern handling equipment for loading, unloading of containers from rail flats, chassis, their stacking, movement, cargo handling, stuffing/de- stuffing, refrigerated storage facility

for perishable cargo etc.

- (c) Availability of sufficient secured area for segregation / consolidation of cargo and for its safe handling.
- (d) The premises need to be connected with Custom House on EDI to handle the transshipment in ICES.
- (e) Experience of custodian in handling import export matters and working knowledge of Customs Act, rules and regulations.
- (f) Logistics arrangements including constraints, if any, in movement of containers between approved place / premises and port.

[Refer Circular No.14/2007-Cus, dated 16.03.2007]

5. Transshipment from gateway port to SEZ:

- 5.1 The procedure for transshipment of cargo from gateway port to SEZs is laid down under Special Economic Zones Rules, 2006. Broadly, the procedure is the fifth copy of the registered or assessed Bill of Entry filed by an importer in SEZ will be submitted to Customs officer at the port of import, and is itself treated as permission for transfer of goods to SEZ. No separate documents or transshipment bond is required to be filed, and the transshipment permission is stamped on the fifth copy of the Bill of Entry. The SEZ importer shall submit fifth copy of Bill of Entry bearing endorsement of the authorized officer that the goods have been received in SEZ to the Customs Officer in charge of the airport or port or inland container depot or land Customs station or post office or public or private bonded warehouse, as the case may be, failing which the officer in charge of such airport or port or inland container depot or land Customs station or post office or public or private bonded warehouse, as the case may be, shall write to the Specified Officer for raising demand of applicable duty from the SEZ importer. Similar procedure for export goods is prescribed under the SEZ Rules, 2006.

6. Timely issuance of transshipment permits:

- 6.1 Filing of transshipment applications and issuance of Transshipment Permits on Saturdays is allowed.
- 6.2 Transshipment permits would not be denied if the goods imported at a Customs station are manifested for being transshipped to any port/airport or any ICD/CFS, except in case of a specific intelligence about mis-declaration of goods in the IGM or presence of contrabands in the container. Even in such cases, before detaining any such container at the gateway port, permission from Joint/Additional Commissioner shall be obtained in writing. The Commissioners are required to look into this aspect personally and ensure that such permits are issued smoothly and, in a hassle, - free manner.

[Refer Circulars No. 46/2002-Cus, dated 29.07.2002 and No.90/2002-Cus, dated 19.12.2002]

7. Automated movement of containerized cargo from gateway ports to hinterland - SMTP:

- 7.1 The transshipment of containerized cargo from one port to an inland port or ICD/CFS is automated where the EDI system (ICES) is operational. This involves exchange of messages for Transshipment of Cargo electronically among Customs, Port authorities, ICDs and Shipping Agents. The implementation of this module is a significant step in the ongoing Business Process Re-engineering initiatives of the department and will reduce the congestion and dwell-time of cargo at the ports and contribute to reduction in transaction costs of imports.
- 7.2 In the automated Transshipment Module, the requirement of an application by the carrier is done away with and the SMTP (Sub manifest Transshipment Permit) portion of the IGM itself is treated as a request for transshipment. Carriers are not required to separately file an application for this purpose. They will however be required to indicate the code of the transporter undertaking the transshipment (e.g. CONCOR) in a specific field in the IGM. The ICES system allows transshipment of those containers against whom the port of destination is indicated as ports other than the port of discharge.
- 7.3 The transshipment permit information is sent to the carrier, the transporter undertaking the transshipment, custodian of the gateway port, and the ICES system at the destination ICD. Transshipment permit can also be printed by the carrier in his office or in the custom house.
- 7.4 The transshipment permit transmitted to the recipient port/ ICD/ CFS is automatically converted into an IGM and the Shipping Lines is not required to file any fresh IGM in respect of such containers.
- 7.5 The transporter performing the transshipment activity will be required to electronically submit a container arrival report to the ICES system at the destination ICD/ CFS in a specified format. The container arrival report will be matched with transshipment message received from the Gateway Port and a 'landing certificate' message will be generated by the inland port/ICD/CFS which will be transmitted to the Gateway port for closure of IGM Lines.

[Refer Circular No.46/2005-Cus, dated 24.11.2005]

8. Movement of export cargo from port/ICD/CFS to gateway port:

- 8.1 The export cargo, after its clearance at a port/ICD/CFS, may be carried in sealed containers to the gateway port for export. Broadly, the procedure in this regard is as follows:
- (a) The exporters are required to bring their goods meant for exports to the Port/ICD/ CFS and file six copies of Shipping Bill with all necessary documents like GR form/SDF, AR4 Form, Certificate issued by Export Promotion Councils, etc. In addition to the usual information given in the

Shipping Bill, the exporter is required to mention the gateway port of export along-with the serial number(s) of the container(s). The Shipping Bill is assessed as usual, the goods examined, samples drawn, and if required, inspection carried out by other agencies to check compliance with provisions of various Allied Acts before export is permitted.

- (b) The examination order is given on the duplicate and two transference copies of the Shipping Bill i.e. on all three copies. After examination of the goods, container is sealed by the Customs with 'one time bottle seal'. The duplicate copy of Shipping Bill is retained at the ICD/CFS/port and the transference copies forwarded to the gateway port. The E.P. copy of Shipping Bill is required to be suitably endorsed/stamped by the Customs officer to the effect that the goods are to be transshipped at the gateway port mentioned on the Shipping Bill for their destination outside India.
- (c) The goods cleared for export at the port/ICD/CFS are allowed to be carried to the gateway port subject to the conditions of execution of bond similar to that provided for transshipment of import goods under relevant Regulations, and if export goods are manifested for the final destination through the gateway port. The FOB value of goods is to be debited from the continuity bond executed by the custodians. The carriers/custodians transporting the goods are to be handed over the transference copies of Shipping Bill in a sealed cover.
- (d) The containers are allowed to be carried from a port/ICD/CFS to the gateway port by vessel or rail or road or by combination of two or more of these modes of transport.
- (e) The Drawback, if any, is required to be paid to the exporters as soon as the Shipping Bill is passed and goods are shipped at the originating port/ICD/CFS subject to the condition that the necessary bond has been executed by the Steamer 80 Agent/carrier to bring back and submit the proof of export to the Customs within 90 days.
- (f) At the gateway port, the containers are normally allowed to be exported under Customs supervision after checking the seals. In case seals are intact and documents are in order, no further examination of goods is undertaken. The Preventive Officer supervising the export of container, endorses the fact of shipment in both the transference copies of the Shipping Bill. Steamer agent has to file EGM in duplicate.
- (g) One copy of transference Shipping Bill along with a copy of EGM is sent back to the originating port/ICD/CFS.
- (h) At the originating port/ICD/CFS, export manifest and transference copy of Shipping Bill, received from the gateway port, are co-related with the duplicate copy of the Shipping Bill and other relevant documents for closure of export manifest and cancellation of bond.

9. Movement of export cargo from one port to another by rail:

- 9.1 Movement of export cargo after its clearance at the originating port is allowed by rail to another port for export therefrom. The procedure for such movement and the documentation will be similar to that being followed for movement of export cargo from the ICDs/CFSSs to gateway ports. Thus, all the documentation relating to Customs clearance of export goods and examination etc. will take place at the originating port. After clearance, cargo will be stuffed and sealed in containers in the presence of Customs. The drawback and other import incentives are to be paid/credited at the originating port.

[Refer Circular No.75/2001-Cus, dated 05.12.2001]

10. Export of cargo in containers & closed bodied trucks from ICDs/CFSSs through LCSs:

- 10.1 Movement of export cargo from ICDs/CFSSs to Nepal and Bangladesh through Land Customs Stations is as per the following procedure:

- (i) The exporters are required to bring their goods meant for export to ICD/CFSS, and to file a Shipping Bill on EDI. The Shipping Bill shall be assessed as per EDI/RMS procedures. Three copies of Shipping Bill shall be printed (including one transference copy) The original of the Shipping Bill shall be retained by the ICD which one copy (transference copy) shall be carried with the cargo by the driver in a sealed envelope to the LCS of exit. The triplicate copy shall be retained by the exporter. The goods to be exported shall be stuffed in a closed body truck or container, as is convenient to the exporter, and sealed with ECTS seal. The ECTS seal number shall be recorded in all copies of the Shipping bill. The Custodian shall be responsible for obtaining the ECTS seals from the Management Service Provider (MSP) managing the transit project for Nepal cargo for this purpose.
- (ii) At the LCS, the transference copy of the Shipping Bill shall be submitted by the driver to the proper officer of Customs. The Customs officer shall verify the trip report through the ECTS web application and where no alert of any unauthorized resealing is found, he shall record the same in the transference copy of the Shipping Bill and put his name, signature, date and retain the same in the LCS for record. The officer shall remove the ECTS e-seal and allow the movement of the container/ closed body truck as the case may be, across the border for originating ICD/ CFSS shall view the same trip report on the ECTS web application and where no alert of any unauthorized unsealing is found, he shall take a print of the same and attach it with the original Shipping Bill along with his name, signature and date.
- (iii) In case the trip report indicates any unauthorized un-sealing, the matter shall be brought to the notice of the Deputy/ Assistant Commissioner of Customs and such container/truck shall be subjected to 100% examination.

If any deviation from the Shipping Bill or invoice is detected during examination, adjudication proceedings may be initiated. The Assistant/ deputy Commissioner of Customs at the originating ICDs/CFSSs may take appropriate action under the Customs Act including raising a demand on the Custodian, equal to the export duty, Drawback, and/or any other export incentives, in respect of the export goods, in addition to any other action that is required to be taken against the exporter. The matter shall also be reported to the jurisdictional Commissioner of GST for recovery of Taxes.

[Refer Circulars No. 52/2017-Customs dated 22.12.2017, No. 32/2018-Customs dated 22.12.2017 and No. 39/2020-Customs dated 04.09.2020]

11. Procedure for movement of goods under TIR Carnets:

- 11.1 The TIR Carnet opened in the country of departure serves as a Customs control document in the countries of departure, transit and destination. It also serves as proof of the existence of an international guarantee for the goods transported under the Carnet. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has been appointed by CBIC as the NGA for issuance of Carnets under the Convention in India. The NGAs in each Contracting Party to the Convention constitute a guarantee chain linking all TIR countries with the International Road Transport Union (IRU), a non-governmental organization in Geneva, Switzerland, at the apex of the guarantee chain. The presentation of a valid TIR Carnet bearing the names, stamps and signatures from IRU and those of the issuing association and duly filled-in by the transport operator is the proof of the existence and validity of the guarantee.
- 11.2 The National Guaranteeing association shall fix the period of validity of the TIR Carnet by specifying a final date of validity after which the Carnet may not be presented for acceptance at the Customs office of departure. However, if the carnet has been accepted by the Customs office of departure on or before the final date of validity, the Carnet shall remain valid until the termination of the TIR operation at the Customs office of destination.
- 11.3 The TIR carnet is available in 4,6,14 and 20 vouchers and each TIR operation (between two customs station) requires the use of one pair of vouchers (1 white, 1 green). Step by step guidance on how to fill the TIR carnet is available at the IRU website (www.iru.org). The TIR carnet serves as a guarantee for the customs duties and taxes in transit and as the Customs transit declaration. Thus, where India is the country of departure or the country of destination, a shipping bill or bill of entry, as the case may be, is also required to be filed for import or export of consignments under the cover of a TIR carnet.
- 11.4 The procedure at the Customs office of Departure is as follows:
- (i) At the Customs office of departure, the Customs authorities shall check the cargo on the basis of information contained in the TIR Carnet completed by the transport operator. The Customs authorities shall then seal the load compartment, report it in the TIR Carnet, keep one sheet (white voucher) and fill-in the corresponding counterfoil. The TIR Carnet will then be handed

back to the transport operator.

- (ii) When crossing the outgoing border of the country, Customs authorities shall check the seals, detach a second sheet (green voucher) from the TIR Carnet and fill-in the corresponding counterfoil.
- (iii) The filled-in counterfoils by Customs provide evidence to the transport operator that the TIR operation in that country has been terminated.
- (iv) The outgoing Customs office (i.e. that at the border) shall send the detached sheet (green voucher) to the office of departure within 7 days of the departure of the goods. The latter shall compare the received sheet with the one it initially retained. If there are no objections and no reservations by the outgoing office, the TIR operation may be discharged by Customs authorities in that country.
- (v) If the sheet, detached by the outgoing office, contains reservations or if it does not reach the Customs office of departure or if Customs authorities have any other reason to question the proper application of the TIR operation, an internal inquiry will be started. The transport operator and the NGA shall be informed that the termination of the TIR operation has been certified with reservations or has not taken place at all or that other reasons have led to doubts about the proper application of the TIR operation and that they are requested to provide explanations. If a satisfactory reply is not received, the Customs authorities shall apply the provisions of the TIR Convention and national legislation to determine the taxes and duties due to Customs.
- (vi) If after sufficient effort, the Customs authorities are unable to collect the duties payable from the carnet holder, the Customs authorities shall claim the amount so payable from the NGA within the timelines stipulated in the Convention.

11.5 The procedure at the Customs office of Transit and country of destination:

- (i) The incoming Customs office of transit checks the seals and withdraws one sheet from the TIR Carnet, and the outgoing office proceeds likewise. Both sheets are compared for a final control and the TIR operation can be discharged or, in the case of irregularities, submitted to the procedure outlined above.
- (ii) In the country of destination, if the incoming border office also is the office of destination, it fills-in the TIR Carnet, retains two sheets and becomes responsible for the goods to be transferred to another Customs procedure (warehousing, import clearance, etc.) in that country. If the cargo has to be carried to another Customs office in the same country, the incoming office acts like an incoming border office, and the next office inside the country becomes that of final destination.

11.6 No TIR Carnet can be issued/ accepted for movement of alcohol and tobacco in India.

11.7 Where a TIR operation has not been discharged, the competent customs authorities shall:

- (a) notify the TIR Carnet holder at his address indicated in the TIR Carnet of the non-discharge;
- (b) notify the guaranteeing association of the non-discharge. The competent authorities shall notify the guaranteeing association with a maximum period of one year from the date of acceptance of the TIR Carnet by those authorities or two years when the certificate of termination of the TIR operation was falsified or obtained in an improper or fraudulent manner.
- (c) The guaranteeing association shall pay the amounts claimed within a period of three months from the date when a claim for payment is made against it.

11.8 TIR is being introduced in a phased manner in India. The Customs Stations in India authorized for use of TIR shall be:

Table 11.1: Customs Stations in India authorised for use of TIR

Ports	Inland Container Depots (ICDs)
1. Nhava Sheva	1. Tughlakabad
2. Mundra	2. Patparganj
3. Kolkata	3. Dadri
4. Chennai	4. Ahmedabad
5. Cochin	5. Hyderabad
6. Visakhapatnam	6. Pune
7. Krishnapatnam	7. Durgapur

11.9 For the above purpose, authorization has to be accorded to-

- (i) operators who can apply, obtain and use the TIR for movement of cargo;
- (ii) containers that would be deployed in TIR operations, conforming to the standards laid down in the convention.

11.10 The customs officer at the port of departure shall affix the one-time customs seal and make necessary endorsements in the TIR carnet and affix the official stamp of the Custom House.

11.11 In cases where an examination is conducted by customs in the course of a journey and it is required to break seals and/or remove identifying marks, they shall affix and record the new seals and/or identifying marks on the vouchers of the TIR Carnet used in their country, on the corresponding counterfoils and on the vouchers remaining in the TIR Carnet.

- 11.12 Heavy or bulky goods, if the authorities at the Customs office of departure so decide, be carried by means of non-sealed container.

[Refer Circular No. 48/2018 dated 03.12.2018]

12. Transshipment of cargo by air:

12.1 A detailed procedure has been prescribed for transshipment by air of (i) imported cargo between two airports in India, (ii) international transshipped cargo (Foreign to Foreign), and (iii) export of cargo tendered at one Customs airport for export from another Customs airport. The movement of cargo between the gateway airport and inland airport is allowed in Indian Airlines flights and also in private sector airlines flights.

12.2 Transshipment of cargo from a gateway airport to an inland airport:

- (i) On arrival of flight, the transshipment cargo should be segregated in custodian's premises.
- (ii) For transshipment of cargo, the carrier/ console agent is required to file an application for transshipment of cargo, consigned to another airport as indicated in HAWB. Cargo Transfer Manifest (CTM) prepared by the carrier/consol agent, as the case may be, shall itself be treated as application for transshipment. Separate CTMs may be prepared destination-wise. Such transshipment should be approved by the Proper Officer.
- (iii) The cargo mentioned in the CTM needs to be escorted by the Preventive Officer from the warehouse of the custodian to the warehouse of receiving airlines which acknowledges the same. The concerned airlines/custodian warehouse should have double locking arrangement, one key of which will be with the airlines/ custodian and the other with Customs, for storage of transshipment cargo. No physical examination needs to be conducted, except on specific intelligence, for allowing transshipment and only marks and numbers of cargo need to be verified.
- (iv) The receiving airlines should prepare its cargo manifest and transshipment be allowed under Customs supervision. The value of transshipped cargo should be debited from the Transshipment Bond.
- (v) Customs at destination airport will acknowledge the receipt of the cargo and send back the acknowledgement manifest through the carrier. The carrier should produce such acknowledgement at the originating airport within 10 days of transshipment. On the basis of such acknowledgement the Transshipment Bond would be re-credited.
- (vi) The usual procedure for Customs clearance of cargo shall be adopted at the destination airport.

12.3 International transshipped cargo (Foreign to Foreign):

- (i) On the arrival of flight, the transshipment cargo meant for destination abroad should be segregated in the Custodian's premises.
- (ii) The carrier is required to file application for transshipment of cargo and CTM prepared by the airlines shall be treated as application for transshipment. Such transshipment should be approved by the Proper Officer.
- (iii) Cargo mentioned in CTM need to be escorted by the Preventive Officer from the warehouse of custodian to the export terminal. No physical examination needs to be conducted, except on specific intelligence, and only marks and numbers of cargo need to be verified. Such cargo may be exported with other export cargo.
- (iv) Transshipment of Bangladesh export cargo to third countries is now permitted through Air Cargo Complex, Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, effective 15th July 2024, alongside Kolkata and Delhi. This amendment to Circular No. 29/2020-Customs aims to improve logistics efficiency, with movement allowed via road from LCS Petrapole following existing procedures.

[Refer Circular No. 09/2024- Customs dated 09.07.2024]

12.4 Export of cargo tendered at one Customs airport for export from another Customs airport:

- (i) Shipping Bill shall be filed at the originating Customs station and "Let Export Order" should be given by the Customs at the same station. Transshipment Permit (TP) should be prepared by the airlines/ carrier and approved by the proper officer. TP should be sent alongwith the cargo and Transshipment Bond shall be debited for the value of cargo.
- (ii) On arrival at the gateway airport, the cargo should be taken to the warehouse of the domestic airlines/custodian in a clearly identified area. The warehouse should have double locking arrangement, one key of which will be with the airlines/ custodian and the other with Customs. The Customs officers in charge of warehouse should verify the details of the packages with the TP, Airway Bill, etc. The domestic airlines may prepare the CTM airlines- wise which shall be certified by the Export Freight Officer (EFO).
- (iii) Cargo should be shifted to the transshipment warehouse in the export terminal of custodian and acknowledgement obtained. No examination of such cargo should normally be done at gateway airport, except on credible intelligence or information.
- (iv) When the aircraft is ready for loading, the airlines should seek permission from the EFO for loading. The load plan prepared by the airlines should be signed by the Airlines, EFO and the custodian.

- (v) Cargo should be loaded in the aircraft under Customs supervision.
- (vi) Copy of manifest signed by the EFO and Airway Bill alongwith copy of Shipping Bill should be sent by the airlines to the originating station within 30 days of transshipment. Transshipment Bond shall be re-credited at originating airport
- (vii) In case the transshipment is by bonded truck, the marks and numbers of the packages shall be verified with the details in the transshipment permission, and the bonded truck sealed with bottle seal in the presence of the Preventive Officer.
- (viii) If transshipment of cargo is also desired at some intermediate Customs airport, carrier/ airlines should give advance intimation to intermediary airport. Customs at intermediary airport would supervise the movement of cargo and endorse the same on Transshipment Permit. The concerned airlines/custodian warehouse should have double locking arrangement, one key of which will be with the Airlines / custodian and the other with Customs, for storage of transshipment cargo. The loading of such cargo again would be under the supervision of Customs Officer.

12.5 If the cargo transshipped under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 is not unloaded at the place of destination in India, or if the quantity unloaded is short of the quantity to be unloaded at that destination, and if the failure to unload or the deficiency is not accounted for, then the person- in-charge of the conveyance shall be liable for penal action as per the provisions of Customs Act, 1962.

[Refer Circular No.6/2007-Cus, dated 27.1.2007]

12.6 In order to ensure an efficient Cargo Transfer Facility and to reduce dwell, Board has decided that in case of international transshipped cargo (Foreign to Foreign), for the presorted containers wherein cargo does not require segregation, ramp to ramp or tail to tail transfer of cargo can be effected under preventive supervision on payment of MOT and observance of Cargo Transfer Manifest (CTM) procedure. In these cases, transshipment cargo meant for destination abroad need not be sent to cargo warehouses. In the case of containers other than pre-sorted containers, the existing procedure for transshipment of Cargo (Foreign to Foreign) would continue to apply.

[Refer Circular No.8/2011-Cus, dated 28.1.2011]

12.7 Airlines/ other carriers having annual transshipment volume above 2500 MT to/from any airport would be exempt from Bank Guarantee for carriage of goods on transshipment.

[Refer Circular No.24/2006-Cus, dated 25.8.2006]

13. Bonded trucking facility:

13.1 With a view to supplement the existing facility and provide adequate flexibility to the trade in the choice of modes of transport, movement of imported cargo in containers / trucks has been allowed between airports/ACCs and airports/ACCs/CFSS/ICDs as per the following procedure:

- (i) On the basis of the request made by the trade and in terms of Section 45(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 the Commissioner of Customs will appoint the airlines or their duly approved agents or the custodians of gateway airport/ACCs or the custodians of destination /CDs/CFSS/airports/ACCs as the custodian of all cargoes to be transshipped under bonded cargo trucking facility from airport/ ACCs to ICDs/CFSS/airports/ACCs in hinterland by road. The permit will be valid for one year from the date of issue initially and shall be renewed every three years subsequently.
- (ii) Transshipment of imported cargo is governed by the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Customs Act, 1962 and the Goods Imported (Conditions of Transshipment) Regulations, 1995.
- (iii) The imported cargo should be manifested for transshipment. In respect of consol cargo where the Master Airway Bill does not show the final destination, the airlines filing transshipment application should keep a copy of both Master Airway Bill and House Airway Bill to indicate that the particular consignment sought for transshipment is for an inland Customs airport/ICD/CFSS/ACC.
- (iv) For proper account of cargo the custodian should execute a suitable running bond with a bank guarantee for an amount approved by Commissioner of Customs concerned. The amount will be debited from this bond when the transshipment cargo is taken by the custodian and it will be credited when the proof of handing over of the cargo to Customs at final destination is produced. The custodian will be responsible for any shortage or pilferage of the cargo.
- (v) The custodian will submit a list of trucks together with registration numbers to be used for movement of each transshipment cargo. The trucks so deployed for transport should be specially secured to avoid pilferage of cargo and have provision of affixing of Customs "Bottle Seals".
- (vi) The airlines/custodian should have a transshipment warehouse within the Airport Apron area so that the goods on unloading can be shifted to the transshipment warehouse without having to be moved outside the Airport area. The concerned airlines/custodian warehouse should have double locking arrangement, one key of which will be with the airlines/custodian and the other with Customs, for storage of transshipment cargo. Preventive Officers will be posted at the airlines/custodian warehouse on cost recovery basis.
- (vii) If the airlines/custodian does not have a transshipment warehouse, the

import cargo for transshipment duly passed with transshipment application will be received by them from the Airport Authority of India's (AAI) custody to their make-up area specially earmarked for the purpose of palletisation/containerisation on the same day under Customs supervision and if for any reason the goods cannot be transshipped immediately, the same should be handed over to AAI.

- (viii) The custodian appointed and deciding to transship the cargo will present transshipment application (5 copies) along with the copy of Airway Bill (both Master Airway Bill and House Airway Bill, wherever applicable) to the Customs Officer in charge of transshipment clearance. The original transshipment copy must be affixed with Rs.20 stamp as T.P fees. The transshipment application should contain details such as (a) name and address of the importer; (b) name and address of the exporter; (c) country of origin; (d) airport of destination; (e) flight no. and date; (f) IGM no. and date; (g) description of goods; (h) value of the goods; (i) No. of packages; (j) weight gross/net; and (k) details of container/palletised vehicle on which the cargo consignment is to be carried.
- (ix) After scrutiny of T.P. application the T.P. Officer will issue Customs Bottle Seal and hand it over to the Customs Officer supervising the loading of the cargo in container/truck. The T.P. Officer will mention S.No. of Customs Bottle Seal on all copies of transshipment application.
- (x) On getting the transshipment permission the custodian/airlines will shift the goods from AAI warehouse to the make-up area earmarked for the purpose of palletisation/ containerization or shift the goods from their warehouse into the container/truck within the premises of the warehouse under the supervision of the Customs Officer posted for the purpose. After loading of the goods, the Customs Officer will seal the container/truck with Customs Bottle Seal and under his name and signature endorse all T.P. as: "Supervised the loading of. Number of packages on container / truck No destined to.....airport/ACC/CFS/ICD and sealed with Customs Bottle Seal No.....on(date) covered by Transshipment Permit No....."
- (xi) Original copy of T.P. application will be forwarded to the Import Freight Officer (IFO) of Customs at the airport/ACC/CFS of destination. Duplicate copy will be retained by T.P. Officer. Triplicate copy of T.P. application will be handed over to the airlines/custodian. The Quadruplicate copy will remain with the Customs Officer posted in the airlines/custodian warehouse and supervising the loading of cargo. The Quintuplicate copy will be sent in sealed cover along with the truck/container to IFO of Customs at the airport/ACC/CFS/ICD of destination who will retain it after verification of cargo.
- (xii) The IFO of Customs at the airport/ACC/CFS/ICD of destination will check the Customs Bottle Seal and description of packages as per T.P. copy and tally the packages with the copies of the manifest received to ensure that

the packages are in good condition. The safety and security of the packages is the responsibility of the custodian and in case of any damage at the time of in transit, it should be clearly indicated in all copies of manifest and attested by custodian. The IFO at the airport/ACC/CFS/ICD of destination after receiving the cargo shall under his name and signature give a suitable endorsement on the original T.P. copy, as given below, and retain the T.P. copy sent with the truck for record. 'Checked Customs Bottle Seal and packages as per T.P. application No.....dated arrived on Container/Truck No..... on (date).'

- (xiii) The endorsed original T.P. copy will be presented by the airlines/custodian as evidence of handling over of the cargo to the transshipment officer at the ACC/ airport from where the transshipment permission was granted. On receiving such endorsed T. P. copy the transshipment officer will close the entry in the register.
- (xiv) The airlines/custodian shall make necessary arrangements at the airport/ACC/ ICD/CFS of destination to remove the cargo and deposit the same with custodians appointed under Section 45 of the Customs Act, 1962, under Customs supervision.
- (xv) The airlines/custodian shall produce the evidence of handling over of the cargo at the inland airport/ACC/CFS/ICD of destination within 30 days from the dispatch of goods / failing which suitable action will be taken.
- (xvi) The airlines/custodian will be required to bear the expenditure on cost recovery basis over the preventive staff to be provided exclusively for this purpose.

13.2 The movement of unaccompanied baggage from airports/ACCs to ICDs/CFSs/ Airports/ACCs shall be allowed by the bonded trucks.

13.3 The procedure of bonded trucking facility is available for movement of imported cargo both by containers and trucks.

[Refer Circulars No. 69/1999-Cus, dated 06.10.1999 and No.06/2007-Cus, dated 22.01.2007]

14. Carriage of domestic cargo on international flights:

14.1 Air India, Indian Airlines and private domestic private airlines are permitted to carry domestic cargo between domestic airports on their international flights subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:

- (i) Separate space shall be assigned by the airlines or custodian in the cargo complex/ area of the airport for receipt and storage of domestic cargo till these are delivered or dispatched.
- (ii) Domestic cargo will be received by the airlines in the designated area during the normal working hours of Customs at the respective airport.

- (iii) The containers/Unit Load Devices (ULDs) used to carry the domestic or international cargo shall be clearly marked or coloured or strapped, for identification, distinction at the time of loading/ unloading, transportation.
- (iv) Domestic tags shall be prepared for identification of the domestic cargo with separate colour coding.
- (v) Loading or unloading of domestic cargo in any international flight/ aircraft shall be carried under the supervision of Customs officers.
- (vi) Domestic and international cargo will be loaded separately, and shall be carried in hold area onboard the aircraft distinctly identifying these cargoes.
- (vii) On arrival of the domestic cargo, at the destination airport, the airlines shall make necessary arrangements to deliver the domestic cargo.
- (viii) In respect of transshipment of international cargo, airlines shall be required to execute necessary bond and bank guarantee unless exempted on account of fulfilling the specified threshold limit of annual transshipment volume. In addition, prescribed transshipment procedure shall be strictly adhered to. Accordingly, no separate bond or bank guarantee shall be required in respect of domestic cargo.
- (ix) In case of any violation of the prescribed conditions or any other regulations providing for the manner in which the imported goods/ export goods shall be received, stored, delivered or otherwise handled in a Customs area, necessary action may be taken against the person including withdrawal of the facility and imposition of penalty under the Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009.

[Refer Circulars No. 78/2001-Cus, dated 07.12.2001, No.45/2005-Cus, dated 24.11.2005, No.6/2007-Cus, dated 22.01.2007 and No.4/2010-Cus, dated 15.02.2010]

15. Movement of domestic courier bags on domestic segments of international flights:

15.1 The movement of domestic courier bags on domestic sector of international flights of all the airlines is permitted subject to following conditions:

- (i) The courier company must be registered with Customs.
- (ii) The packages/bags of domestic courier should be clearly and identifiably differentiated from the International Courier bags/packets by printing in bold "DOMESTIC COURIER".
- (iii) The domestic courier bags should be kept in separate pallets and should be stored in the separately marked domestic bins/containers on the aircraft.

- (iv) At the place of embarkation, the domestic courier company will submit "goods declaration", indicating the number of bags, number of packages in bags, content of packages, to the on-board courier or person in-charge of the aircraft with a copy to the Escort Officer of Customs.
- (v) At the place of disembarkation/ arrival, the cargo manifest will be filed by person incharge of the aircraft or on-board courier, as the case may be, with the proper officer of Customs. In case, on board courier is not accompanying the courier consignment, the responsibility to file the cargo manifest with the proper officer of Customs will vest with the person in charge of the aircraft.
- (vi) The copy of the declaration submitted to escort officer of Customs will be handed over by the Escort Officer to the Customs Officer at the disembarking airport, for carrying out the checks and verifications, if so required.
- (vii) If the courier consignment is accompanied by "on road courier"; they will not be allowed to carry any courier bags on board the aircraft as hand baggage.

16. Movement of imported goods from a port direct to CFS of another Customs station:

16.1 In the interest of reducing transaction cost and dwell time Board has decided that suitable changes in ICES may be carried out to allow direct movement of imported goods from a gateway port to a CFS of another Customs station directly. This was necessitated since the ICES module at present does not allow generation of Sub Manifest Transshipment Permit (SMTP) to allow such movement of imported goods. Till such time the electronic system is made operational the following procedure has been prescribed for direct movement of imported goods from gateway port to a CFS:

- (i) At the Gateway Port, Customs shall prepare a consolidated list of all SMTP generated CFS- wise for consignments bound for another Customs station/ ICD. This list should be transmitted electronically by the gateway port to the receiving Customs station /ICD.
- (ii) The goods will move from the gateway port direct to the CFS under cover of a bond accepted by the Customs at the gateway port. The carrier will also carry the relevant SMTP in duplicate and hand over the same to the custodian at the CFS.
- (iii) On arrival of the goods at the CFS attached to ICD, the custodian of the CFS shall prepare:
 - i. A list of goods/container arrival, on daily basis. This list shall inter alia cover the detail of SMTP generated at the gateway port, a hard copy whereof is received along with the goods/containers. This list shall be signed by the custodians and shall be endorsed by Customs Officer in the CFS. The custodian of the CFS shall forward the list of

goods/container arrival, to ICD on daily basis.

- II. A Landing Certificate on the lines of a Container Arrival list shall be signed by custodian.
- (iv) The Custodian of CFS shall forward a copy of Landing Certificate duly endorsed by Customs at receiving end to the Customs at the gateway port for recrediting the bond executed with Customs.
- (v) On arrival of the goods/container inside the CFS, the custodian along with the surveyor, if any, in presence of the Customs Officer shall verify the correctness of details of consignments and will make an endorsement in the SMTP. The endorsed SMTP shall be forwarded to concerned ICD. With receipt of endorsed SMTP and approval of Customs officer at the ICD, local IGM shall be permitted to be filed at Service Center in case of LCL cargo
- (vi) The Bill of Entry will be filed at the ICD as usual and the goods will be examined and cleared at the CFS.

16.2 This facility shall be extended to CFSs that are at a considerable distance from the ICD, or en- route to an ICD (from the gateway port). Movement of consignments from the gateway ports to CFS adjacent to ICD shall continue to be permitted, as earlier. The furnishing of suitable bond by the custodian of the ICD/CFS with the Customs at the gateway port shall also continue as at present.

[Refer Circulars No.47/96-Cus, dated 16.09.1996, No.57/98-Cus, dated 04.08.1998, No. 31/99-Cus, dated 27.05.1999, No.69/99-Cus, dated 06.10.1999, No.34/2000-Cus, dated 03.05.2000, No.56/2000-Cus, dated 05.07.2000, No.61/2000-Cus, dated 13.07.2000, No.75/2001-Cus, dated 05.12.2001, No.78/2001-Cus, dated 07.12.2001, No.15/2002-Cus, dated 25.02.2002, No.18/2002-Cus, dated 13.03.2002, No.46/2002-Cus, dated 29.07.2002, No.90/2002-Cus, dated 09.12.2002, No. 61/2003-Cus, dated 18.07.2003, No.87/2003-Cus, dated 06.10.2003, No.52/2004-Cus, dated 07.10.2004, No.45/2005-Cus, dated 24.11.2005, No.46/2005-Cus, dated 04.11.2005, No.47/2005-Cus, dated 24.11.2005, No.24/2006-Cus, dated 25.08.2006, No.6/2007-Cus, dated 22.01.2007, No.14/2007-Cus, dated 16.03.2007, No.31/2005-Cus, dated 25.07.2005, No.18/2009-Cus., dated 08.06.2009, No.4/2010-Cus, dated 15.02.2010 and No.22/2013-Cus., dated 24.05.2013]

16.3 Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations, (SCMTR) 2018:

- I. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Custom (CBIC) vide notification No. 38/2018-Cus (NT) dated 11.05.2018 read with notification No. 65/2018-Cus (NT) dated 30.07.2018 and 88/2018-Cus (NT) dated 30.10.2018 have notified Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations 2018.
- II. The Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations (SCMTR), 2018, seek to bring about transparency, predictability of movement, advance

collection of information for expeditious clearance. It brings various improvements in the current Customs procedures with the objective of reducing errors and facilitating the importers and stakeholders by reducing the processing time and cost. The benefits of the SCMTR, 2018 include inter-alia:

- I. Doing away with application for rotation number by Shipping Lines.
 - II. Availability of complete error-free import manifest for pre-arrival processing.
 - III. Electronic submission of supporting documents during Entry-Inward.
 - IV. Single registration and a National Bond for transshipment of containers with facility of automated re-crediting (of bonds).
 - V. Electronic submission of same bottom cargo information (paper-based submission is dispensed with).
 - VI. Electronic one-step processing of transshipment of LCL cargo and sea-sea transshipment.
 - VII. Catering to multi-leg transshipments without any additional steps.
 - VIII. Electronic tracking of change in containers in place of paper-based verification/tracking.
 - IX. Eliminating the requirement of repeat submission of details at subsequent ports in case of transshipments.
 - X. Streamlining filing of stuffing reports thereby reducing time and errors involved.
 - XI. Clear demarcation of logistics and document-based workflow, thereby enabling deployment of IoT in the future such as Smart Gates, Track and Trace, e-seal etc.
 - XII. Alignment of the Customs procedures in line with the logistics movement.
- III. Registration: Under the SCMTR regulations, the Person acting as Authorised Carriers (Authorized Sea Carrier, Authorised Transhipper), Authorised Sea Agent, Custodian, Terminal Operator shall have to be approved afresh by the proper officer. The Approval is completely online and faceless. In order to ease of doing business and reduce compliances for EXIM Community, the Board has decided to abolish renewals of Registration in Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations incorporating the following changes:
- I. To provide lifetime validity of the licenses/registrations;
 - II. To enable provision for making the licenses/registrations invalid in case the licensee/registration holder is inactive for the period exceeding 1 year at a time;
 - III. To empower Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs to renew a license/registration which has been invalidated due to inactivity; and
 - IV. To provide for voluntary surrender of license/registration.

[Refer Circular No.17/2021-Customs dated 23.07.2021]

- IV. Transition provision: The Declarations under SCMTR are to be provided in the new message format. The DG Systems has developed the new formats for submission by different stakeholders. Since there is a change in the manner of reporting, the regulation has provided the transitional provisions for submission under old and new formats simultaneously, so as to cause less disruption to the trade and provide time for adoption of new processes. Currently the transitional provisions have been extended till 31.03.2025

[Refer Notification No. 56/2022-Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2022]

- V. To Reduce the compliance burden for citizens and business activities, The Board has decided to abolish renewals of Licence/Registration in Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations, 2018

[Refer Circular No. 17/2021 dated 23.07.2021]

- VI. The SCMTR, 2018 stipulate the obligations, roles and responsibilities, for the various stakeholders involved in the import & export of goods. It also specifies changes in the formats and timelines for filing the manifest declarations. The Circular No. 43/2020-Customs dated 30.09.2020 has elaborated more on the above aspects. To provide time for readiness of the Systems and stakeholders, a transitional arrangement was introduced through Regulation 15 to file in the old format in addition to the new format during this transitional arrangement. This arrangement got postponed since 2018 due to various reasons. Since, the authorities required one month time to complete the development of module and another one month for testing and stabilizing the same. The SCMTR was introduced in a phased manner

[Refer Notification No. 57/2024-Customs dated 31.08.2024 and Notification No. 74/2024-Customs dated 30.10.2015]

16.4 Customs procedure for export of cargo in closed containers from ICDs to Bangladesh using inland waterways:

With a view to facilitate the trade and leveraging the potential of Inland waterways for enhancing trade and transit, transshipment of containerized export goods of Bangladesh through India using inland waterways routes has been allowed. The goods cleared at the ICDs shall be first brought by road or rail to the gateway ports of Kolkata or Haldia, from where the containers shall be loaded on a barge/vessel for further journey by riverine route to Bangladesh through Land Customs Station of Hemnagar.

[Refer Circular No. 17/2022-Customs dated 09.09.2022]

16.5 Enabling exports of Bangladesh goods to India by rail in closed container:

The empty containers returning from Bangladesh to India on a train would be

utilized to carry export goods of Bangladesh to India. This shall apply to closed containers moved by Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) carried on trains operated by Indian Railways. While the train will enter into India through the Land Customs Station of Petrapole or Gede, the train will be allowed to transit to any ICD of India for customs clearance of goods

[Refer Circular No. 08/2022-Customs dated 17.05.2022]

16.6 Transshipment through India of containerized export cargo of Bangladesh destined for third countries using Riverine and Land routes:

For facilitating the trade and leveraging the potential of inland waterways for enhancing trade and transit, the transshipment of containerized export goods of Bangladesh through India using riverine and rail routes has been allowed. It entails entry of containerized cargo into India through Land Customs Station, Hemnagar, from where the goods shall be transported to the sea port of Kolkata or Haldia on a barge/vessel using the riverine route agreed under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade between India and Bangladesh (IBP route); and unloading of containers from the barge/vessel and further loading on a railway train at the sea port of Kolkata or Haldia, from where the goods will travel by rail to the sea port of Nhava Sheva or Mundra for export to third countries.

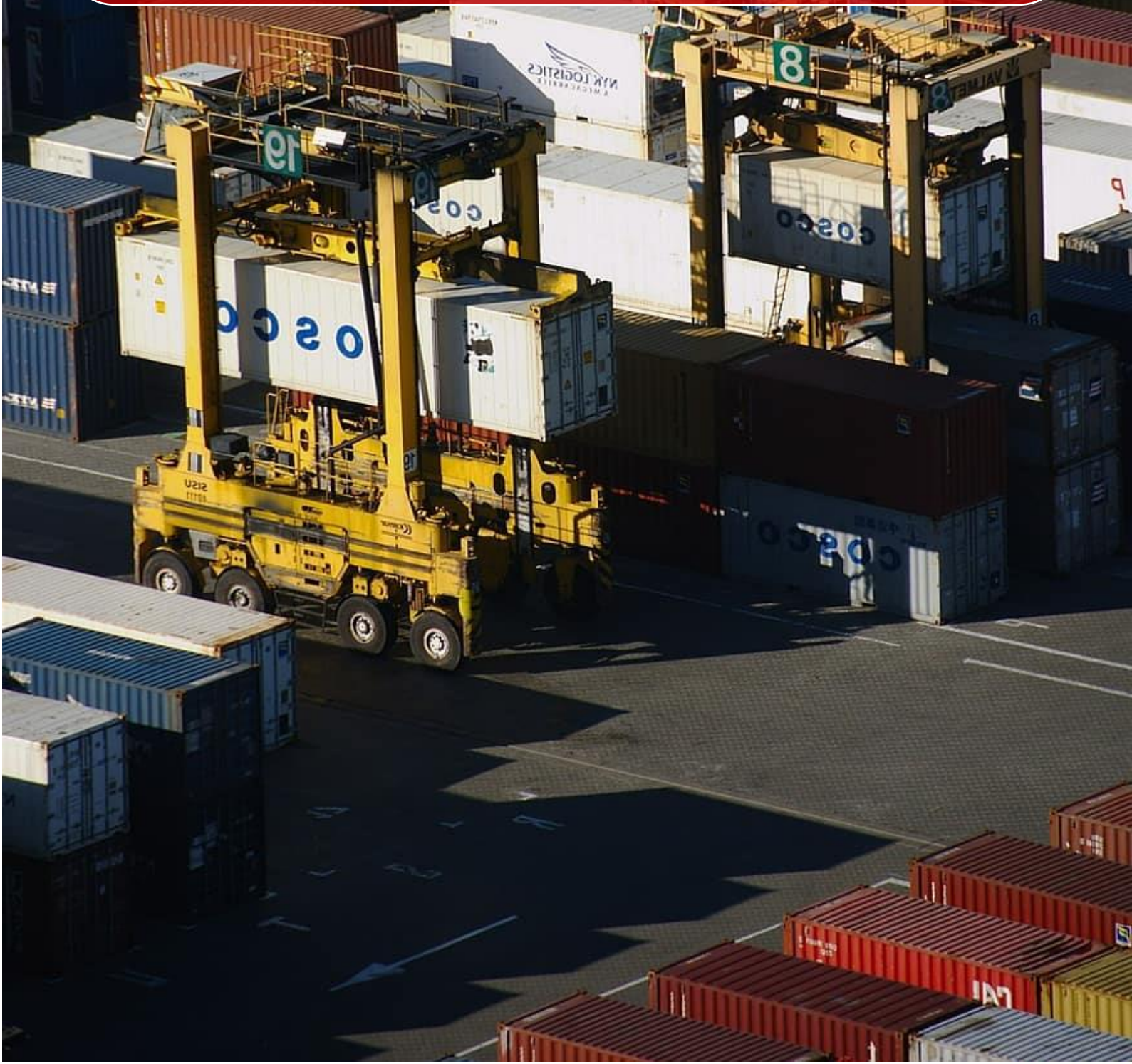
[Refer Circular No. 19/2022-Customs dated 14.09.2022]

16.7 Transshipment of Export Cargo from Bangladesh to third countries through Land Customs Station (LCSs) to Port/Airport, in container of closed bodies trucks:

With a view to facilitate exports, movement of Bangladesh export cargo destined to third countries, transiting through the Indian territory has been allowed. Bangladesh export cargo can enter the Indian territory from Land Customs Station of Petrapole or Gede/Ranaghat and further move to Port of Nhava Sheva via rail and from Land Customs Station of Petrapole to Kolkata Port or air cargo complexes at Delhi, Kolkata or Bangalore or Port of Nhava Sheva via road for eventual export to third countries.

[Refer Circulars No. 42/2018-Customs dated 02.11.2018, No. 29/2020-Customs dated 22.06.2020, No. 03/2023-Customs dated 07.02.2023, No. 09/2024-Customs dated 09.07.2024]

12 Consolidation of Cargo



Chapter 12: Consolidation of Cargo

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 With the development of a number of ICDs/CFSs in the hinterland, importers and exporters have the option to either get their import/export consignments cleared at the gateway ports or any nearby ICD/CFS. The export goods cleared by Customs at an ICD/CFS are sent in sealed containers to gateway port where these containers are normally allowed to be exported without further examination of the goods. Similarly, imported cargo meant for any ICD/CFS is allowed to be transhipped in sealed containers from the gateway ports to such ICDs/CFSs and all Customs formalities in relation to clearance of cargo are completed by the importers at ICD/CFS.
- 1.2 Export containers sealed at the ICD/CFS were earlier not allowed to be re-opened for consolidation at the gateway port, which led to shifting this activity to international hub ports e.g. Dubai, Singapore and Colombo. Similarly, import containers with LCL cargoes used to be brought to hub ports, where shipping lines used to consolidate the cargo and stuff in containers destination wise. There was thus a demand from exporters, importers, shipping lines, agents and consolidators to allow the re-working of containers at the gateway ports to avoid the extra expenditure incurred for undertaking the same job at the foreign hub ports.
- 1.3 The facility of re-working containers is now allowed at the gateway ports. Shipping lines can take containers stuffed with LCL export cargo, irrespective of destination, from ICD/CFS to a gateway port, where these can be opened and re-worked with cargo received from different ICDs/CFSs and stuffed in containers, destination-wise. Similarly, LCL import cargo brought at any gateway port can be re-worked and consolidated in containers ICD-wise. With this facility, the exporters get benefited by saving in freight charges, reduction in transit time, better handling and safer delivery of cargo as the activity takes place under the supervision of Indian agencies. The facility also reduces freight charges for imported LCL cargo as it helps in optimum utilization of container capacity. It also helps in attracting business for Indian ports and developing them as transshipment hubs.

2. Procedure for consolidation of import cargo:

- 2.1 Broadly, the procedure for consolidation of import cargo at the gateway ports is as follows:
 - (i) On arrival of the LCL cargo meant for ICDs/CFSs, at the gateway port the concerned shipping line files the IGM with the Customs;
 - (ii) The de-stuffing and consolidation of the LCL cargo ICD/CFS-wise is to be done at the earmarked space under Customs supervision and surveyors of the custodians;
 - (iii) After consolidation of LCL cargo (ICD/CFS-wise), the custodian at the

gateway port shall prepare a tally list showing details of the import consignments, the previous container number, IGM No. and the details of the new container. The shipping line has to then file sub- IGMs for all LCL (Import) cargo IGM-wise;

- (iv) After acceptance of sub-IGM by Customs, the LCL cargo ICD/CFS-wise is allowed to be re-stuffed in empty containers. The containers so re-stuffed are sealed by the custodian as per the procedure. The details of the new bottle seal should be indicated in the sub-IGM;
- (v) For transshipment of re-stuffed LCL cargo in new containers to different ICDs/ CFSs, the concerned shipping line is to follow the procedure laid down in the Goods Imported (Conditions of Transshipment) Regulations, 1995; and
- (vi) After completion of Customs formalities and clearance of LCL cargo at the respective ICDs/CFSs, a copy of the sub-IGM is to be sent back to Customs authorities at the gateway port for confirmation/closure of IGM.

3. Procedure for consolidation of export cargo:

3.1 Broadly, the procedure for consolidation of export cargo at the gateway ports is as follows:

- (i) LCL cargo brought to an ICD/CFS is subject to routine documentation, assessment and examination by Customs. After examination and clearance of LCL cargo at the ICD/CFS, the packages opened for Customs examination are sealed by Customs. The shipping line is required to use identification mark on each package, clearly indicating serial number of package, description of goods, total number of packages covered under that particular shipping bill, exporter's identity and their own codified identity;
- (ii) After completion of Customs formalities, the packages are handed over to the custodians along with two transference copies of Shipping Bill, certified copies of invoice, packing list, Bill of Lading and other documents;
- (iii) The custodian consolidates the cargo irrespective of shipping line and destination and stuffs these in containers. After sealing of such containers in presence of Customs, containers are carried to the gateway port or a CFS near gateway port by the custodian;
- (iv) At the gateway port, the documents are handed over to Customs and the containers are opened in presence of Customs. The cargo is handed over to shipping lines/ their agents/MTOs/consolidators, etc., who re-work the cargoes received from different ICDs as well as cargo cleared for export at the gateway port or CFSs near the gateway port and re- stuff the cargo in containers destination-wise in presence of Customs;
- (v) The custodians of the gateway port or CFS near gateway port have to maintain a tally sheet container-wise indicating details of the export consignments, the previous container number, Shipping Bill number, AR-4

number and the details of new containers in which goods are re-stuffed;

- (vi) The container number in which such cargoes are stuffed is to be indicated by the Customs Officer on both the transference copies of Shipping Bill and AR-4. One copy of Shipping Bill is retained by the Customs at the gateway port and other copy of Shipping Bill is returned to the originating ICD/CFS;
- (vii) The LCL cargo cleared by Customs at the ICD/CFS is normally not to be examined again by Customs at the gateway port or at the CFS where LCL cargo is being consolidated; and
- (viii) The Drawback is to be paid at the inland ICDs/CFSs immediately after the clearance of LCL cargo by Customs without waiting for actual shipment of cargo from the gateway port.

3.2 Jurisdictional Commissioners shall, by issue of suitable standing order allow the movement of containers/ trucks loaded with LCL cargo from one CFS to another CFS under their jurisdiction so as to have optimum utilization of space in a containers/ truck. They should, however, ensure this facility is not misused and revenue is safeguarded.

[Refer Circulars No.55/2000-Cus, dated 30.6.2000 and No.22/2001-Cus, dated 17.4.2001 and Instruction F.No.450/66/2005-Cus.IV, dated 24.11.2005]

4. International transshipment of LCL containers at Indian ports:

4.1 As per Section 54(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 transshipment of imported goods to any place outside India, referred as 'International transshipment', is allowed except in respect of goods prohibited under Section 11 of the said Act. Accordingly, international transshipment of imported goods in Full Container Load (FCL) is permitted. Further, as a measure of trade facilitation and to enable Indian ports to act as Transshipment Hubs, transshipment facility for imported goods in Less than Full Container Load (LCL) is permitted at approved places under the jurisdiction of identified Custom Houses. Currently, this facility is provided at Chennai, Cochin, Nhava Sheva, and Tuticorin.

4.2 The following procedure is prescribed on arrival of the international transshipment (ITP) containers:

- (i) The application for international transshipment of FCL cargo can be made by master of the vessel or his authorized agent, Non-Vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC) or any other person duly authorized in this behalf by the foreign supplier;
- (ii) No goods for international transshipment should be unloaded from the vessel until the permission for the same has been given by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs authorized in this behalf by the Commissioner of Customs, on the basis of manifested details in IGM;
- (iii) The ITP container details such as container number, broad description of

goods etc. shall be mentioned in the IGM. In the electronic manifest, there are fields for specifying (a) Port of destination, and (b) 'cargo movement' code. For cargo movement, there are three codes, which need to be filled correctly with proper port of destination, as follows:

- (a) 'LC' – Local Cargo: This refers to the port code where cargo is delivered. It is the same as the port of arrival.
 - (b) 'TC' – Transshipment Cargo': It refers to international cargo and the port of destination shall be the port code where transshipment cargo is destined to or delivered.
 - (c) 'Transshipment to ICD': This is the local cargo meant for transshipment to hinterland port i.e. ICD. The port of destination is the port code of the ICD.
 - (d) There is a field 'Container Status' to specify whether the cargo is FCL or LCL or 'Empty'. The line and sub-line numbers provide the inter-linkage between the cargo details and the container details.
- (iv) The unloading of such ITP containers at gateway port would be in presence of Customs Officers. The containers would be taken to approved place / premises under Customs escort. Custodian of such premises would provide a segregated secure space for ITP containers.
 - (v) Customs Officers would examine the seal of the ITP Containers and in case of it tampering, such container should be immediately resealed with the Customs seal in the presence of the custodian/shipping agent and same should be recorded. Such containers will be examined 100% by the Customs Officers and findings recorded thereof and put up to the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner in charge for further action.
 - (vi) LCL cargo meant for a foreign port outside India would be de-stuffed in the presence of Customs Officer and stored in a secured area as provided by custodian. LCL cargo may contain consignments meant for transshipment to any port outside India as well as consignments for home consumption or transshipment to ICDs. This would necessitate segregation of the two types of cargo at the time of de-stuffing and moving them to respective storage areas under Customs escort. Till such time, sufficient precaution should be taken to avoid duplication/mixing up or manipulation of cargo meant for transshipment/home-consumption.
 - (vii) Whenever the LCL cargo are required to be exported to foreign destination, The restuffing of such LCL cargo meant for the foreign port along with the export cargo would be done under the supervision of a Customs officer. Further, container would be sealed in presence of a Customs Officer and the details of LCL cargo would be entered in EGM.
 - (viii) Custodian would maintain the record of ITP LCL cargo, both loaded and unloaded, and submit a monthly summary to Customs. He shall execute a

general bond for an amount equal to the approximate value of goods expected to be imported in 30 days for purpose of international transshipment and undertake to export transshipment cargo within 30 days or within extended period as Commissioner may allow and follow all the relevant Acts, Rules and Regulations in force.

- (ix) Custodian would be responsible for safe handling of the LCL cargo and ensure that there is no intermixing of ITP LCL cargo with other cargo.
- (x) International transshipment of cargo needs to be effected within 30 days of 'Entry Inward' of the importing ship. The permission for transshipment would not be given to cargo having arms, ammunition, explosives and other cargo considered as constituting a threat to the security/safety and integrity of the country and other goods attracting prohibition under Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962. However, goods which are "restricted" as per the FTP may be permitted for transshipment to destination abroad.
- (xi) Further, transshipment shall not be allowed to any port / destination, in respect of which any order or prohibition is in force for the time being. Commissioners may also prescribe any additional safeguard for securing safe transshipment. The provisions of Section 48 relating to the procedure in case of goods not transshipped within 30 days after unloading shall apply to the good meant for transshipment as these are also 'imported goods'.
- (xii) For international transshipment of LCL containers, the Commissioners should adopt consultative approach with the stakeholders/operators to identify suitable premises.

Following factors may be considered by the Commissioner in this regard:

- (a) Location of the premises.
- (b) Availability of adequate infrastructure - modern handling equipment for loading / unloading of containers from rail flats, chassis, stacking, movement, cargo handling, stuffing/de-stuffing, refrigerated storage facility for perishables etc.
- (c) Availability of sufficient secured area for segregation/ consolidation of cargo and its safe handling.
- (d) The premises need to be connected with Custom House on EDI to handle the transshipment in ICES.
- (e) Experience of custodian in handling import export matters and working knowledge of Customs Act, rules and regulations.
- (f) Logistics arrangements including constraints, if any, in movement of containers between approved place/premises and port.

- (xiii) In line with Boards instructions, Commissioners may also indicate detailed operational procedure, taking into account the requirements, physical movement in carrying goods to the approved place / premises etc. at individual Customs stations.

[Refer Circulars No.55/2000-Cus, dated 30.06.2000, No.61/2000-Cus dated 13.07.2000, No.67/2000-Cus, dated 17.08.2000, No.22/2001-Cus, dated 17.04.2001 and No.14/2007-Cus, dated 16.03.2007 and Instruction F.No.450/66/2005-Cus.IV, dated 24.11.2005]

13 Merchant Overtime Fee



Chapter 13: Merchant Overtime Fee

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 At times, the trade requests for Customs clearance facilities or for Customs supervision of loading/unloading of vessels, stuffing, de-stuffing of containers, examination of cargo etc. beyond normal working hours of Customs or on holidays. Sometimes requests are received for posting of officers to supervise activities like stuffing, de-stuffing of containers etc., at a factory or place beyond the Customs area. Normally, the trade is required to plan its activities requiring Customs supervision or presence during working hours on working days and within the Customs area. However, in certain cases, e.g. in case of perishable cargo, lifesaving drugs or other consignments required urgently which has landed at an airport after working hours or on holidays, the importer may require immediate clearance. Considering the difficulties of the trade, the services of Customs, after normal working hours or on holidays within the Customs area or at any time at a place beyond Customs area, are provided on payment of overtime fee.
- 1.2 The overtime fee (also referred as MOT fee) is collected in terms of Section 36 of the Customs Act, 1962 which allows unloading/loading of imported/export cargo from/on a vessel beyond working hours on a working day or on holidays only on payment of a prescribed fees and the Customs (Fees for Rendering Services by Customs Officers) Regulations, 1998 which prescribes the rates and the manner for collection of such fee.

2. Levy of overtime fee:

- 2.1 The overtime fee is levied for services rendered by the Customs officers to trade beyond normal working hours or on holidays. If the service is rendered at a place that is not their normal place of work or at a place beyond the Customs area, overtime is levied even during the normal working hours. The term 'function' means any function performed by the Customs officer under the Customs Act, 1962 and it includes:
- (a) Examination of the goods and related functions,
 - (b) Loading and unloading of goods whether generally or specifically,
 - (c) Escorting goods from one Customs area to the other, and
 - (d) Any other Customs work authorised by the Commissioner of Customs.
- 2.2 The term 'working hours' means the duty hours prescribed by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs for normal Customs work. Where different working hours have been prescribed by the Commissioner of Customs for different items of Customs work or for different places within his jurisdiction, such working hours are to be considered as 'working hours' for the purpose of levy of overtime fee.
- 2.3 Present rates of overtime fee for rendering services by the Custom officers listed

in Table 13.1:

Table 13.1: Present rates of overtime fee for rendering services by the Custom officers

Category of officer	Fee per hour or part thereof on working days (in Rs.)		Fee per hour or part thereof on holidays (in Rs.)	
	6 am - 8 pm	8 pm - 6 am	6 am - 8 pm	8 pm - 6 am
Appraisers, Superintendent (Customs Preventive) and Superintendent (Central Excise)	85	125	140	180
Air Customs Officers, Examiners, Preventive Officers and Inspectors of Central Excise	75	100	105	145
Class IV staff	35	45	55	60

2.4 Overtime fee is levied for a minimum of 3 hours in each case, except in cases of overtime postings immediately preceding or immediately following the working hours of the concerned cadre of officers. The period between the midnight and 6 am is treated as a block for calculation of overtime fee whether the services are required for the entire block or for a portion thereof. In regard to services provided by Customs officers during working hours at a place beyond Customs area, the overtime fee is charged for the entire block of working hours before lunch or after lunch, as the case may be, whether the request for the services of Customs officer is for the entire block or a portion thereof.

3. Procedure for posting of officers on overtime basis:

- 3.1 The party desirous of availing of the services of officers on overtime basis is required to make prior request for such posting. The Customs scrutinizes the application and ascertains the requirement of the job and calculates the overtime fee on the basis of rates prescribed in the said Regulations. A separate fee will be charged if either the Customs Broker, vessel, party (importer/exporter) changes. Once the party pays the overtime fee, the officers are posted to perform Customs work.
- 3.2 In case a Customs Broker handles more than one Bill of Entry/Shipping Bill of an importer/exporter, he need not pay separate set of fee for each such document. Similarly, if an exporter or importer has more than one activity to be supervised by Customs during the same block, he need not pay overtime fee for each activity separately.

3.3 In case a custodian requests for services of Customs officers beyond the normal working hour, the same is allowed on payment of merchant overtime fee.

4. Expansion of 24X7 Customs clearance and clarification of levy of MOT charge in CFS attached to 24X7 ports:

4.1 As a trade facilitation measure CBIC has amended the Customs (Fees for Rendering Services by Customs Officers) Regulations, 1998 and no fee shall be leviable in location where the working hours in respect of clearance of cargo in Customs Ports or Customs Airport has been prescribed as 24 hours on all day.

14 Procedure for Less Charge Demand

Chapter 14: Procedure for Less Charge Demand

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The Customs Act, 1962 mandates filing of correct declaration by importers or exporters in respect of imported / export goods with regard to value, description of goods, classification, exemption notifications having bearing on assessment of Customs duty etc. The Customs duty is determined in terms of Section 15 or section 16 of the Customs Act, 1962 in respect of imported or export goods respectively. If the duty paid / levied is found to be less than what is due to be paid to the Government, the importer or exporter is required to pay the short levied / non levied or short paid / non paid amount of duty. In this regard, the Customs Act, 1962 empowers officers to issue a demand cum Show Cause notice for recovery of amount of duty short levied/ non levied from the importer/exporter.

2. Legal provisions:

- 2.1 Section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for recovery of any duty which has not been levied or has been short levied or erroneously refunded or if any interest payable has not been paid, part paid or erroneously refunded provided a notice demanding such duties/interests is issued within the time limit specified in that Section.
- 2.2 Where the short levy is by reason of collusion or any willful misstatements or suppression of facts by the importer the period for issuing the demand notice is five years from the relevant date specified in Sub-section (4) of Section 28.
- 2.3 Other notices are to be issued within two years from the relevant date, as provided under Section 28(1).
- 2.4 In terms of the provisions of Section 28(8), the proper officer shall, after allowing the concerned person an opportunity of being heard and considering the representation, made by such person, determine the amount of duty or interest from such person limited to the amount specified in the notice.
- 2.5 In terms of the provisions of Section 28(9), such determination of duty or interest under section 28(8) is to be completed within a period of six months and one year from the date of the notice in respect of cases falling under section 28(1) and section 28(4) respectively.
- 2.6 However, any officer senior in the rank to the proper officer may, having regard to the circumstances which prevented the proper officer from determination of the amount of duty or interest within such time period prescribed under section 28(8), extend the period specified for a further period of six months and one year in respect of cases falling under section 28(1) and section 28(4) respectively.
- 2.7 Further in terms of the provisions of Section 28BB any inquiry or investigation under this Act, culminating in the issuance of a notice under sub-section (1) or sub-section (4) of section 28 shall be completed by issuing such notice, within a

period of two years from the date of initiation of audit, search, seizure or summons, as the case be, or such extended period of further one year.

2.8 In terms of the provisions of Section 110AA, where in pursuance of any proceedings, in accordance with Chapter XIIA or XIII, if an officer of customs has reasons to believe that-

- (a) any duty has been short-levied, not levied, short-paid or not paid in a case where assessment has already been made;
- (b) any duty has been erroneously refunded;
- (c) any drawback has been erroneously allowed; or
- (d) any interest has been short-levied, not levied, short-paid or not paid, or erroneously refunded,

then such officer of customs shall, after causing inquiry, investigation, or as the case may be, audit, transfer the relevant documents, along with a report in writing--,

- (i) to the proper officer having jurisdiction, as assigned under section 5 in respect of assessment of such duty, or to the officer who allowed such refund or drawback; or
- (ii) in case of multiple jurisdictions, to an officer of customs to whom such matter is assigned by the Board, in exercise of the powers conferred under section 5,

and thereupon, power exercisable under Section 28, 28AAA or Chapter X, shall be exercised by such proper officer or by an officer to whom the proper officer is subordinate in accordance with sub-section (2) of Section 5.

3. Provisions for voluntary compliance:

3.1 The person chargeable with duty or interest, may pay before service of notice, either on the basis of his own ascertainment of such duty or the duty ascertained by the proper officer, the amount of duty along with the interest payable thereon under Section 28AA or the amount of interest which has not been so paid or part-paid.

3.2 Before issuing notice under section 28(1), the proper officer shall hold pre-notice consultation with the persons chargeable to duty or interest except in cases falling under section 28(4) or 28AAA;

3.3 The person who has paid the duty along with the interest or amount of interest under section 28(1)(b) shall inform the proper officer of such payment in writing, who on receipt of such information, shall not serve any notice in respect of the duty or interest so paid or any penalty leviable under the provisions of the Act or the rules made thereunder.

3.4 In terms of the provisions of Section 114A, where duty or interest, as the case may be, as determined under section 28(8) and the interest payable thereon

under section 28AA is paid within 30 days from the date of communication of the order of the proper officer determining such duty, the amount of penalty liable to be paid by such person shall be twenty percent of the duty or interest, as the case may be, so determined.

- 3.5 Sub-section (5) of Section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that the importer or the exporter or the agent or employee of the importer or exporter, to whom a notice is served under the Sub-section (4) of Section 28 of the said Act pays the duty in full or in part as may be accepted by him, and the interest payable thereon under Section 28AA of the said Act and penalty equal to 15% of the duty specified in the notice or the duty so accepted by such person within 30 days of the receipt of the notice. In such case, under sub-section (6) of Section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962 –
- (i) if such person has paid the duty in full together with interest and penalty, the proceedings in respect of such person and other persons to whom notice is served shall, without prejudice to the provisions of Sections 135, 135A and 140 of the said Act, be deemed to be conclusive as to the matters stated therein.
 - (ii) However, if the duty with interest and penalty that has been paid falls short of the amount actually payable, then, the proper officer shall proceed to issue the notice as provided for in clause (a) of sub-section (1) in respect of such amount which falls short within two years from the date of receipt of information under sub-section (5) of section 28 of the said Act.

4. 'Proper officer' for the Sections 17 and 28 of the Customs Act, 1962:

- 4.1. To address the issue of validity of Show Cause Notices issued by the DRI, which were impacted by the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Canon India Private Limited vs Commissioner of Customs, certain provisions of the Customs Act, 1965 were validated through Section 97 of the Finance Act, 2022. However, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its judgment dated 07.11.2024 reviewed its earlier findings in the case of Commissioner of Customs versus M/s Canon India Pvt. Ltd. The relevant provisions of the Customs Act have been inserted as mentioned below:
- (i) Sub-Section (34) of Section 2 had been amended to specifically state that assignment of functions to an officer of Customs by the Board or the Principal Commissioner/ Commissioner of Customs shall be done under the newly inserted sub-sections (1A) and (1B) of Section 5 of the Customs Act, 1962.
 - (ii) Section 3 had been amended to specifically include the officers of DRI, Audit and Preventive formation in the class of Officers, so as to remove the ambiguity as regards the class of officers of Customs.
 - (iii) Sub-section (1A) and (1B) have been inserted in section 5 of the Act to explicitly provide power of assignment of function to officers of Customs by the Board or as the case may be, by the principal Commissioner of Customs

or Commissioner of Customs. The amendment has been necessitated to correct the infirmity observed by the Courts in recent judgements that the Act required explicit provisions conferring powers for the assignment of function to officers of Customs as proper officers for the purpose of the Act, besides definition clause

(34) in section 2 of the Customs Act.

- (iv) Sub-section (4) to section 5 is inserted to delineate the criteria which the Board may adopt while imposing limitations or conditions under sub-section (1) or while assigning functions under sub-section (1A) to the officers of Customs. For instance, one of the limitations/conditions that the Board currently imposes on officers of customs is that they are required to operate within a specified territorial jurisdiction. However, with the launch of faceless assessments and other trade facilitation initiatives wherein, for instance, a need is felt for the development of industry-specific expertise in assessments the Board may need to confine jurisdiction to certain goods or class of goods.
- (v) Sub-section (5) to section 5 is inserted to ensure that wherever necessary, for the proper management of work, two or more officers of Customs, can concurrently exercise powers and functions (as in the case of faceless assessment).
- (vi) Section 110AA is inserted with a view to affirm the principle that, wherever, an original function duly exercised by an officer of competent jurisdiction, is the subject matter of a subsequent inquiry, investigation, audit or any other specified purpose by any other officer of customs, then, notwithstanding, such inquiry, investigation, audit or any other purpose, the officer, who originally exercised such jurisdiction shall have the sole authority to exercise jurisdiction for further action like reassessment, adjudications, etc. consequent to the completion of such inquiry, investigation, audit or any other purpose.

4.2. In alignment with the above provisions, the Proper Officer for issue of demand has been notified under Section 5(1A) vide notification 26/2022-Customs (N.T.) dated 31.03.2022.

4.3. Cases of single jurisdictions may be adjudicated in terms of the guidelines on monetary limit for adjudication of cases by different grades of Customs Officers. Board has decided that cases where SCNs are issued under section 28 of the Customs Act, 1962, these will be adjudicated as per following norms highlighted in Table 14.1.

Table 14.1: Monetary limit for adjudication of cases by different grades of Customs Officers

Adjudicating Officer	Nature of Cases	Amount of Duty involved
Commissioner	All cases	Without limit
ADC/JC	All cases	Upto Rs.50 lakhs
AC/DC	All cases	Upto Rs. 5 lakhs

4.4. Further, the proper officer for the issuance of single jurisdiction Show Cause Notice and adjudication of cases under the provisions of Rule 16 of the Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax Drawback Rules, 1995 shall be as under:

- (i) In case of simple demand of erroneously paid drawback, the present practice of issuing Show Cause Notice and adjudication of case without any limit by Assistant / Deputy Commissioner of Customs shall continue.
- (ii) In cases involving collusion, willful suppression of facts etc., the adjudication powers will be as described in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2: Adjudication powers in cases involving collusion, willful misstatement or suppression of facts etc.

Adjudicating Officer	Amount of Drawback
Additional / Joint Commissioner of Customs	Without limit
Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs	Upto Rs.5 lakhs

4.5. In case of Export Promotion Schemes i.e. Advance Authorization / DFIA / Reward Schemes etc. the adjudication powers shall be as described in Table 14.3.

Table 14.3: Adjudication powers in case of Export Promotion Schemes

Level of Adjudicating Officer Duty	Duty Incentive amount
Commissioner of Customs	Without any limit.
Additional / Joint Commissioner of Customs	Upto Rs.50 lakhs
Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs	Upto Rs.5 lakhs

4.6. In relation to goods which are liable for confiscation under Chapter XIV of the Customs Act 1962, the adjudication powers for the purposes of adjudging confiscation or penalty shall be as under described in Table 14.4

Table 14.4: Adjudication powers for the purposes of adjudging confiscation or penalty

S. No.	Customs Officer	Value of goods liable for confiscation
(1)	Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs	Above rupees one lakh but not exceeding rupees ten lakhs
(2)	A Gazette Officer of Customs lower in rank than an Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs	Not exceeding rupees one lakh

[Refer Notification No.50 /2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 08.06.2018]

4.7. However, in case of multiple jurisdictions, the following category of cases has been assigned to the officers of Customs for the purpose of issuing Show Cause Notice and adjudication vide Notification No. 28/2022-Customs (N.T.) dated 31.03.2022, in respect of cases falling under section 110AA. These are discussed in Table 14.5 below.

Table 14.5: Proper Officer of Customs for issuing Show Cause Notice in case of multiple jurisdictions

S. No.	Cases of multiple jurisdictions covered by Section 110AA in respect of --		Proper officer of Customs
(1)	(2)		(3)
1.	Clauses (a) or (b) and (d)	(i) involving aggregate duty upto rupees five lakhs.	(i) Deputy Commissioner of Customs or Assistant Commissioner of Customs who is assigned the function relating to assessment of duty or refund, as the case may be, in the jurisdiction having highest amount of duty or refund, at the stage of transfer.
		(ii) involving aggregate duty upto rupees fifty lakhs.	(ii) Additional Commissioner of Customs or Joint Commissioner of Customs to whom the Officer specified at (i) above in Column (3) is subordinate in accordance with sub-section (2) of section 5.

		(iii) involving aggregate duty without limit.	(iii) Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs to whom the Officer specified at (i) above in Column (3) is subordinate in accordance with sub-section (2) of section 5.
2.	Clauses (c) and (d)	(iv) involving aggregate amount of drawback upto rupees five lakhs.	(iv) Deputy Commissioner of Customs or Assistant Commissioner of Customs who is assigned the function allowing drawback in the jurisdiction having highest amount of drawback, at the stage of transfer.
		(v) involving aggregate amount of drawback without limit.	(v) Additional Commissioner of Customs or Joint Commissioner of Customs to whom the Officer specified at (iv) above in Column (3) is subordinate in accordance with sub-section (2) of section 5.
3.	Clause (d)	(vi) involving only interest amount	(vi) Deputy Commissioner of Customs or Assistant Commissioner of Customs who is assigned the function relating to assessment of duty or refund or drawback, as the case may be, in the jurisdiction having highest amount of interest, at the stage of transfer.

4.8. Powers to Chief Commissioners to assign the cases for adjudication of show cause notices within their respective jurisdiction:

For smooth and expeditious disposal of the pending demands for adjudication, the Board has delegated its powers conferred by clause (a) of section 152 of the Customs Act, 1962 (52 of 1962), to the Principal Chief Commissioner or Chief Commissioner of Customs for the purposes of assigning the cases for adjudication of show cause notices issued under the provisions of the said Act or rules, regulations made there under, within his jurisdiction.

[Refer Notification No. 91/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 05.11.2018]

5. **Demand Show Cause Notice:**

5.1 The proper officer shall not serve demand notice, where the amount involved is

less than rupees one hundred, in terms of provisions of section 28(1)(b).

- 5.2 Show Cause Notice for demand of duty or interest under the provisions of Section 28, 28AA or 28AAA of the Customs Act, 1962 can be issued by such proper officer or by an officer to whom the proper officer is subordinate in accordance with sub-section (2) of Section 5, within the time period specified therein or such extended time period.

6. Adjudication proceedings:

- 6.1 After receipt of the notice, the noticee shall have to submit its reply within the time period specified in the notice.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of the notice's reply to a demand notice the matter is examined in detail and the noticee is offered an opportunity of 'personal hearing' to explain his case before the adjudicating authority. After the personal hearing, the adjudicating authority, shall examine the material placed before him and the relevant legal provisions and come to a conclusion. Generally, the issues involved are mis-declaration of the description of the goods resulting in wrong classification and levy of lesser duty, mis-declaration of value, quantity and weight having a bearing on duty, calculation error resulting in short levy of duty, non-inclusion of certain components of value in the assessable value etc.
- 6.3 The adjudicating authority is required to take an independent decision as a quasi-judicial authority and pass appropriate orders either determining the amount of short levy in terms of Section 28(8) of the Customs Act, 1962 or dropping the proceedings where it is found that there is no short levy. In either case an appealable order is to be issued by the adjudicating authority. Such determination of duty/ issuing adjudication orders is to be done within the time period specified under Sub-section 9 of Section 28. The duties, fines and penalties imposed, if any, are required to be paid immediately, unless the party files an appeal and obtains a stay from the competent authority.
- 6.4 The proper officer may keep the case pending, in case the proper officer is unable to determine the amount of duty or interest under sub-section (8) on account of ---
- (a) an appeal in a similar matter of the same person or any other person is pending before the Appellate Tribunal or the High Court or the Supreme Court; or
 - (b) an interim order of stay has been issued by the Appellate Tribunal or the High Court or the Supreme Court; or
 - (c) the Board has, in a similar matter, issued specific direction or order to keep such matter pending; or
 - (d) the Settlement Commissioner has admitted an application made by the person concerned,

Further, the proper officer shall inform the person concerned the reason for non-determination of the amount of duty or interest under sub-section (8) and in such case, the time specified in sub-section (9) shall apply from the date when such reason ceases to exist.

- 6.5 In case of baggage, the Additional Commissioner or Joint Commissioner shall adjudicate the cases without limit, since such cases are covered by the offences under Chapter XIV of the Customs Act, 1962 and it is necessary to expeditiously dispose such cases in respect of passengers at the airport.
- 6.6 In other cases, such as short landing, the adjudication power will be the same as provided under the Customs Act, 1962 or the rules/regulations made thereunder.
- 6.7 As regards breach of condition of a notification after availing of the exemption thereunder, the Apex Court has held that that the obligation under a notification is a continuing one and the Customs authorities are well within their power to recover the duty whenever it comes to their notice that the importer has failed to fulfill the conditions. In such cases the demand can be issued irrespective of the time factor and the amount can be recovered in terms of the provisions of the Customs Act.
- 6.8 The confirmed demands are enforced and recoveries effected in accordance with the provisions of Section 142 of Customs Act, 1962. Where it is not possible to recover the amount by adjusting against any money which the Department owes to such persons, or by detaining and selling any goods belonging to such persons which are under the control of the Department, action is initiated to recover Government dues through the District Collector as if it were an arrears of land revenue. Powers are also vested with Customs for attaching/detaining and selling movable or immovable property belonging to or under control of such person.

[Refer Circular No.23/2009-Cus, dated 01.09.2009]

A photograph of a library shelf filled with law books. The books are bound in dark brown leather with gold lettering. The spines of the books in the foreground are clearly visible, with some labeled 'LAW REPORTS' and numbers like '172', '173', and '174'. A semi-transparent red rounded rectangle is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the page number and title in white text.

15
Refunds under Customs and
IGST Act

Chapter 15: Refunds under Customs and IGST Act

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On import or export of goods, at times duty may not be required to be paid or be paid in excess of what was actually leviable. Such non-leviable/excess payment may be due to lack of information on the part of importer/ exporter or non-submission of documents required for claim of lower value or rate of duty. Sometimes, such non-leviable/excess payment of duty may be due to re-import, return back of goods to the exporter, relinquishment of title by the importer, shortage/short landing, pilferage of goods or even incorrect assessment of duty by Customs. In such cases, refund of excess amount of duty paid can be claimed by the importer or exporter. If any excess interest has been paid by the importer/exporter on the amount of duty paid in excess, its refund can also be claimed.

2. Legal provisions:

- 2.1 Section 26 of the Customs Act, 1962 deals with the Refund of export duty in certain cases where on the exportation of any goods any duty has been paid, such duty shall be refunded to the person by whom or on whose behalf it was paid, if
- (a) the goods are returned to such person otherwise than by way of re-sale;
 - (b) the goods are re-imported within one year from the date of exportation; and
 - (c) an application for refund of such duty is made before the expiry of six months from the date on which the proper officer makes an order for the clearance of the goods.

Where on the importation of any goods capable of being easily identified as such imported goods, any duty has been paid on clearance of such goods for home consumption, such duty shall be refunded to the person by whom or on whose behalf it was paid, if-

- (a) the goods are found to be defective or otherwise not in conformity with the specifications agreed upon between the importer and the supplier of goods: Provided that the goods have not been worked, repaired or used after importation except where such use was indispensable to discover the defects or non-conformity with the specification;
- (b) the goods are identified to the satisfaction of the Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs as the goods which were imported;
- (c) the importer does not claim drawback under any other provisions of this Act; and

- (d) (i) the goods are exported; or
- (ii) the importer relinquishes his title to the goods and abandons them to Customs; or
- (iii) such goods are destroyed or rendered commercially valueless in the presence of the proper officer, in such manner as may be prescribed and within a period not exceeding thirty days from the date on which the proper officer makes an order for the clearance of imported goods for home consumption under section 47:

Provided that the period of thirty days may, on sufficient cause being shown, be extended by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs for a period not exceeding three months:

Provided further that nothing contained in this section shall apply to the goods regarding which an offence appears to have been committed under this Act or any other law for the time being in force.

Section 27 of the Customs Act, 1962 deals with the claim for refund of duty and interest. As provided therein, refund of duty and interest can be claimed either by a person who has paid the duty in pursuance to an order of assessment or a person who has borne the duty.

- 2.2 Any person claiming refund of any duty or interest has to make an application in duplicate in the form as prescribed in the Customs Refund Application (Form) Regulations, 1995, to the jurisdictional Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs.

3. Relevant dates for submission of a refund application:

- 3.1 In terms of Section 27 of the Customs Act, 1962 an application for refund is required to be filed within one year from the date of payment of duty and interest. Normally, the time limit of one year is computed from the date of payment of duty, however, in following situations, such time limit is computed differently:
- (a) In case of goods which are exempt from payment of duty by an ad-hoc exemption order issued under Section 25(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 the limitation of one year is to be computed from the date of issue of such order;
 - (b) Where duty becomes refundable as a consequence of judgment, decree, order or direction of the appellate authority, Appellate Tribunal or any court, the limitation of one year is to be computed from the date of such judgment, decree, order or direction.
 - (c) Where any duty is paid provisionally under Section 18 of the Customs Act, 1962 the limitation of one year is to be computed from the date of adjustment of duty after the final assessment thereof or in case of re-assessment, from the date of such re-assessment; and

- (d) The date of payment of any duty and interest in relation to a person, other than the importer shall be the date of purchase of goods by such person

3.2 The limitation of one year for claiming refund does not apply where any duty and interest has been paid under protest.

4. Processing of refund claim:

4.1 The application for refund is required to be filed with documentary or other evidence including documents relating to assessment, sales invoice and other like documents to support the claim that the duty and interest was paid in excess, incidence of duty or interest has not been passed on by him to any other person, and the refund has not been obtained already.

4.2 Where on scrutiny, the application is found to be complete in all respects the Customs issues an acknowledgement in the prescribed Form. However, in case the application is found to be incomplete, the Customs will return the same to the applicant, pointing out the deficiency. The applicant has to then re-submit the application after making good the deficiency.

4.3 The application of refund found to be complete in all respects by Customs, is processed to see if the whole or any part of the duty and interest paid by the applicant is refundable. In case, the whole or any part of the duty and interest is found to be refundable, an order for refund is passed. However, in view of the provisions of unjust enrichment enshrined in the Customs Act, the amount found refundable has to be transferred to the Consumer Welfare Fund except in the following situations when it is to be paid to the applicant:

- (a) If the importer has not passed on the incidence of such duty and interest to any other person;
- (b) If such duty and interest was paid in respect of imports made by an individual for his personal use;
- (c) If the buyer who has borne the duty and interest, has not passed on the incidence of such duty and interest to any other person;
- (d) If amount found refundable relates to export duty as specified in Section 26 of the Customs Act, 1962;
- (e) If amount relates to Drawback of duty payable under Sections 74 and 75 of the Customs Act, 1962; and
- (f) If the duty or interest was borne by a class of applicants which has been notified for such purpose in the Official Gazette by the Central Government.
- (g) If the duty was paid in excess by the importer before an order permitting clearance of goods for home consumption is made where such excess

payment of duty is evident from the bill of entry in the case of self-assessed bill of entry or the duty actually payable is reflected in the reassessed bill of entry in the case of reassessment.

5. Unjust enrichment:

- 5.1 In terms of Section 27(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 the concerned Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs has to examine the facts of the case and the material placed before him in order to determine whether the amount claimed by an applicant is refundable to him or not. Further, the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs should go through the details of audited balance sheet and other related financial records, certificate of the Chartered Accountant etc., submitted by the applicant in order to decide whether the applicant had not passed on the incidence of the duty and interest thereon, if any, to any other person. The Order-in-Original passed by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs on the refund application should be a speaking order providing specific details including the relevant financial records that are relied upon to arrive at a conclusion whether the burden of duty or interest, as the case may be, has been passed on or not. Refund orders issued in a routine and casual manner thereby sanctioning the amount but crediting the same to the Consumer Welfare Fund without going through the factual details of the case and the due process as provided in the first proviso cannot be considered as a complete and speaking order.

6. Interest on delayed refund:

- 6.1 The Customs has to finalize refund claims immediately after receipt of the refund application in proper form along with all the documents. In case, any duty ordered to be refunded to an applicant is not refunded within 3 months from the date of receipt of application for refund, interest that is currently fixed @ 6% is to be paid to the applicant. The interest is to be paid for the period from the date immediately after the expiry of 3 months from the date of receipt of such application till be date of refund of such duty. For the purpose of payment of interest, the application is deemed to have been received on the date on which a complete application, as acknowledged by the proper officer of Customs, has been made.
- 6.2 Where any order of refund is made by the Commissioner (Appeals), Appellate Tribunal or any Court against an order of the Assistant Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner of Customs, the order passed by the Commissioner (Appeals), Appellate Tribunal or by the Court, as the case may be is deemed to be an order for the purpose of payment of interest on delayed refund.
- 6.3 The interest on delayed refund is payable only in respect of delayed refunds of Customs duty and no interest is payable in respect of deposits such as deposits for project imports, security for provisional release of goods etc.

7. Expeditious disposal of refund applications:

- 7.1 The procedure to ensure expeditious disposal of Customs duty refund applications and to enhance transparency in refund disbursement is as follows:

- (a) Receipt and acknowledgement of all refund applications: All refund applications made under Section 27 of the Customs Act, 1962 whether by post or courier or personal delivery, shall be received by the department and a simple receipt of having received the “refund application” shall be issued immediately. The receipt should make it clear that the application has not been scrutinized for its completeness. These applications are required to be scrutinized for their completeness within 10 working days of their receipt, for giving acknowledgement by the Proper Officer as per the Customs Refund Application (Form) Regulations, 1995. Hence, if any deficiency is found in the application or any document is required by the department, the same shall be informed at this stage of initial scrutiny itself within 10 working days of the initial receipt. This will avoid any chance for raising repeated queries to the applicant, in a piece-meal manner and bring certainty in dealing with refund applications.
- (b) Processing of refund applications and their disposal: Application found complete in all respects after scrutiny, shall be processed on first-come-first served basis. If refund is due, an order for refund is required to be passed in terms of Section 27(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 or where the claim for refund is found liable to be rejected, as the case may be, a speaking order shall be passed giving complete reasons for the order. Further, the order should indicate that the aspect of unjust enrichment has been examined based on the applicable guidelines. The order should also contain the findings of adjudicating authority on the documents produced in support of the claim and the basis for determining the amount as either refundable to the claimant or payable to the Consumer Welfare Fund or the claim not being admissible.
- (c) Issue of cheque: Where the refund application is admitted, whether in part or in full, and claimant is eligible for refund, the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs may ensure that payment is made to the party within 3 days of the order passed after due audit, if any. In all such cases refund amount shall be paid to the applicant by a cheque drawn on the authorised bank with which the sanctioning authority maintains account. After the cheque is signed, it shall either be delivered to the claimant or his authorised representative personally or sent to him by Registered Post, Acknowledgement Due at Government cost, on the basis of pre-receipt already obtained from the claimant.
- (d) Audit: Pre-audit of refund claims (other than those to be post-audited) will be conducted by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner (Audit), in the Commissionerate Headquarters Office. Thereafter, the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Group/ Division will pass an order-in- original in respect of the claim. Thereafter, the orders- in-original passed in this regard shall be subjected to review by the Commissioner concerned. The applications of refund of amount below Rs.50,000/- may be post- audited on the basis of the random selection by Assistant/Deputy Commissioner (Audit). The selection can be made in such a way that 25% of the refund applications are post-audited. The applications of refund for amount between Rs.50,000/- and Rs. 5 lakhs should be compulsorily post-audited. This audit system is aimed at

checking improper sanction and payment of refunds. However, this does not dispense with the verification of the refund vouchers and the re- conciliation of refunds, which shall be done by the Chief Account Officers. It may be ensured that where pre-audit is involved, the same is completed at the earliest so that the disposal of refund applications is not unduly delayed.

- (e) CVC's instructions: Under authority of Section 8(1)(h) of the CVC Act, 2003 Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has issued instructions to bring about greater transparency and accountability in the discharge of regulatory, enforcement and other public dealings of the Government organizations. These instructions require that status of individual applications/matters should be made available on the organization's website and updated from time to time so that the applicants are duly informed about the status of their applications. It is further stated that the manual records maintained for various purposes may continue. In pursuance of CVC's instructions, Commissioners of Customs shall establish a mechanism for maintenance of a comprehensive database in their respective website, indicating the receipt, acknowledgement, action taken for disposal (either payment or rejection) of refund applications and those pending at the end of the month. The details of refund application such as name of the claimant, file number, date of application, amount of refund claimed, date of its acknowledgement shall be indicated in chronological order by the date of its receipt. The applications may be serially numbered for each year and shall be shown in a single list indicating their respective status distinctly. The illustrative status that could be mentioned for easy understanding of any applicant may include the following:
- (i) refund application received but pending for scrutiny and acknowledgement
 - (ii) refund application acknowledged for its completeness
 - (iii) refund application found incomplete and returned for rectification of deficiency
 - (iv) refund application rejected by passing a speaking order
 - (v) refund application sanctioned, pending verification by audit
 - (vi) cheques issued for refunds sanctioned and paid to applicant/ credited to consumer welfare fund.
- This is not exhaustive and any other stage of processing of refund application may also be indicated. An abstract at the end of the month about the total number of refund applications received, acknowledged, disposed and pending may also be indicated. This online data base would be accessible to the trade and public as well as by all Customs officers to enhance transparency. Further, the status of individual applications for refund of Customs duty shall be updated from time to time, at least daily, so that the applicants remain duly informed about the status of their applications. The data may be allowed for display on the website for three months period from the date of its final disposal and thereafter it can be moved to the history database.
- (f) Monitoring Mechanism: Chief Commissioners/ Directorate General of Performance Management (DGPM) are to review the position of refunds in their respective zones/ select zones, to check on the timely sanction of refund

applications. If any refund application is pending for long period, the reasons for the same may be identified by the concerned Chief Commissioner and action initiated for disposal by reference to the concerned Commissionerate. DGPM may also access the database of refund applications and maintain the data in respect of those refund applications pending for long period and action taken thereon, for reporting to the Board.

[Refer Notifications No.32/95-Cus(N.T.), dated 26.05.1995 and No.75/2003-Cus(N.T.), dated 12.09.2003 and Circulars No.59/95-Cus, dated 05.06.1995, No.24/2007-Cus, dated 02.07.2007, No.7/2008-Cus, dated 28.05.2008, No.22/2008-Cus, dated 19.12.2008 and CVC Circular No.40/11/06, dated 22.11.2006 (<http://www.cvc.nic.in>)]

8 IGST Refund:

8.1 Introduction:

8.1.1 Under GST, exports and supplies to SEZ are zero rated as per Section 16 of the IGST Act, 2017. By zero rating, it is meant that the entire supply chain of a particular supply is tax free, i.e., there is no burden of tax either on the input side or output side.

8.1.2 As per Section 16(3) of the IGST Act, 2017, a registered person making a zero-rated supply is eligible to claim refund in accordance with the provisions of Section 54 of the CGST Act, 2017, under either of the following options, namely: (i) He may supply goods or services or both under bond or letter of undertaking, subject to such conditions, safeguards and procedure as may be prescribed, without payment of integrated tax and claim refund of unutilised input tax credit of CGST, SGST / UTGST and IGST; or (ii) He may supply goods or services or both, subject to such conditions, safeguards and procedure as may be prescribed, on payment of integrated tax and claim refund of such tax paid on goods or services or both supplied.

8.1.3 As per Rule 96 of the CGST Rules 2017, dealing with refund of IGST paid on goods exported out of India, the shipping bill filed by an exporter shall be deemed to be an application for refund of integrated tax paid on the goods exported out of India, once both the export general manifest (EGM) and valid return in Form GSTR-3 or Form GSTR3B, as the case may be, has been filed. Thus, once the shipping bill and the EGM is filed and a valid return is filed, the application for refund shall be considered to have been filed and refund shall be processed.

8.1.4 IGST Refund module for exports is operational in ICES since 10.10.2017. As per Rule 96 of the CGST Rules 2017, dealing with refund of IGST paid on goods exported out of India, the shipping bill filed by an exporter shall be deemed to be an application for refund of integrated tax paid on the goods exported out of India, once both the export general manifest (EGM) and valid return in Form GSTR-3 or Form GSTR- 3B, as the case may be, has been filed. Rule 96 further stated that the information on GSTR 1 shall then be transmitted electronically to Customs and the System designated by Customs shall process the refund claim.

8.1.5 The IGST refund module has been designed in line with the above rule and has an inbuilt mechanism to automatically grant refund after validating the Shipping Bill data available in ICES against the GST Returns data transmitted by GSTN. The matching between the two data sources is done at Invoice level and if the necessary matching is successful, ICES shall process the claim for refund and the relevant amount of IGST paid with respect to each Shipping Bill or Bill of export shall electronically be credited to the exporter's bank account as mentioned with the Customs authorities.

8.2 Pre-requisites and precautions required to be taken by exporters for successful processing of refund claims:

- i. file GSTR 3B with taxable value for export and IGST paid against exports indicated in appropriate fields.
- ii. file GSTR 1 or Table 6A for the exports made with correct details such as Invoice number, Taxable value, IGST paid, Shipping Bill number, Shipping Date and Port Code.
- iii. ensuring aggregate IGST paid amount claimed in GSTR 1 or Table 6A is not greater than the IGST paid amount indicated in Table 3.1(b) of GSTR 3B of the corresponding month
- iv. use Table 9 of GSTR 1 of the following month to amend the records of previous month so as to take care of issues mentioned in paras (ii) and (iii) above.

8.3 Ensuring hassle free processing of refund claims:

- a) Jurisdictional officers at gateway port may initiate swift penal action against shipping lines/ agents who fail to file either regular or supplementary EGMs electronically for cargo originating from ICDs.
- b) Jurisdictional officers in ICDs should ensure filing of local EGM i.e., train or truck summary, as the case maybe, immediately after cargo leaves the port, liaising with the jurisdictional officers at the port for incorporation of Shipping Bills pertaining to the cargo originating in ICDs, in the EGMs filed at gateway port by the Shipping lines/agents and rectification of errors in local and gateway EGM, wherever necessary.
- c) Jurisdictional officers at gateway port should strictly monitor the EGM pendency and error reports available in ICES and get the EGM errors resolved in an expeditious manner by asking the Shipping lines/ agents to file requisite amendments and approving those amendments on ICES. Errors in shipping bill or in local EGM (i.e., truck or train summary), the remedial action has to be taken by jurisdictional officer in ICD.

8.4 Sanction of pending IGST refund claims where the records have not been transmitted from the GSTN to DG Systems

8.4.1 As an interim measure for those cases where the records have not been transmitted by GSTN to Customs EDI system, to overcome the problem of refund

blockage, subject to undertakings/ submission of CA certificates by the exporters and post refund audit scrutiny, the following procedure shall be followed:

A. Cases where there is no short payment:

- (i) The Customs policy wing would prepare a list of exporters whose cumulative IGST amount paid against exports and interstate domestic outward supplies, for the period July 2017 to March 2018 mentioned in GSTR-3B is greater than or equal to the cumulative IGST amount indicated in GSTR-1 for the same period. Customs policy wing shall send this list to GSTN.
- (ii) GSTN shall send a confirmatory e-mail to these exporters regarding the transmission of records to Customs EDI system.
- (iii) The exporters whose refunds are processed/ sanctioned would be required to submit a certificate from Chartered Accountant before 31st October 2018 to the Customs office at the port of export to the effect that there is no discrepancy between the IGST amount refunded on exports and the actual IGST amount paid on exports of goods for the period July 2017 to March 2018.
In case there are exports from multiple ports, the exporter is at liberty to choose any of the ports of export for submission of the said certificate.
- (iv) A copy of the certificate shall also be submitted to the jurisdictional GST office (Central/ State). The concerned Customs zone shall provide the list of GSTINs who have not submitted the CA certificate to the Board by the 15th November 2018.
- (v) Non submission of CA certificate shall affect the future IGST refunds of the exporter.
- (vi) The list of exporters whose refunds have been processed as above shall be sent to DG (Audit)/ DG (GST) by the Board.

B. Cases where there is short payment:

- (i) In cases where there is a short payment of IGST i.e. cumulative IGST amount paid against exports and interstate domestic outward supplies together, for the period of July 2017 to March 2018 mentioned in GSTR-3B is less than the cumulative IGST amount indicated in GSTR-1 for the same period, the Customs policy wing would send the list of such exporters to the GSTN and all the Chief Commissioner of Customs.
- (ii) e-mails shall be sent by GSTN to each exporter referred in para (i) above so as to inform the exporter that their records are held up due to short payment of IGST. The e-mail shall also advise the exporters to observe the procedure under this circular.

- (iii) The exporters would have to make the payment of IGST equal to the short payment in GSTR 3B of subsequent months so as to ensure that the total IGST refund being claimed in the Shipping Bill/GSTR-1 (Table 6A) is paid. The proof of payment shall be submitted to Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs in charge of port from where the exports were made. In case there are exports from multiple ports, the exporter is at liberty to choose any of the ports of export.
 - (iv) Where the aggregate IGST refund amount for the said period is upto Rs. 10 lacs, the exporter shall submit proof of payment (self-certified copy of challans) of IGST payment to the concerned Customs office at the port of export. However, where the aggregate IGST refund amount for the said period is more than Rs. 10 lacs, the exporter shall submit proof of payment (self-certified copy of challans) of IGST to the concerned Customs office at the port of export along with a certificate from chartered Accountant that the shortfall amount has been liquidated.
 - (v) The exporter would give an undertaking they would return the refund amount in case it is found to be not due to them at a later date.
 - (vi) The Customs zones shall compile the list of exporters (GSTIN only), who have come forward to claim refund after making requisite payment of IGST towards short paid amount and complied with other prescribed requirements.
 - (vii) The compiled list may be forwarded to Customs policy wing, DG (Audit) and DG (GST). Customs policy wing shall forward the said list of GSTINs to GSTN. On receipt of the list of exporters from Customs policy wing, GSTN shall transmit the records of those exporters to Customs EDI system.
 - (viii) The exporters whose refunds are processed/ sanctioned as above would be required to submit another certificate from Chartered Accountant/ Cost Accountant before 31st October, 2018 to the same Customs office at the port of export to the effect that there is no discrepancy between the IGST amount refunded on exports and the actual IGST amount paid on exports of good for the period July 2017 to March 2018. A copy of the certificate shall also be submitted to the jurisdictional GST office (Central/ State). The concerned Customs zone shall provide the list of GSTINs who have not submitted the CA certificate to the Board by the 15.11.2018.
 - (ix) Non submission of CA certificate shall affect the future IGST refunds of the exporter.
- C. The exporters would be subjected to a post refund audit under the GST law. DG (Audit) shall include the above referred GSTINs for conducting Audit

under the GST law. The inclusion of IGST refund aspects in Audit Plan of those units may be ensured by DG (Audit). In case, departmental Audit detects excess refunds to the exporters under this procedure, the details of such detections may be communicated to the concerned GST formations for appropriate action.

- D. DG (GST) shall send the list of exporters to jurisdictional GST officers (both Centre / State) informing that these exporters have taken benefit of the procedure prescribed in this circular. The jurisdictional GST formations shall also verify the payment particulars at their end

8.5 GST refunds-mechanism to verify the IGST payments for goods exported out of India in certain cases

8.5.1 Instances of availment of IGST refund using fraudulent ITC claims by some exporters have been observed by various authorities. Exporters have availed ITC on the basis of ineligible documents or fraudulently and utilized that credit for payment of IGST on goods exported out of India. It has also been observed in several cases that there is huge variation between the FOB value declared in the Shipping Bill and the Taxable value declared in GST Return apparently to effect higher IGST pay out leading to encashment of credit. It is decided to verify the IGST payments through the respective GST field formations. The procedure specified in the instruction 15/2017-Cus dated 09.10.2017 stand modified to the extent as under:

- A. **Identification of Suspicious cases:** DG (Systems) shall work out the suitable criteria to identify risky exporters at the national level and forward the list of said risky exporters to Risk Management Centre for Customs (RMCC) and respective Chief Commissioners of Central Tax. DG (Systems) shall inform the respective Chief Commissioner of Central Tax about the past IGST refunds granted to such risky exporters (along with details of bank accounts in which such refund has been disbursed).
- B. **Inserting Alert in the System:** RMCC shall insert alerts for all such risky exporters and make 100% examination mandatory of export consignments relating to those risky exporters. Also, alert shall be placed to suspend IGST refunds in such cases.
- C. **Examination of the export goods:** Customs officers shall examine the consignment as per the RMCC alert. In case the outcome of examination tallies with the declaration in the Shipping Bill subject to no other violation of any of provision of the Customs Act, 1962 or other laws being observed, the consignment may be cleared as per the regular practice.
- D. **Suspension of IGST refunds:** Notwithstanding the clearance of the export consignments as per para C above, such Shipping Bills shall be suspended for IGST refund by the Deputy or Assistant Commissioner of Customs dealing with refund at the port of export.
- E. **Verification by GST formations:** Chief Commissioner of Central Tax shall

get the verification of the IGST refund claims and other related aspects done in accordance with the Standard Operating procedure to be issued by the GST policy wing. (ii) The GST formation shall furnish a report to the respective Chief Commissioner of Central Tax within 30 days specifying clearly whether the amount of IGST paid and claimed/ sanctioned as refund was in accordance with the law or not. (iii) Chief Commissioner of Central Tax shall compile and forward report of all cases to RMCC and concerned customs port of export within 5 working days thereafter.

[Refer Rule 96 of the CGST Rules 2017, Circulars No. 42/2017- Customs dated 07.11.2017, No.5/2018- Customs dated 23.02.2018, No. 6/2018- Customs dated 16.03.2018, No. 12/2018-Customs dated 29.05.2018, No. 33/2018- Customs dated 19.09.2018, No. 37/2018-Customs dated 09.10.2018, No. 40/2018-Customs dated 24.10.2018]

16

Detention and Release/Storage of Imported/Export Goods



Chapter 16: Detention and Release/Storage of Imported/Export Goods

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Normally, the goods liable for confiscation under the Customs Act, 1962 are seized by the Customs. However, in some cases where seizure is not practicable, it may become necessary to detain the goods for investigation. The provisions for detention of goods are contained in Section 110 of the Customs Act, 1962. The goods are detained for various reasons and at the instance of various agencies of the Department, such as the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Directorate General of Goods and Services Tax Intelligence, Narcotics Control Bureau and Directorate of Enforcement and even other agencies, like the Central Bureau of Investigation. Once order for detention of goods is served to the owner of the goods, he cannot remove, part with, or otherwise deal with the goods except with the prior permission of the proper officer of the Customs. During investigation and subsequent adjudication proceedings, if the contravention of provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 and other allied laws is established, action is taken against the importers/ offending goods as provided in the law. In other cases, the charges are dropped at initial stages or at the appeal stage.
- 1.2 In respect of goods detained at the port/airport/ICD/CFS/LCS etc, the custodians of goods demand their dues for storing the goods (i.e., the warehousing charges) from the importers/ exporters. Likewise, the shipping lines demand container detention charges for the period the goods are kept in their custody. When the goods are detained for a long period, the warehousing/demurrage charges and container detention charges become high. In cases where the charges against the importers or exporters are dropped, the Customs usually issues detention certificates for the period when goods were under detention. The custodians normally remit the detention/demurrage charges wholly or partially on the basis of detention certificates issued and recommendation made by the Customs. However, it is not obligatory, as held in some recent Court judgments that custodians must waive the rentals payable to them.
- 1.3 The Apex Court examined the matter of quantum of demurrage and payment of demurrage in the cases of International Airport Authority of India vs. Grand Slam International [1995 (77) ELT 753 SC] and Trustees of Port of Madras vs. Nagavedu Lungi & Co., [1995 (80) ELT 241 SC] and held that detention charges and warehousing charges are payable to the custodians and shall be paid by the exporter or the importer even where the Customs detention has been finally held as improper/illegal.

2. Guidelines for expeditious Customs clearance/provisional release:

- 2.1 To avoid delays in the release and minimize hardship to the trade if goods remain detained pending investigation into any dispute in relation to assessment etc., the stress is on expeditious assessment/investigations. Further, unless the goods are prohibited or involved in serious fraud even if there is a dispute in assessment etc., provisional release option is given to the importers.

- 2.2 Goods are not to be detained on simple valuation or classification disputes. If it becomes necessary to detain the goods for investigation of any serious suspected fraud etc., the importer/ exporter must be intimated in writing that he may shift the goods to a bonded warehouse under Section 49 of the Customs Act, 1962, with a clear indication that if he does not avail of this facility and the goods incur demurrage, etc., he would have to bear the demurrage and other charges levied by the custodian/other agencies.
- 2.3 Seized imported goods shall be released provisionally, upon request of the owner of the seized goods, subject to executing a Bond for the full value / estimated value of the seized goods.
- 2.4 In addition to the Bond, a Bank Guarantee or security Deposit to cover:
- The entire amount of duty/differential duty leviable on such goods;
 - Amount of fine that may be levied in lieu of confiscation under Section 125 of the Act;
 - Amount of penalties that may be levied under the Act as applicable at the time of adjudication;
 - The competent authority may increase or decrease the amount of Security Deposit.
- 2.5 The adjudicating authority, specifying the reason, may deny provisional release of any goods which are liable to confiscation under Section 111 of 113 or as defined as "Prohibited Goods under section 2(33) (Malabar Diamond Gallery Pvt Ltd Vs Additional Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Chennai- 2016 (341) E.L.T 65 (Mad.).
- 2.6 Distinction between Provisional Assessment & Provisional Release: The Hon`ble Madras High Court in the Malabar Diamond Gallery Pvt Ltd Vs Additional Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Chennai- 2016 (341) E.L.T 65 (Mad.), held that although the import of gold was not prohibited, if the import was in violation of the Conditions attached to such import amounts to smuggling and that a prayer for release could be refused. Further, the Hon`ble High Court of Delhi in Petrochemical & Polymers Vs. The Addl. Director General, DRI & Anr, held that the power under Section 110A of the Act involves exercise of discretion & the scope of judicial review if the discretion has been rightly exercised, that treatment of all types of wrongful imports on an equal footing might result in miscarriage of justice, hence the said Section leaves some margin to the Customs in the exercise of their discretion.
- 2.7 The Bond shall contain an undertaking that the importer shall pay the duty, fine and or penalty as the case may be adjudged by the Adjudicating Authority.
- 2.8 Further, where security is furnished by way of Bank Guarantee, the Bank Guarantee should contain a clause binding the issuing Bank to keep it renewed valid till final adjudication of the case. In the case of non-renewal of guarantee, the guaranteed amount be credited to the Government account by the Bank on its own.

2.9 While provisional release of seized imported goods under Section 110A of the Customs Act, 1962 may normally be considered by the competent adjudicating authority upon a request made by the owner of the seized goods, provisional release shall not be allowed in the following cases –

- (i) Goods prohibited under the Customs Act, 1962 or any other Act for the time being in force;
- (ii) Goods that do not fulfill the statutory compliance requirements/obligations in terms of any Act, Rule, Regulation or any other law for the time being in force;
- (iii) Goods specified in or notified under Section 123 of the Customs Act, 1962;
- (iv) Where the competent authority, for reasons to be recorded in writing believes that the provisional release may not be in the public interest.

[Refer Circular No.35/2017-Customs dated 16.08.2017]

3. Guidelines for provisional release of seized imported goods pending adjudication under Section 110A of the Customs Act, 1962:

3.1 The provisional clearance should be allowed as a rule and not as an exception. Provisional release may not be resorted to in the cases mentioned in para 2.9 but here too option for storage in warehouses under Section 49 of the Customs Act, 1962 should be provided to the importers (goods can be allowed entry into the country only after the laid down quality standards etc. are satisfied).

3.2 In case of containerized cargo, wherever the parties are not in a position to execute bond and bank guarantee for taking provisional release or the Department is of the view that clearance cannot be allowed, the goods may be de-stuffed after giving notice to all concerned and stored in the port's godowns and warehouses to avoid container detention charges.

3.3 In order to ensure expeditious clearance of export cargo it is provided that:

- (a) In case the export goods are found to be mis-declared in terms of quantity, value and description and are seized for being liable to confiscation under the Customs Act, 1962, the same may be ordered to be released provisionally on execution of a Bond of an amount equivalent to the value of goods along with furnishing an appropriate security in order to cover the redemption fine and penalty.
- (b) In case the export goods are either suspected to be prohibited or found to be prohibited in terms of the Customs Act, 1962 or ITC (HS), the same should be seized and appropriate action for confiscation and penalty initiated.
- (c) In case the export goods are suspected of mis-declaration or where declaration is to be confirmed and further enquiry / confirmatory test or expert opinion is required (as in case of chemicals or textiles materials), the goods

should be allowed exportation provisionally. The exporters in these cases are required to execute a Bond of an amount equal to the value of goods and furnish appropriate security in order to cover the redemption fine and penalty in case goods are found to be liable to confiscation. In case exports are made under any Export Promotion / Reward Schemes, the finalization of export incentives should be done only after receipt of the test report / finalisation of enquiry and final decision in the matter. The Bond executed for provisional release shall contain a clause to this effect.

- (d) Export goods detained for purpose of tests etc., must be dealt with on priority and the export allowed expeditiously unless the prohibited nature of goods is confirmed. Continued detention of any export goods in excess of 3 days must be brought to the notice of the Commissioner of Customs, who will safeguard the interest of the genuine exporters as well as the revenue.

3.4 Wherever in adjudication proceedings, the parties have been allowed to clear the goods on payment of redemption fine and penalty and parties, instead of clearing the goods on payment of fine and penalty, prefer an appeal, they will have to pay demurrage/ detention charges, etc., even if they succeed in appeal, as the liability has arisen due to their filing appeal and not clearing the goods for which option was available.

3.5 The Departmental officers will be held accountable for cases where detention of goods have been ordered on insufficient and weak grounds resulting in unconditional release of detained goods in adjudication stage itself, where importers have to suffer avoidable demurrage charges/loss by pilferage etc.

[Refer Instruction F.No. 450/82/95-Cus. IV, dated 7.7.1997 and Circulars No.42/2001-Cus, dated 31.7.2001 and No.1/2011-Cus, dated 4.1.2011]

3.6 Board has reiterated that special care will have to be taken by field formation to avoid any unwarranted delays in clearance that may lead to possible demurrage liability on Customs. Where for justifiable reasons in certain types of exceptional situations, release of consignments is not considered advisable even on provisional basis, options must be given by sending intimation in writing to the importers / exporters or their agents to keep the goods in warehouses in terms of Section 49 of the Customs Act. It should be made clear that if the facility is not availed and the goods incur any demurrage, the importers/exporters will be wholly responsible for its payment.

[Refer Instruction F.No.450/160/2011-Cus.IV, dated 13.2.2012]

3.7 There can be no justification to hold up export consignments for long periods unless the export goods are prohibited under Customs Act, 1962 or ITC (HS) Policy. Essentially, genuine exports must be facilitated and there should be no delays or hold ups of export goods. Therefore, the Board has reiterated that it shall be the responsibility of Commissioner of Customs concerned to ensure strict compliance of extant instructions in this regard and deviation or lapse shall be proceeded against.

[Refer Circular No. 30/2013-Cus., dated 05.08.2013]

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Import and Export through courier



Chapter 17: Import and Export through Courier

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Imports and exports through courier are becoming increasingly popular. At present, the courier clearances are allowed both under manual mode as well as electronic mode. The courier clearances under the manual mode are governed by Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998, and courier clearance under electronic mode are governed by Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010. The courier goods are cleared through a fast-track basis on observance of simple formalities by courier companies. Examination of parcels is kept to the minimum and clearance is allowed on the basis of selective scrutiny of documents. The duty, where leviable, is paid by the courier company on behalf of importers/exporters before taking delivery of the parcels.
- 1.2 The facility of imports and exports through courier mode is allowed to only to those courier companies which are registered by the Customs. These courier companies are called "Authorised Couriers". The courier parcels are normally carried by passenger/ cargo aircrafts. In the case of clearance through Land Customs Stations (LCS), other mode of transport is used. Both of them are allowed to file the Courier Import Manifest.
- 1.3 At present, the courier facility of courier clearance is available at 14 Customs airports in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Cochin, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Trivandrum, Coimbatore, Calicut, Tiruchirapalli, Nashik and Land Customs Stations at Petrapole and Gojadanga. The Courier clearances under the electronic mode of Customs clearance are made operational at 9 locations i.e., Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi Chennai, Cochin, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Kolkata and Hyderabad.
- 1.4 The scheme of Customs clearance of imports and exports by courier mode introduces certain procedural relaxation. Such imports and exports shall, however, continue to be governed by the applicable provisions of the FTP or any other law, for the time being in force.

2. Categories of goods allowed import through courier:

- 2.1 Except for certain excluded categories, all goods are allowed to be imported through the courier mode. The exclusion of certain categories of goods is based upon the fact that these broadly require specific conditions to be fulfilled under any other Act or rule or regulation such as testing of samples etc. on reference to the relevant authorities or experts before their clearance. In these cases, due to additional compliance requirements, the assessment and clearance takes time. These goods, therefore, do not fit into the scheme, which envisages Customs clearance on a fast-track basis. Further, air terminals and LCS are not equipped to handle certain goods. Thus, in general the following categories of goods are not allowed import through the courier mode:
 - (a) Precious and semi-precious cargo;

- (b) Animals and plants;
 - (c) Perishables;
 - (d) Publications containing maps depicting incorrect boundaries of India;
 - (e) Precious and semi-precious stones, gold or silver in any form;
 - (f) Goods under Export Promotion Schemes including EOU scheme, except Drawback, RoDTEP and RoSCTL schemes.;
 - (g) Goods exceeding weight limit of 70 kgs. (Individual packages) imported through courier under manual mode. However, under the electronic mode, no such restriction regarding weight has been provided.
- 2.2 Clearance of goods under EOU scheme is permitted under the electronic mode.

3. Categories of goods allowed export through courier:

- 3.1 As in the case of imports, all goods are allowed to be exported through courier except for the following excluded categories:
- (a) Goods attracting any duty on exports;
 - (b) Goods exported under export promotion schemes, such as DEEC, EPCG, etc.
 - (c) Goods where the value of the consignment is above Rs.25,000/- and transaction in foreign exchange is involved (the limit of Rs.25,000/- does not apply where the G.R. waiver or specific permission has been obtained from the RBI).
- 3.2 The export of cargo through Courier mode having FOB value upto Rs. 10,00,000/- per consignment has been allowed under Courier Imports and Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations 2010.

[Refer Notification No. 23/2023-Cus (N.T.) dated 31.03.2023]

- 3.3 The export of cargo through Courier mode having FOB value upto Rs. 10,00,000/- per consignment has been allowed under Courier Imports and Exports (Clearances) Regulations 1998.

[Refer Notification No. 22/2023-Cus (N.T.) dated 31.03.2023]

4. Import and export of gems and jewellery:

- 4.1 Import of gems and jewellery including samples thereof by EOUs or SEZ units is allowed through courier. Likewise, export of cut and polished diamond, gems and jewellery under any scheme of FTP from EOUs, SEZs or DTA is allowed through courier subject to the condition that the value of each export consignment under such export does not exceed Rs.20lakhs.

5. Procedure for clearance of import goods:

- 5.1 For facilitating Customs clearance, the goods imported by courier are divided into the following categories:

- (a) Documents that include any message, information or data recorded on paper, cards or photographs having no commercial value, and which do not attract any duty or subject to any prohibition/restriction on their import or export;
- (b) Samples - any bonafide commercial samples and prototypes of goods supplied free of charge of a value not exceeding Rs.50,000/- for exports and Rs.10,000/- for imports which are not subject to any prohibition or restriction on their import or export and which does not involve transfer of foreign exchange.
- (c) Free gifts - any bonafide gifts of articles for personal use of a value not exceeding rupees 25,000/- for a consignment in case of exports and Rs.10,000/- for imports which are not subject to any prohibition or restriction on their import or export and which do not involve transfer of foreign exchange.
- (d) Low value dutiable or commercial goods - goods having a declared value of up to Rs.1,00,000/-;and
- (e) Dutiable or commercial goods - goods having a declared value of more than Rs.1,00,000/-.

5.2 Different Customs declaration forms have been prescribed under the Courier Regulations for manual mode and electronic mode. Under the manual mode, simplified Bills of Entry have been specified, as mentioned below, for the clearance of goods. The goods are assessed to duty on merits like any other imported goods, and exemption, wherever available, is allowed to such imports when claimed.

- a) Courier Bill of Entry-III for documents,
- b) Courier Bill of Entry-IV for samples and free gifts, and
- c) Courier Bill of Entry-V for commercial shipments up to a declared value of Rs. one lakh.

5.3 The courier regulations for the manual mode stipulate that for certain categories of imports, a regular Bill of Entry prescribed in the Bill of Entry (Forms) Regulations, 1976 is to be filed. These include, (a) goods imported under EOU scheme; (b) goods imported under DEEC and EPCG schemes; (c) goods imported against the license issued under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation), Act, 1992; (d) goods imported by a related person defined under the Customs Valuation Rules,1988, (e) goods in respect of which the proper officer directs filing of a Bill of Entry; and (f) goods having a declared value of more than Rs. One lakh.

5.4 Under the courier Regulations for the electronic mode the forms prescribed for filing Customs declarations are:

- (a) Courier Bill of Entry-XI (CBE-XI) for documents in Form B,
- (b) Courier Bill of Entry-XII (CBE-XII) for free gifts and samples in Form C,
- (c) Courier Bill of Entry-XIII (CBE-XIII) for low value dutiable

consignments in Form D, and

- (d) Courier Bill of Entry-XIV (CBE-XIV) for other dutiable consignments in Form E for import consignments.

6. Procedural formalities for clearance of export goods:

- 6.1 In case of export goods, the Authorised Courier files Courier Shipping Bills with the proper officer of Customs at the airport or LCS before departure of flight or other mode of transport, as the case may be. Different Forms have been prescribed for export of documents and other goods. The Authorised Courier is required to present the export goods to the proper officer for inspection, examination and assessment.
- 6.2 For certain categories of export goods, a regular Shipping Bill, as prescribed in the Shipping Bill and Bill of Export (Form) Regulations, 1991 is required to be filed. Such Shipping Bills are processed at the Air Cargo Complex or the EOUs or STP or EHTP and thereafter with the permission of Customs, the goods are handed over to a courier agency for onward dispatch. The goods to which this procedure applies are:
 - (a) Goods originating from EOUs/STPs/EHTP,
 - (b) Goods exported under DEEC, EPCG schemes, and
 - (c) Goods which require a license for export under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.
- 6.3 Under courier Regulations for electronic mode, the forms for filing Customs declarations for export goods are (a) Courier Shipping Bill-III (CSB-III) for documents in Form G and (b) Courier Shipping Bill-IV (CSB-IV) for goods in Form H.

7. Examination norms for goods imported or exported by courier:

- 7.1 The following examination norms are provided for import and export of courier consignments:
 - (a) 100% screening of import/ export consignments (documents and all types of cargo) is required to be done through X-ray or other NII techniques. Wherever possible the facility of X-ray machines available with Customs could be used; otherwise the airlines or AAI's screening facility may be resorted to for such screening. Further, wherever feasible such screening by multi-agencies could be combined to reduce the time taken and avoid duplicity.
 - (b) Physical examination of export documents, gifts, samples and export goods limited up to a maximum of 10% of the total courier consignments or specific intelligence. The consignments so selected will be examined 100%.
 - (c) Physical examination of import documents, gifts, samples and dutiable goods limited upto a maximum of 10% of the total courier consignments. The consignments so selected will be examined 100%.
 - (d) Selection of consignments' physical examination would be based on the various parameters such as nature of goods, value, weight, status of

importer, etc.

- i. Commissioner of Customs in respective port can exercise the discretion of random examination of goods, on specific parameter such as country of import/export, nature of goods as presently provided in the EDI system.
- ii. Any consignment can be examined by the Customs (even upto 100% examination), if there is any specific intelligence or there is doubt during Xray in respect of the said consignment.
- iii. Under the automated process the consignments would be identified for examination on the basis of risk analysis.

[Refer Circular No. 23/2006-Cus, dated 25.08.2006]

8 Transshipment of goods:

- 8.1 The facility of transshipment between two Customs stations is available under courier mode as per the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, Goods Imported (Conditions of Transshipment Regulations, 1995 and other instructions. Many times consignments imported through courier mode may also need to be transferred to cargo terminal of the same airport for clearance purposes. Such transfer is akin to local movement of cargo from one custom area of the Customs station to another custom area of the same station and is covered by local procedure evolved by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.

[Refer Circular No.18/2009-Cus, dated 08.06.2009]

9. Disposal of uncleared goods:

- 9.1 The Courier regulations for both manual and electronic mode prescribe a procedure for clearance of uncleared goods. In case of imported goods, the same are required to be detained by Customs and a notice issued to the Authorised Courier and goods can be disposed of after the expiry of 30 days of the arrival of the said goods. The charges payable for storage and holding of such goods are to be borne by the Authorised Courier.
- 9.2 In the case of export goods, a similar procedure as in respect of imported goods is prescribed, the only difference being that such goods can be disposed of if they have not been exported within 7 days of arrival into the Customs Area or within such extended period as may be permitted by the Customs.

10. Registration of Authorised Courier:

- 10.1 A person desirous of operating as an Authorised Courier is required to get himself registered with the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs. Under the regulations for the manual mode, the registration is valid for 10 years and renewable for another 10 years if performance of courier is satisfactory. Similar provisions are contained in the regulation for the electronic mode except that the initial registration period is fixed as 2 years.

- 10.2 The person applying for registration should be financially viable and in support

thereof he is required to produce a certificate issued by a scheduled bank or such other proof evidencing possession of assets of a value not less than Rs. 25 lakhs. Further, he will have to execute a bond with a security of Rs.10 lakhs for registration at Mumbai, Calcutta, Delhi and Chennai. At other airports and LCS, the security deposit is kept at Rs. 5 lakh. The security can be in cash or in the form of postal security or National savings Certificate or Bank Guarantee. A condition of registration is that the applicant agrees to pay the duty, if any, not levied or short levied with interest, if applicable, on any goods taken clearance by the Authorised Courier.

10.3 An Authorised Courier registered at one Customs station is allowed to transact business at more than one airport or LCS subject to giving of intimation in the prescribed form. However, separate bond and security will have to be furnished at each airport and LCS.

10.4 Existing Authorised Couriers who are registered or transacting business in terms of Regulation 12 of the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations 1998 at locations where automated clearance facilities become operational shall be eligible to file declarations under the electronic mode without any requirement for fresh appointment or fresh intimation, subject to the fulfilment of other conditions or requirements imposed under courier Regulations for the electronic mode. In short, once a person is registered as an Authorized Courier, he can file declarations under both the modes subject to compliance of other requirements of the respective Regulations.

11 Obligation of Authorised Courier:

11.1 A number of obligations are cast on the Authorised Courier. These include obtaining an authorization from the consignees for clearance of import or export goods (except import goods having a declared value of Rs.10,000 or less, where the authorization may be obtained at the time of delivery of the consignments to consignee). Some of the important obligations are as follows:

- (a) File declarations, for clearance of imported or export goods, through a person who has passed the examination referred to in Regulation 8 or 19 of the Custom House Agents Licensing Regulations, 2004 and who are duly authorised under Section 146 of the Act;
- (b) Advise his client to comply with the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 and rules and regulations made there-under;
- (c) Verify the antecedent, correctness of Importer Exporter Code (IEC), identity of his client and the functioning of his client in the declared address by using reliable, independent, authentic documents, data or information;
- (d) Exercise due diligence in furnishing information to the Customs in relation to clearance of import or export goods;
- (e) Not withhold any information communicated to him by Customs relating to assessment and clearance of import/export goods from a client;
- (f) Not withhold any information relating to assessment and clearance of import/ export goods from the assessing officer and not attempting to influence the conduct of any officer of Customs in any matter by the use of threat, false accusation, duress or offer of any special inducement

etc.; and

- (g) Maintain records and accounts prescribed by the Customs and abide by all the provisions of the Act and the rules, regulations, notifications and orders issued thereunder.

11.2 The obligation on the Authorized Courier to verify the antecedents, identity of his client and the functioning of his client in the declared address by using reliable, independent, authentic documents, data or information is based upon the increasing number of offences involving various modus-operandi such as fraud and duty evasion by bogus IEC holders etc. In this regard, the detailed guidelines on the list of documents to be verified and obtained from the client/ customer are laid down. It is obligatory for the client/ customer to furnish to the Authorised Courier any two of the listed documents. However, there is no requirement for the client/ customer to furnish a photograph separately to the Authorised Courier.

[Refer Circular No.9/2010-Cus, dated 08.04.2010]

12 Outsourcing/Sub-letting:

12.1 (CCSP) under the Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009, a provision is made prescribing the requirement of prior permission of Customs if the Authorized Courier wants to sub-let/outsource any of the components in the door-to-door supply chain. This is necessary since an Authorized Courier is defined as one, who, in relation to import or export of goods, is a person engaged in the international transportation of goods for export and imports on door- to-door delivery basis, and is registered in this behalf by the jurisdictional Commissioner. Also, the basic reason for expeditious clearance facilities being extended is that Authorized Couriers have in place verifiable and secure work processes on a global basis backed by an elaborate IT infrastructure for knowledge and information management. These companies have their own in- house mechanisms to guard against use of express supply chain by unscrupulous elements. Therefore, any unauthorized sub-letting or outsourcing of any of the components in the door-to-door supply chain may defeat the very purpose behind facility of expeditious clearance. Hence, the Commissioners of Customs should review the facilities available with the Authorised Couriers appointed under their charge to ensure compliance. Further, while allowing, any sub-letting or outsourcing due care should be taken to ensure that it does not go against the very purpose behind facility of expeditious clearance.

13 De-registration and forfeiture of security:

13.1 The registration of an Authorised courier can be revoked by the Commissioner and his security can be forfeited on grounds of his failure to comply with the conditions of the bond, the provisions of regulations and misconduct. Revocation of registration can be made only after a notice is issued to the Authorised Courier and he is given an opportunity to present his case in writing as well as opportunity of being heard in the matter. In cases where an inquiry needs to be conducted to establish prima facie the grounds against the Authorised Courier, the Commissioner of Customs can, pending such inquiry, suspend the registration. An Authorised Courier, if aggrieved by the order of the Commissioner, may represent to the Chief Commissioner within 60 days of

communication of the impugned order.

[Refer Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1988, Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010, Circulars No.56/95- Cus, dated 30.05.1995, No.85/98-Cus, dated 13.11.1998, No.23/2006-Cus, dated 25.08.2006, No.31/2007-Cus, dated 29.08.2007 and No.33/2010-Cus, dated 07.09.2010]

14 Courier electronic clearance procedure:

14.1 Clearance of imported goods shall be affected in the following manner:

- (i) The Authorised Courier or his agent shall file with the proper officer, in an electronic form, a manifest for imported goods prior to its arrival viz. Express Cargo Manifest - Import (ECM-I) in Form A;
- (ii) The courier packages containing the imported goods shall not be dealt with in any manner except as may be directed by the Commissioner of Customs and no person shall, except with the permission of proper officer, open any packages.
- (iii) The Authorised Courier or his agent shall make entry of goods imported by him, in an electronic declaration, by presenting to the proper officer the Courier Bill of Entry-XI (CBE-XI) for documents in Form B or the Courier Bill of Entry-XII (CBE-XII) for free gifts and samples in Form C or the Courier Bill of Entry-XIII (CBE-XIII) for low value dutiable consignments in Form D or the Courier Bill of Entry-XIV (CBE-XIV) for other dutiable consignments in Form E.
- (iv) The Authorised Courier shall present imported goods for inspection, screening, examination and assessment thereof.
- (v) Imported goods which are not taken clearance within 30 days of arrival, shall be detained by proper officer and shall be sold or disposed of by the person having custody thereof, after notice to the Authorised Courier and to the declared importer, if any, and the charges payable for storage and holding of such goods shall be payable by the Authorised Courier.

14.2 Clearance of export goods shall be done as follows:

- (i) The Authorised Courier or his agent shall, on or after such date as the Board may specify by notification, file in an electronic form, a manifest for export goods before its export with the proper officer viz. Courier Export Manifest (CEM) in Form F.
- (ii) The courier packages containing the export goods shall not be dealt with after presentation of documents to the proper officer in any manner except as may be directed by the Commissioner of Customs and no person shall, except with the permission of proper officer, open any package of export goods, brought into the Customs area, to be loaded on a flight.
- (iii) The Authorized Courier or his agent shall make entry of goods for export, in Courier Shipping Bill-III (CSB-III) for documents in Form G or, as the case may be, in the Courier Shipping Bill-IV (CSB-IV) for goods in Form H, before presenting it to the proper officer.

(iv) The Authorized Courier shall present the export goods to the proper officer for inspection, screening, examination and assessment thereof.

(v) Any export goods brought into customs area for export purpose and not exported within 7 days or within such extended period as permitted by the proper officer in case of delay beyond the control of the Authorized Courier and declared exporter, may be detained by the proper officer and sold or disposed off by the custodian, after notice to the concerned Authorized Courier and declared exporter. The charges for storage and handling of such goods shall be paid by such Authorized Courier.

14.3 The Authorized Courier or his agent empowered to deal with the imported/export goods shall be required to pass the examination referred to in the Custom Brokers Licensing Regulations, 2013.

14.4 Regulation 13 of the Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010 provides for suspension or revocation of registration of authorized courier on the basis of grounds specified therein. The following procedure has been prescribed for revoking registration:

(i) The Commissioner of Customs shall issue a notice in writing to the Authorised Courier stating the grounds on which it is proposed to revoke the registration and requiring the said Authorised Courier to submit, within such time as may be specified in the notice, not being less than 45 days, to the Deputy /Assistant Commissioner of Customs nominated by him, a written statement of defence and also to specify in the said statement whether the Authorised Courier desires to be heard in person by the said Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs.

(ii) The Commissioner of Customs may, on receipt of the written statement from the Authorised Courier, or where no such statement has been received within the time-limit specified in the notice, direct the Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs to inquire within a period of 3 months, from the order of suspension or from the date of initiation of enquiry, as the case may be, into the grounds which are not admitted by the Authorised Courier.

(iii) The Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs shall, in the course of inquiry, consider such documentary evidence and take such oral evidence as may be relevant or material to the inquiry in regard to the grounds forming the basis of the proceedings, and he may also put any question to any person tendering evidence for or against the Authorised Courier, for the purpose of ascertaining the correct position.

(iv) The Authorised Courier shall be entitled to cross-examine the persons examined in support of the grounds forming the basis of the proceedings. If the Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs declines to examine any person on the grounds that his evidence is not relevant or material, he shall record his reasons in writing for so doing.

(v) At the conclusion of the inquiry, the Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs shall prepare a report of the inquiry recording his findings.

(vi) The Commissioner of Customs shall furnish to the Authorised Courier a copy of the report of the Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs and shall require the Authorised Courier to submit, within the specified period not being less than 60 days, any representation that he may wish to make

against the findings of the Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs.

- (vii) The Commissioner of Customs shall, after considering the report of the inquiry and the representation thereon, if any, made by the Authorised Courier, pass such orders as he deems fit.

[Refer Instruction F.No.450/54/2008-Cus.IV, dated 9.2.2011 and Notification No. 65/2012-Cus (N.T.), dated 26.07.2012]

15 KYC and other facilitations:

15.1 It has been decided that two documents, one for 'proof of identity' and other for 'proof of address' would be required for KYC verification. However, in case of individuals, if any one document listed in the Board Circular No 9/2010-Cus., dated 8-4-2010 contains both 'proof of identity' and 'proof of addresses', the same shall suffice for the purpose of KYC verification. Board has also expanded the list of documents required for KYC verification by including 'Aadhaar Card' as a valid document for individuals. If individuals may possess proof of identity in the form of prescribed document but their address of present stay is not mentioned in the proof of identity, for such cases, it was decided that proof of identity collected by the representative of the authorized courier at the time of delivery of such consignments to an individual consignee along with recording of address of the place where such consignments would be delivered to the consignee by the authorized courier companies would suffice for KYC verification. In order to bring in more clarity, in this regard, either Aadhaar card or Passport or PAN card or Voter-ID card shall suffice for KYC verification however recording of address of place of delivery would continue.

15.2 In the case of import or export through courier by a firm, company, institution, registered under the GST laws, GSTIN shall suffice as document for the purpose of KYC verification. In case the firm, company or institution is not registered under GST laws, Unique Identification Number(UIN) or PAN shall serve as the document for KYC verification.

[Refer Circulars No. 7/2015-Customs dated 12.02.2015, No.13/2016-Customs dated 26.04.2016, No.02/2018-Customs dated 12.01.2018]

15.3 In order to expedite decision making for outsourcing activities by Couriers, the Board has decided that permission mandated under the Courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulations, 1998 and Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010 should be granted without delay and in any case within 7 days.

[Refer Circular No. 59/2016- Customs dated 02.12.2016]

15.4 In respect of re-export of mis-routed consignments, the Board has decided that such decisions on request for re- export in specified situations should ordinarily be taken within 2 (two) days.

[Refer Circular No. 9/2010-Cus., dated 8.4.2010 and No.4/2015-Cus., dated 20.1.2015]

15.5 Auto LEO facility introduced by CBIC in 2020 has been extended to ECCS module and the auto LEO facility shall also be allowed upon X-ray clearance to

Courier Shipping Bill (CSB) marked for 'assessment only', provided that the CSB has been cleared under assessment and examination has not been mandated.

[Refer Circular No. 19/2023-Customs dated 02.08.2023]

- 15.6 In order to further reduce dwell time of Courier Exports in Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS) and to enhance the trade facilitation, the provision for Advance assessment of Courier Shipping Bills has been implemented in ECCS.

[Refer Circular No. 28 /2023- Customs dated 08.11.2023, read with Advisory No. 11/SYS/WZU/2023 dated 19.10.2023 issued by DG (Systems)]

- 15.7 The Indian Customs EDI System (ICES) is being used at International Courier Terminals (ICTs) for exports made through courier mode, to extend the, the export-related benefits like Duty Drawback, RoDTEP, and RoSCTL.

[Refer Circular No. 15/2024- Customs Dated 12.09.2024]

- 16 To reduce the compliance burden for citizens and business activities, the Board has decided to abolish renewals of Licence/Registration for Authorised Courier

[Refer Circular No. 24/2021-Customs dated 27.10.2021]

17 E-Commerce Procedure for Jewellery Re-Import:

- 17.1 The Courier Import and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010 have been amended vide Notification No. 57/2022-Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2022. The regulations apply to re-import of, -(i) jewellery made of precious metals, whether or not studded or set with precious and semi-precious stones, classified under CTH 7113 but excluding CTSH 71131190 and CTSH 71131960 of the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975(51 of 1975), and(ii) imitation jewelry classified under CTH 7117 of the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975,

[Refer Notification No. 57/2022-Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2022 and Circular No. 09/2022 dated 30.06.2022]

18 E-Commerce exports of Jewellery:

- 18.1 The procedures were simplified for e-commerce exports of jewellery through Courier mode in cases where an exporter does not opt to avail the facility of re-import of the exported jewellery. Certain requirement for uploading the documents on the ECCS-system were waived off and the declaration to this effect in the courier shipping bill (CSB-V) at the time of export is sufficient.

[Circular No. 17/2023- Customs dated 15.06.2023]



18

Import and Export through
post

Chapter 18: Import and Export through Post

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The facility for import and export of goods by Post Parcels is provided by the Postal Department at its Foreign Post Offices and all the post offices. Customs facilities for examination, assessment, clearances are available at these post Offices. However, parcels for export will be opened and examined if required by the Customs at the jurisdictional Postal Department of the Zone as per Notification No. 31/2017-Customs (N.T.) dated 31.03.2017.

2. Legal Provisions:

- 2.1 Goods exempted from prohibition under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 can be imported through posts and are to be classified under the respective Chapter Headings of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 and the applicable rate of duty is charged on all the goods imported by post. Further, goods again any import licence or customs clearance permit can also be imported through Post. All goods including alcoholic drinks imported through courier can also be imported through posts excepting motor vehicles.
- 2.2 All goods imported or exported by posts are governed by Section 83 and 84 of the Customs Act, 1962, except Postal parcels and letter packets.
- 2.3 In respect of import of any goods through post, necessary bill of entry needs to be filed either by importer, postal authorities or the Customs Broker containing the details like description, quantity and value of the goods along with the manifest. Further in respect of exports, the procedures are stipulated in Exports by Post Regulations 2018, as amended by the Exports by Post (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 and Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022.

[Refer to Notifications No. 103/2022-Customs (N.T.) and No. 104/2022-Customs (N.T.) both dated 09.12.2022]

- 2.4 The relevant date for rate of duty and tariff value, if any, applicable in respect of imports through post is the date on which the postal authorities file the relevant Bill of Entry to the Proper Officer of Customs along with the list containing details of the goods for assessment.
- 2.5 If the post parcels come through a vessel and the said Bill of Entry is filed by the postal authorities before arrival of the vessel, the rate of duty and tariff value applicable shall be as on the date of arrival of the vessel i.e. Entry Inward of the vessel.
- 2.6 In respect of export goods, the relevant date for rate of duty and tariff value, if any, applicable, is the date on which the exporter delivers the goods to postal authorities for exportation and files the documents prescribed under the Exports by Post Regulations and the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulation.

3. Clearance of Letter Mail Articles:

- 3.1 Letter Mail Articles are generally cleared by the Customs at the time of their presentation by elimination through scanning unless they appear to contain contraband or dutiable articles. In such cases, the Letter Mail is subjected to further examination at the Foreign Post Offices or sub- Foreign Post Offices, as the case may be.

4. Importability of dutiable items through post:

- 4.1 Import of dutiable goods by letter, packet or parcel posts is permitted subject to filling of bill of entry indicating that the letter/packet may be opened for Customs examination. Dutiable goods may also be imported by post if Customs is satisfied that the details of nature, weight and value of the contents in declaration as above are correctly stated.

[Refer Notification No.78-Cus, dated 02.04.1938]

- 4.2 Items intended for personal use, which are exempt from the prohibitions under the FTP or the Customs Act, 1962, can be imported by postal channel on payment of appropriate duties under Tariff Heading 9804 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.

- 4.3 Customs duty payable if less than Rs.1000/- is exempt.

[Refer Notification No. 21/02-Cus, dated 1.3.2002]

5. Import of gifts through post:

- 5.1 As per Foreign Trade Policy, import of goods through post as gift is prohibited except for life saving drugs/medicines and Rakhi (but not gift related to Rakhi) but import of goods as gifts with payment of full applicable duties is allowed.

[Refer Circular No. 4/2020-Customs dated 21.01.2020]

- 5.2 Bonafide gifts up to a value limit as prescribed by the Government of India when imported by post, are exempt from Basic and Additional Customs duties. (Notification No.171/93-Cus, dated 16-9- 1993). Further, only those items can be imported as gifts, which are not prohibited for importation under Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

- 5.3 The sender of the gift may not necessarily be residing in the country from where the goods have been dispatched and any person abroad can send the gifts to relatives, business associates, friends, companies and acquaintances. The gifts should be for bonafide personal use only. The purpose of this stipulation is that the person receives the gift genuinely free and the payment is not made for it through some other means. The quantity and frequency of the gifts should not give rise to the belief that it is used as a route to transfer money. The gifts can be received by individuals, societies, institutions, like schools and colleges and even corporate bodies.

- 5.4 For calculating the value limit prescribed the Government of India in case of imports of gifts, postal charges or the airfreight is not taken into consideration. The value is taken as original value of the goods in the country from where the goods have been dispatched.
- 5.5 If the value of the gifts received is more than the prescribed limit the receiver has to pay Customs duty on the whole consignment, even if the goods were received free, unsolicited. In addition, at the discretion of the Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner, if the goods are restricted for import, the receiver has a liability for penalty for such import, even if the goods have been sent unsolicited. The restricted goods are also liable to confiscation and receiver has to pay redemption fine in lieu of confiscation in addition to duty and penalty. Certain prohibited goods like narcotic drugs, arms, ammunition, obscene films/printed material etc. are liable to absolute confiscation and the receiver is liable for penal action, even if the goods have been sent unsolicited.
- 5.6 Customs duty is chargeable on gifts assessed over the prescribed limit by the Customs. In case of post parcel, the customs department shall assess the duty payable and the postal department collects the assessed duty from the receiver of the gift and subsequently deposits it with the customs.

6. Import of samples through post:

- 6.1 Bonafide commercial samples and prototypes imported by post are exempted from Customs duty, subject to the value limit prescribed by the Government provided that the samples are supplied free of cost.
- 6.2 Importers having IEC code number can import commercial samples through post without payment of duty upto a value of Rs.100,000/- or 15 units in number within a period of 12 months. The goods so imported shall be clearly marked as "Samples". The importer is required to furnish a declaration to the effect that the samples are solely for the purpose of being shown to the exporters for securing or executing export orders. The importer is also required to undertake that if declaration is found to be false, he will pay appropriate duty on the goods imported as commercial samples.

[Notification No.154/94-Cus, dated 13.7.1994]

7. Import of Indian and Foreign Currencies by Post:

- 7.1 Under the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, no person may bring or send into India any foreign exchange or Indian currency except with special or general permission of the RBI. Import of Indian currency notes and coins by post is not permitted.
- 7.2 To reduce pendency and to avoid delay in clearance of mail articles, Customs may allow import of both Indian and foreign currencies received by residents by post, provided the value does not exceed Rs.5,000/-, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Approval is granted by Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner of Customs;
- (b) A detailed record should be maintained of the exemptions granted;
- (c) Record of the name and addresses of the remitter and addressee in India should be maintained; and (d) Where a spurt is noticed in the number of covers received over a time, the matter may be reported to the concerned Regional Office of RBI.

7.3 Parcels/packets containing foreign/Indian currency, etc., in excess of Rs.5,000/- shall be Detained and adjudicated on merits and released on the basis of "No Objection Certificate" from the RBI.

[Refer Circular No.16/2002-Cus, dated 05.03.2002]

7.4 There is a general permission given to Authorised Dealers to import currency notes from their overseas branches/correspondents for meeting their normal banking requirements. In view of this, no specific clearance is required from RBI for such imports.

[Refer Circular No.60/02-Cus, dated 13.9.2002 read with Annexure V to RBI's AD (MA Series) Circular No.11, dated 16.5.2000]

8. Procedure in case of postal imports:

8.1 Rules Regarding Postal Parcels and Letter Packets from Foreign Ports in/out of India prescribe procedure for landing and clearing at notified ports/airports/ LCSs of parcels and packets forwarded by foreign mails or passenger vessels or airliners. The procedure broadly is as under:

- (a) The boxes or bags containing the parcels shall be labelled as "Postal Parcel", "Parcel Post", "Parcel Mail", "Letter Mail" and will be allowed to pass at specified the Foreign Parcel Department of the Foreign Post Offices and Sub Foreign Post Offices.
- (b) On receipt of the parcel mail, the Postmaster hands over to the Customs the following documents:
 - (i) A memo showing the total number of parcels received from each country of origin;
 - (ii) Eliminate the parcels which are letters, documents in consultation with the Customs Department.
 - (iii) File the Bills of entry in the prescribed forms along with the senders' declarations and any other relevant documents that may be required for the examination, assessment etc. by the Customs Department;
 - (iv) The relative Customs Declarations and dispatch notes (if any); and

- (c) On receipt of the documents, the Customs Appraiser shall scrutinize the particulars given in the memo and identify the parcels to be detained for examination either for want of necessary particulars or defective description or suspected misdeclaration or under- valuation of contents. The remaining parcels are to be assessed for duty by scrutinizing the Bill of entry, as the case may be. For this purpose, the Appraisers are generally guided by the particulars given in the Bill of entry or Customs declarations and dispatch notes (if any). When any invoice, document or information is required to ascertain the real value, quantity or description of the contents of a parcel, the addressee may be called upon by way of a notice to produce or furnish such invoice, document and information.
- (d) Whenever necessary, the values from the declarations are considered as per the Bill of entry and after conversion into Indian Currency at the ruling rates of exchange, the amount of duty is calculated and entered.
- (e) Duty is calculated at the rate and valuation in force on the date that the postal authorities present a list of such goods or date of filing the Bill of entry with the Customs. In case the parcels are brought through a vessel and postal authorities present list of goods before arrival of the vessel, the rate of duty and tariff value shall be the date on which Inward Entry is granted to the vessel.
- (f) All parcels marked for detention are to be detained by the Postmaster and the rest of the parcels which have been eliminated by the Customs will go forward for delivery to the addressee on payment of the duty marked on each parcel.
- (g) The detained parcels are submitted together with the Bill of entry to the Customs and after examining the details of contents of value in the Bills of entry Customs Appraiser clears the bill.
- (h) In the case of receipt of letter mail bags, the Postmaster gets the bags opened which is scrutinized under the supervision of the Customs with a view to identify packets containing dutiable articles. Those parcels containing non dutiable goods are eliminated and the dutiable packets are to be detained and presented in due course to the Customs Appraiser with a bill of entry for the purpose of assessment. The Customs Appraiser will assess the amount of duty against each item.
- (i) All parcels or packets required to be opened for Customs examination are opened, and after examination, closed by the Post Office officials and are then sealed with a distinctive seal. The parcels or packets shall remain throughout in the custody of the Post Office officials. (The Rules and regulations prescribed under Not No. 26/2009- Cus (N.T.) for the handling of goods in customs areas will be applicable to the postal department.
- (j) If on examination the contents of any parcel or packet are found mis declared or the value understated or consisting of prohibited goods, such

parcels or packets must be detained. The Postmaster shall follow the instructions stipulated in Notification No. 26/2009-Customs (N.T.) dated 17.03.2019 and shall not allow such parcels or packets to go forward without the Customs' orders. Adjudication proceedings shall be initiated in such cases by the competent officer and the parcels released only after payment of fine and penalty, if any, levied by the adjudicator.

- (k) The duties as assessed by the Customs Appraiser in the Bill of entry shall be recovered by the Post Office from the addressees at the time of delivery of the goods to the importers. The credit for the total amount of duty certified by the Customs Appraiser at the end of each bill is given by the Post Office to the Customs Department in accordance with the procedure settled between the two Departments.
- (l) The Bill of entries or the letter mail bills on which assessment is made remain in the custody of the Post Office, but the duplicates copies are kept in the Customs Department for dealing with claims for refunds, etc.

9. Legal provisions and exemptions in case of postal exports:

- 9.1 Goods which are not prohibited or restricted for export as per FTP can be exported by post through authorized booking post offices and will be subjected to examination at the 28 specified Foreign Post offices. IGST refund and Drawback can also be availed for export through post and also through other export promotion schemes like Advance Licence, EPCG etc. Commercial samples prototypes of goods and free gift as per FTP may also be exported by the post.

[Refer Circular Nos. 25/2022-Customs dated 09.12.2022, No. 06/2023- Customs dated 01.03.2023, 20/2023- Customs dated 07.08.2023, 27/2023- Customs dated 01.11.2023 and 01/2024- Customs dated 01.02.2024]

- 9.2 The rate of duty and tariff value, if any, applicable to any goods exported by post shall be the rate and valuation in force on the date on which the exporter delivers such goods to the Postal Authorities for exportation.
- 9.3 Bonafide commercial samples and prototype of goods supplied free of charge of a value not exceeding Rs.50,000/- which are not subject to any prohibition or restriction for export under FTP and which do not involve transfer of foreign exchange, may be exported through post.
- 9.4 Bonafide gifts of articles for personal use of a value not exceeding Rs.25,000/- which are not subject to any prohibition or restriction on their export under FTP and which do not involve transfer of foreign exchange, may be exported through post.
- 9.5 Export by post of Indian and foreign currency, bank drafts, cheques, National Saving Certificates and such other negotiable instruments is not allowed unless accompanied by a valid permit issued by the RBI, except in cases where such negotiable instruments are issued by an authorised dealer in foreign exchange in

India.

- 9.6 Indian currency notes of Rs.500/- and Rs.1000/- denominations are prohibited by Government of Nepal. Therefore, the Indian currency notes of Rs.500/- and Rs.1000/ - denominations shall not be allowed for export to Nepal.
- 9.7 Prohibitions/restrictions under the FTP and the Customs Act, 1962 apply on the export of various articles by post. Some of these articles are viz. arms and ammunitions, explosives, inflammable material, intoxicants, obscene literature, certain crude and dangerous drugs, antiquities, narcotic drugs etc.
- 9.8 Export of purchases made by the foreign tourists is allowed through post subject to proof that the payment has been made in foreign exchange.

10. Procedure in case of postal exports:

- 10.1 All goods exported by post are required to accompanied by the Declarations filed in the form prescribed in Exports by Post Regulation, 2018, as amended by the Exports by Post (Amendment) Regulations,2022 and the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulation 2022.

[Refer Notifications No. 103/2022-Customs (N.T.) and No. 104/2022-Customs (N.T.) both dated 09.12.2022]

- 10.2 In terms of the exports made under claim of benefit under chapter (Reward Scheme) of FTP, the exporter shall file a form prescribed in Exports by Post Regulation, 2018, as amended by the Exports by Post (Amendment) Regulations,2022 and the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulation 2022. .
- 10.3 All exports by post, where the value exceeding Rs.50/- and where payment has to be received, must be declared on the exchange control form viz. P.P. form. When the postal article is covered by a certificate issued by the RBI (with or without limit) or by an authorised dealer in foreign exchange that the export does not involve any transaction in foreign exchange upto Rs. 500/-, the declaration in a P.P. form is not necessary.
- 10.4 All the letters and parcels before being produced by the postal authorities to Customs officer in the Foreign Post Office should ensure that that prohibited goods like narcotic drugs, foreign exchange, currency etc. is not being sent through the parcel. The suspected parcels are to be presented to the Customs department which can be detained and handed over to the postal authorities for action as stipulated in Not No. 26/2009-Cus (N.T.) dated 17.03.2009.
- 10.5 The detained parcels are opened by Customs officer in presence of the postal authorities and if same do not contain any prohibited or restricted goods and there is no misdeclaration of value the parcels are re-packed and handed over to postal authorities for export.

10.6 If the detained parcels contain restricted or prohibited goods or mis-declared goods with intention to avail inadmissible export benefits, the case is investigated and adjudication proceedings are initiated.

11. Procedure for claiming Drawback on exports through post:

11.1 The exporters claiming any export benefits for the goods exported through post as prescribed in the Rules shall label the outer packing of the consignment and the exporter shall deliver to postal authorities a claim in the prescribed Annexure. The date of receipt of claim by proper officer of Customs shall be the relevant date for filing of claim under the Customs Act, 1962.

11.2 In case the claim is incomplete, a deficiency memo shall be issued within 15 days and if exporter complies within 30 days, an acknowledgement shall be issued. The date of issue of acknowledgement shall be taken as date of filing the claim for the purpose under the Customs Act, 1962.

11.3 Drawback on exports through post is sanctioned by the respective Foreign Post Office.

12. Drawback in respect of goods re-exported through post:

12.1 The goods imported on payment of duty may also be re-exported through post and applicable rate of Drawback under Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962 claimed. The Drawback of the duty paid at the time of import is permissible subject to the fulfilment of the conditions of Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962 and Re-export of Imported Goods (Drawback of Customs Duties) Rules, 1995. The Proper Officer of Customs at Foreign Post Office shall be satisfied about the identity of the goods being re-exported and if the same cannot be established, no Drawback would be payable.

12.2 The procedure to be followed for claim of Drawback on goods re-exported through post, which is paid by the Customs Officer in the FPO, is as follows:

- (i) Rule 3 of Re-export of Imported Goods (Drawback of Customs Duties) Rules, 1995 requires the outer packing of the parcel to carry the words "Drawback Export" and exporter shall give a claim as per Annexure I to said Rules in quadruplicate to the Postal authorities. The date of receipt of aforesaid Annexure I by Customs from Postal authorities shall be the date of receipt of the claim for the purposes of Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962 and exporter shall be informed.
- (ii) If claim is incomplete, a deficiency memo shall be issued within 15 days and if claim is again filed by exporter after complying with the deficiencies within 30 days, the receipt shall be acknowledged and this date shall be treated as date of filing the claim for the purposes of Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962

13. Export of postal goods under Reward Schemes under Foreign Trade Policy

- 13.1 Notification Nos. 92/2009-Cus, 93/2009- Cus, 94/2009- Cus and 95/2009-Cus; all dated 11.9.2009 allow export of goods by post under claim of benefits under Chapter 3 (reward schemes) of the FTP from the Foreign Post Offices nominated under Notification No. 31/2017 -Cus (N.T.). The procedure for availing this benefit is contained in Public Notice No. 13/2013 dated 13.8.2013 issued by the Commissioner of Customs (Exports), New Delhi.

[Refer Circular No. 29/2013-Cus. Dated 05.08.2013]

14. Re-export of partial consignment not allowed:

- 14.1 If the addressee takes delivery of parcels on payment of duty and then wishes to return to the sender, they can do so only under claim for Drawback after observing the prescribed procedure.
- 14.2 Permitting an addressee to open a parcel and take the delivery of part contents on payment of duty and repack the balance of the contents for re-export without payment of duty thereon is not authorised and is irregular.

15. Procedure for e-commerce exports through Post:

- 15.1 Any exporter holding a valid Importer Exporter Code will be permitted to export goods by filing a Postal Bill of Export (PBE) in the form prescribed in Exports by Post Regulations 2018, as amended by the Exports by Post (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 and in Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulation 2022.
- 15.2 Every PBE-I(for e-commerce exports) shall be filed in duplicate and shall cover only one consignor. There will be no limitations on the number of postal shipments which can be effected under a single Postal Bill of Export-I. Invoices should be attached by the exporter with the PBE-I. Importer shall in addition file postal label or declaration as per CN22/CN23 which has a column 'sale of goods'.
- 15.3 PBE along with goods shall be presented to Customs at the Foreign Post Office. Upon completion of processing of PBE, the goods shall be presented to the Postal department, who will acknowledge receipt of the shipment on the PBE and affix the tracking number of each shipment on the same. Upon affixation of the tracking number by the postal authorities, the PBE shall be brought back to the proper officer for grant of 'Let Export Order'. Original PBE will be retained by Customs and the duplicate PBE will be handed over to the exporter or his Customs broker.

[Refer Circulars No. 14/2018- Customs dated 25.07.2018, No. 18/2018- Customs dated 13.06.2018]



19
Import of Samples

Chapter 19: Import of Samples

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 In international trade it is often necessary to send samples of goods manufactured in one country to another country for being shown or demonstrated for customer appreciation and familiarization and for soliciting orders. Samples are imported by the trade, industry, individuals, companies, associations, research institutes or laboratories. These are brought by representatives of foreign manufacturers as a part of their personal baggage or through port or by courier.
- 1.2 Commercial samples are basically specimens of goods that may be imported by the traders or representatives of manufacturers abroad, to know its characteristics and usage and to assess its marketability in India. Samples include consumer goods, consumer durables, prototypes of engineering goods or even high value equipment, machineries (including agricultural machinery) and their accessories.

2. Legal provisions:

- 2.1 India is a signatory to the 1952 Geneva Convention to facilitate the Importation of commercial samples and advertising materials. The notifications issued in this regard enable duty free import of genuine commercial samples into the country for smooth flow of trade. It is, however, not to be used as a means to avoid paying Customs duty through repeated imports of samples in smaller lots.
- 2.2 Goods prohibited under Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 are not allowed to be imported as samples e.g. wild animals, wild birds and parts of wild animals and birds, ivory, arms and ammunitions, and narcotic drugs.
- 2.3 Bonafide trade samples can be imported provided these have been supplied free of charge. For duty free clearance the value of individual sample should not exceed Rs.10,000/- and aggregate value should not exceed Rs.3,00,000/- per year or 50 units of samples in a year. However, the prototypes of engineering goods can be imported even if the value is more than Rs.10,000/-. Such prototypes can be imported upto a value of Rs.10,000/- without payment of duty as long as the goods are rendered useless as merchandise by a suitable process. In case the value exceeds Rs.10,000/-, the said goods have to be re-exported within a period of 9 months or such extended period as the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs may allow. The high valued samples are cleared after depositing duty with Customs and giving an undertaking for their re-export within nine months. The deposited duty is refunded when the machinery is exported back. However, if more than one product is being imported into India, the value limit is increased proportionately. Similarly, if the samples are consigned to more than one consignee, by any foreign company, and are sent at the same time through the same port/airport, it shall not be charged to duty if the value limit of Rs.5,000/- per unit is adhered to. The consignments meant for distribution to different parties in India can also be imported together for convenience of

transport, if the packets are clearly marked and addressed to different persons in India.

- 2.4 A commercial traveler of foreign country is eligible to carry bonafide samples if the value of each of the item is not more than Rs.10,000/- per unit. The traveler must declare that these goods are meant for securing export order or guidance of exporters, and that the total value does not exceed Rs.3,00,000/- per item during the 12 month period and that he has not imported more than 50 units of the said goods within the last 12 months. He also undertakes that he would not sell these goods and if he sells, he will pay the duty leviable on those goods.
- 2.5 The value of Rs.10,000/- is the value of the goods in the country of dispatch excluding local refundable taxes like VAT. In case of free samples of Rs.10,000/-, its value does not include air- freight or postal charges. If value is above Rs.10,000/-, the freight and insurance charges would be added to calculate the duty payable. Importers are trusted to declare correctly and adhere to the undertaking of the limit of yearly value and quantity. Any person suspected to contravene the limit or undertaking deliberately is liable to be investigated, penalized and/or prosecuted.

3. Machinery import:

- 3.1 Machinery that are prototypes of engineering goods, imported either for further manufacture or for use as capital goods for export production or in connection with securing export orders can be imported duty free upto value of Rs.10,000/-. These goods are normally defaced or made un- saleable by punching, cracking, marking with indelible ink etc. The machinery can be cleared by furnishing a Bank Guarantee (or) deposit of the duty payable and an undertaking that these would be re-exported within 9 months of import. For high valued machinery, the importer has to give an undertaking that these are utilised for the purpose of demonstration at the place(s) which is declared. The Customs authority may also seal the machinery during its journey from the port of importation to the place of demonstration and it is unsealed only at the place of operation or place of demonstration

4. Failure to re-export:

- 4.1 The samples have to be re-exported within 9 months. However, the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs, may under special circumstances extend the period of 9 months for a further reasonable period.

[Refer Notification No. 154/1994-Cus dated 13.07.1994 as amended by Notification No. 100/95- Cus dated 26.05.1995, No. 101/95- Cus dated 26.05.1995, No. 75/97- Cus dated 14.10.1997, No. 86/99- Cus dated 06.07.1999, No. 28/2003-Cus dated 01.03.2003, No. 50/2005- Cus dated 20.05.2005, No. 21/2006- Cus dated 28.02.2006, 74/2007- Cus dated 21.05.2007, No. 62/2008- Cus dated 06.05.2008, No. 109/2009- Cus dated 24.09.2009, No. 16/2010- Cus dated 27.02.2010, No. 43/2017 dated 30.06.2017, No. 29/2024-Customs dated 23.07.2024]

5. Import of samples under other scheme:

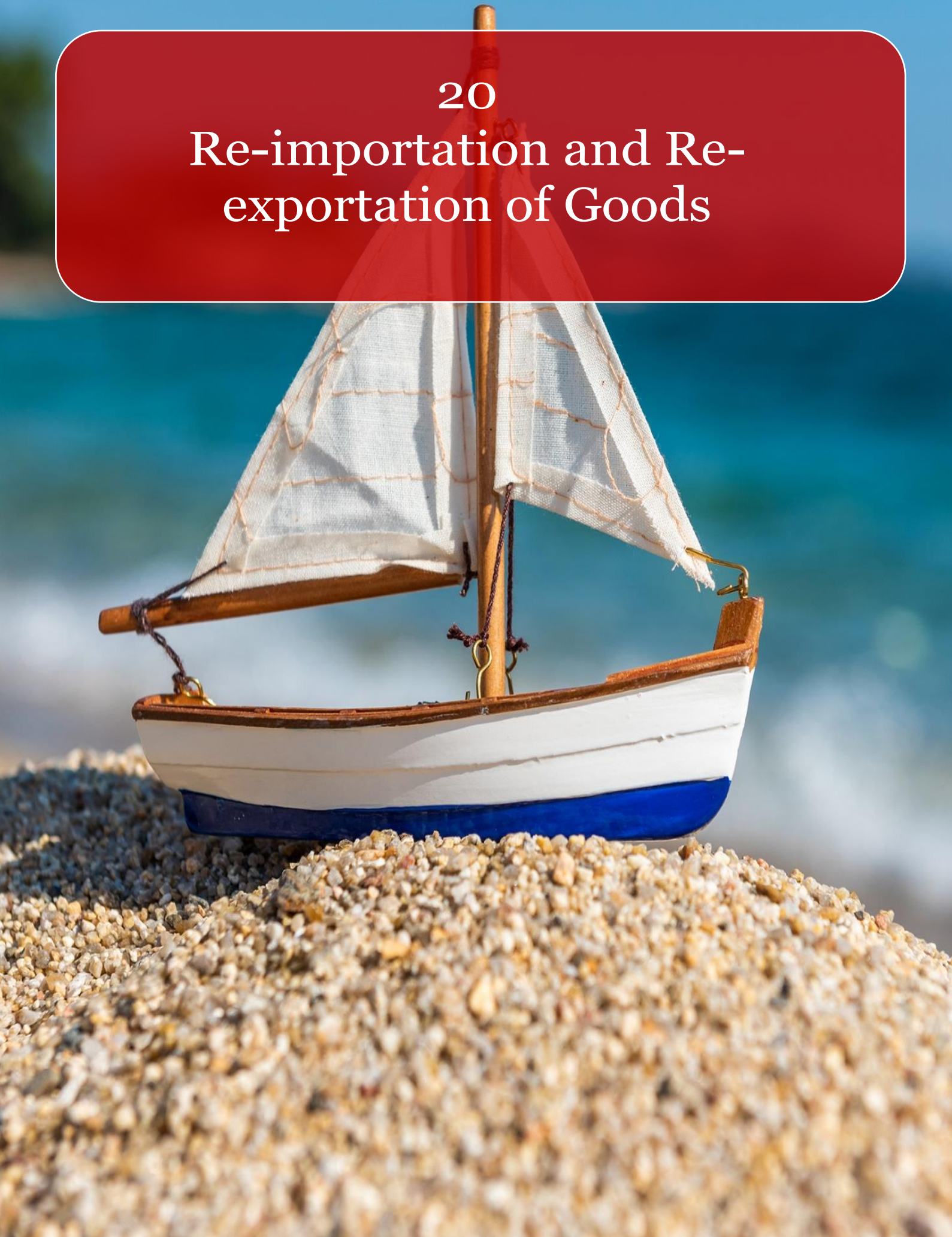
5.1 Duty free import of samples is permitted under following provisions/schemes:

- (a) Goods intended for display or use at an specified event, goods intended for use in connection with the display of goods and certain other items can be imported duty free subject to the compliance of conditions of Notification No. 08/2016-Cus dated 05.02.2016.
- (b) Sample can be imported for Government of India sponsored events viz. trade and industry fairs under Carnet vide Notification No.157/90-Cus, dated 28.03.1990 as amended.
- (c) Samples of goods manufactured by EOUs can be imported duty free in terms of Notification No.52/2003-Cus, dated 31.03.2003.
- (d) It has been clarified that bonafide trade samples should be part of export baggage in terms of para 2.45 of the FTP, 2023 read with para 2.27 of the said FTP and para 2.62 of Handbook of Procedures, 2023

[Refer Instruction F.No.495/2/2011-Cus.VI dated 05.04.2011]

20

Re-importation and Re-exportation of Goods



Chapter 20: Re-importation and Re-exportation of Goods

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Sometimes, indigenously manufactured goods, when exported, are returned back for various reasons including cancellation of export order or after exhibition/display etc., or after use in particular project/contract and completion of the contract etc. (such as machinery). Similarly imported goods which may have discharged duties at the time of original importation have also to be often sent out for repair, reconditioning etc. Private, personal imported property may also have to be sent abroad for repair within the warranty period and returned. There are also goods that may have to be sent for special processes like electroplating, polishing or coating and re-imported. Thus, specific legal provisions permit the facility of re-import and re-export of goods.

2. Re-importation of indigenously manufactured/imported goods:

- 2.1 Under Section 12 of the Custom Act, 1962 import duties of Customs are leviable on all import goods, and no distinction is made whether the goods being imported had discharged duties earlier are being re-imported after exportation for particular purposes. Similarly, even if goods are indigenously manufactured which had been exported earlier under various export incentive schemes or duty drawback claim or even without any export incentive claim, when these are re- imported they attract the Customs duty leviable on like import goods (as the duty is on the act of importation) unless an exemption notification is issued.
- 2.2 To avoid incidence of double duty on re-imported goods such when sent abroad for repairs, certain relief from duty has been provided. Similarly, where the goods are indigenously manufactured, they should bear the Central Excise or GST duties, as applicable, which may not have been discharged at the time of exportation. Further, the exporters should not retain any benefits obtained as an export incentive if the goods are re-imported.
- 2.3 The salient elements of the duty exemption governing the re-imported goods are as follows:
- (i) On re-import of indigenously manufactured goods under duty Drawback/claim of refund of integrated tax paid, export under bond or under other claim of export incentives, essentially the duties equivalent to the export incentives etc. availed have to be paid, on re- importation. Thus, if the goods were exported on payment of GST, without claiming any rebate, and without claiming any export incentives such as Drawback or benefits of the duty exemption schemes, EPCG schemes, and where the indigenously manufactured goods are being returned then no Customs duties are leviable. Further, when the indigenously manufactured goods are exported for repair and returned without claiming any benefits, duty is to be paid on a value comprising fair cost of repairs including cost of materials used in repairs, insurance and freight charges both ways. Similarly, in case of re-

import of cut and polished precious and semi-precious stones exported for treatment abroad as referred to in Paragraph 4.51 of the Foreign Trade Policy, duty is to be paid on a value comprising of the fair cost of treatment carried out including cost of materials used in such treatment, insurance and freight charges, both ways. Basically the benefit is available if the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs is satisfied that the goods are the same which were exported earlier and certain other conditions as laid down in the relevant notification are fulfilled.

[Refer Notification No.45/2017-Cus, dated 30.06.2017]

- (ii) Similar duty exemption provisions in case of re-import of the goods falling within the Fourth Schedule to the Central Excise Act, 1944 (1 of 1944) are contained in Notification No.47/2017-Cus, dated 30.06.2017.
- (iii) Goods manufactured in India or parts thereof that are re-imported for repairs or reconditioning or reprocessing/refining/remaking etc. are exempt from duty subject to the condition that the re-importation takes place within a specified period; the goods are reexported within six months of re-importation; the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs is satisfied as regards the identity of the goods; and certain other conditions ensuring re-export including execution of bonds are fulfilled.

[Refer Notification No.158/95-Cus, dated 14.11.1995 as amended vide Notification No. 43/2017-Cus dated 30.06.2017]

- (iv) Re-imported private personal property, which was imported earlier but exported out for any alteration, renovation, repair free of charge etc. is exempt from duty subject to the condition that the goods are repaired on free of charge basis in accordance with the terms of warranty given by the manufacturers and in accordance with the established trade practice and Drawback or other incentives have not been availed. However, certain Custom duties equivalent to the cost of alterations/renovations/additions/repairs, if any, are payable.

[Refer Notification No.174/66-Cus. dated 24.9.1966 as amended vide Notification No. 44/2017-Cus dated 30.06.2017]

3. Re-exportation of imported goods:

- 3.1 There are often occasions where imported goods may have to be re-exported such as when the import goods are found defective after Customs clearance or are not found as per specifications or requirements. Various machinery items imported for use in certain projects or otherwise are also often to be re-exported by the original owner. Re-exports can be made by sea, air, baggage or post.
- 3.2 Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for grant of Drawback @98% of the Customs duties paid at the time of importation, if the goods are re-exported by

the importer, subject to certain conditions. The re-export is to be made within a maximum period of two years from the date of payment of duty on importation (which period can be extended on sufficient grounds being shown) and goods have to be identified with the earlier import documents and duty payment to the satisfaction of the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs at the time of export. If such goods are used after importation, Drawback is granted on a proportionate basis but if such goods are re-exported after more than 18 months of import 'nil' Drawback is admissible. Further, no Drawback of the import duty paid is permissible for specific categories of goods such as wearing apparel, tea chests, exposed cinematographic films passed by Film Censor Board, unexposed photographic films, paper and plates and x-ray films. Also, in respect of motor vehicles imported for personal and private use the Drawback is calculated by reducing the import duty paid according to the laid down percentage for use for each quarter or part thereof, but upto maximum of four years. Further Circular 21/2017-Cus dated 30.06.2017 has been issued post introduction of GST in this regard.

[Refer Notification No.19/65-Cus, dated 06.02.1965 and Re-export of imported Goods (Drawback of Customs Duties) Rules 2017]

- 3.3 Section 26A of the Customs Act, 1962 allows refund of import duty if the imported goods are found defective or otherwise not in conformity with the specifications agreed upon between the importer and the supplier of goods. One of the conditions for claiming refund is that the goods should not have been worked, repaired or used after the importation except where such use was indispensable to discover the defects or non-conformity with the specifications. Another condition is that the goods are either exported without claiming Drawback or abandoned to Customs or destroyed or rendered commercially valueless in the presence of the Proper Officer within a period of 30 days from the date on which the Proper Officer makes an order for the clearance of imported goods for home consumption. The period of 30 days can be extended by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs on sufficient cause being shown. However, no refund shall be available in respect of perishable goods and goods which have exceeded their shelf life or their recommended storage-before-use period.
- 3.4 CBIC clarified eligibility of exemption Notification No.104/94-Cus., dated 16.03.1994 (as amended) on import of empty containers that satisfy following conditions
- a) that are durable,
 - b) capable of being re-used multiple times,
 - c) capable of being identified at the time of re-export viz. a viz. the imported containers, and
 - d) satisfy all the other stipulated conditions in the notification.

Details of procedural requirements are provided in Circular No.51/2020-Customs dated 20.11.2020.

4. Re-export of diamonds

- 4.1 The board allowed setting up of a Special Notified Zone at Bharat Diamond Bourse, Bandra Kurla Cargo Complex, Mumbai. Bharat Diamond Bourse and their duly appointed handling agent, M/S India Diamond Trading Centre shall be responsible for the receipt, sales, re-exports, custody, delivery, re-export and accounting of the rough diamonds imported for viewing and/or sale in such form as prescribed by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.

[Refer Circular No. 17/2015 – Customs dated 26.05.2015]

- 4.2 The board allowed setting up of a Special Notified Zone at Gujarat Hira Bourse, Ichhapore Surat. M/S SIDC and M/S DGDC shall be responsible for the receipt, sales, custody, delivery, re-export and accounting of the rough diamonds imported for viewing and/or sale in such form as prescribed by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.

[Refer Circular No. 36/2019 - Customs dated 31.10.2019]

5. Re-import of Jewellery

- 5.1 Re-import of jewellery which was exported under bond/LUT for exhibition abroad or on consignment basis, per se indicates that there was no sale involved. Thus, there was no liability to pay Central Excise duty as it arises only at the time of first sale by the manufacturer as per provisions under the Articles of Jewellery (Collection of Duty) Rules, 2016, in spite of leviability of Central Excise duty that had already arisen at the time of manufacture. Condition 1(d) of the notification no. 94/96-Cus requires payment at the time of re-import of Central Excise duty not paid initially at the time of export. As in the present case, no duty was required to be paid for goods which have not been sold and have been re-imported, hence the said condition requiring payment of Central Excise duty in such cases appears to be not applicable even if the re-import is taken to be falling under condition 1(d) of the notification. However, such cases appear to fall more appropriately under residuary entry at Sl. No. 3 of the said notification as the goods were allowed to be exported under simple LUT which was even not required to be registered with Central Excise authority. Hence, in effect, claim of re-import under condition 1(d) or 3 does not materially alter the situation. Therefore, no duty is payable in such cases of re-import provided all other conditions of the notification are met.

[Refer Circular No. 17/2019 dated 19.06.2019]

- 5.2 The activity of sending/taking the specified goods (i.e. goods sent/taken out of India for exhibition or on consignment basis for export promotion except the activities satisfying the tests laid down in Schedule I of the CGST Act, 2017) out of India do not constitute supply within the scope of Section 7 of the CGST Act as there is no consideration at that point in time. Since such activity is not a supply, the same cannot be considered as 'Zero rated supply' as per the provisions contained in Section 16 of the IGST Act, 2017. Hence, there is no requirement of filing any LUT/bond as required under section 16

of the IGST Act, 2017 for such activity of taking specified goods out of India.

Situation mentioned at Sl. No. 1(d) of the Notification No. 45/2017-Customs dated 30.06.2017 require payment at the time of re-import of integrated tax not paid initially at the time of export, for availing exemption under the said notification. As in the case of re-import of specified goods, no integrated tax was required to be paid for specified goods at the time of taking these out of India, the activity being not a supply, hence the said condition requiring payment of integrated tax at the time of re-import of specified goods in such cases is not applicable. It is clarified that such re-import cannot be taken to be falling under situation at Sl. No. 1(d) of the said Notification. Such cases will fall more appropriately under residuary entry at Sl. No. 5 of the said Notification even though those specified goods were exported under LUT, in view of the fact that the activity of sending / taking specified goods out of India is neither a supply nor a zero rated supply.

Even in cases where exports have been made to related or distinct persons or to principals or agents, as the case may be, for participation in exhibition or on consignment basis, but, such goods exported are returned after participation in exhibition or the goods are returned by such consignees without approval or acceptance, as the case may be, the basic requirement of 'supply' as defined cannot be said to be met as there has been no acceptance of the goods by the consignees. Hence, re import of such goods after return from such exhibition or from such consignees will be covered by entry at Serial no. 5 of the Notification No. 45/2017-Cus dated 30.06.2017, provided re-import happens before six months from the date of delivery challan.

[Refer Circular No. 21/2019 - Customs dated 24.07.2019]

6. Applicability of IGST on repair cost, insurance and freight, on goods re-imported after being exported abroad for repairs

- 6.1 It is clarified that notification Nos. 45/2017-Customs and 46/2017-Customs, both dated the 30th of June, 2017 were issued to implement the decision of the GST Council taken earlier, that re-import of goods sent abroad for repair attracts IGST on a value equal to the repair value, insurance and freight. Further, in the light of the recommendations of the GST Council in its 43rd Meeting, a clarificatory amendment has been made in the said notifications, vide notification Nos. 36/2021-Customs and 37/2021-Customs, both dated 19th July, 2021, without prejudice to the leviability of IGST, as above, on such imports as it stood before the amendment.

[Refer Circular No. 16/2021-Cus dated 19.07.2021]

7. Availment of exemption on temporary import of durable Containers

- 7.1 Notification No.104/94-Cus. dated 16.03.1994 (as amended) grants exemption to import of containers of durable nature, from the whole of the duty of customs and the whole of the integrated

tax leviable. The exemption is subject to the condition that such containers are re-exported within 6 months from the date of importation and that the importer executes a bond and furnishes documentary evidence to the satisfaction of the Assistant Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner to safeguard the duty in the event of non-compliance.

- 7.2 `Durable containers` covers within its ambit “any type of reusable packaging containers such as cases, boxes, cartons, trays, etc., made up of metals or plastics”. Thus, it is hereby reiterated that containers that satisfy following conditions are eligible for the said duty exemption:
- (a) that are durable,
 - (b) capable of being re-used multiple times,
 - (c) capable of being identified at the time of re-export viz. a viz. the imported containers, and
 - (d) satisfy all the other stipulated conditions in the notification.
- 7.3 The procedure to be followed for import and re-export of marine containers would continue to be governed by guidelines provided in Circular No. 31/2005-Cus. dated 25.07.2005.
- 7.4 Circular No 51/2020 specifies procedures for durable containers which do not conform to the standard marine container dimensions, but which are intended for temporary import and eventual re-export.

[Refer Circular No. 51/2020 dated 20.11.2020]

8. Electronic Repairs Services Outsourcing (ERSO)

- 8.1 Electronic Repairs Services Outsourcing (ERSO) is an initiative of the Government of India involving MeitY, MOEF&CC, DGFT, and CBIC in collaboration with the industry [Manufacturers Association of Information Technology (MAIT)] . ERSO involves import of goods (defective, damaged electronic goods) by designated repair service entities in India, to reliably repair them and re-export the goods. The repairs services outsourced to the service entities in India enables extension of the life of the electronic goods which is in sync with India’s commitment to the environment.
- 8.2 To provide the regulatory environment, amongst other aspects, the DGFT has issued Public Notice No. 31/2015-20 dated 14.10.2022 for allowing General Authorization for Export after Repairs in India (GAER), the MOEF&CC has issued F.No. 23/151/2022-HSM dated 02.01.2023 providing relaxation to dispose certain goods which are beyond repairs up to specified limit. Further, a pilot project was launched on 31.05.2023 at the Commissioner of Customs Airport and Air Cargo, Bengaluru. As part of this initiative, they issued Public Notice No. 7 dated 27.05.2023, outlining a procedure being tested for import and re-export clearances under ERSO (by specified importers-exporters) with aim of achieving the ecosystem conducive to providing quick and reduced turn-around time imperative for being a repair destination for ICT products globally. Detailed procedure for import and re-export via the Customs Station at

Air Cargo Complex, Bengaluru are detailed in Circular No. 14/2023- Customs

[Refer Circular No. 14/2023- Customs dated 03.06.2023, DGFT Public Notice
No. 31/2015-20 dated 14.10.2022]

21

Disposal of Unclaimed/Uncleared Cargo



Chapter 21: Disposal of Unclaimed/Uncleared Cargo

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Imported goods are allowed to be cleared for home consumption by the Customs, if there are no restrictions or prohibitions, assessment formalities have been completed, and duty leviable has been paid. However, it is often the case that the importer files the Bill of Entry but does not clear the goods due to various reasons such as financial problems, lack of demand for the goods, etc. Such goods are called 'uncleared goods'. In some cases, the importer does not even come forward to file the Bill of Entry for clearance of goods. Such goods are known as 'unclaimed goods'.
- 1.2 In terms of the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, the duty is leviable on imported goods, regardless of whether they are cleared by the importers or not. Similarly, dues of other agencies, such as, carriers and custodians for carriage and storage of goods respectively, may also arise. Where the importers do not come forward to make payment of such dues, the Customs duty and other dues can be recovered by selling the unclaimed/uncleared goods.

2. Legal provisions:

- 2.1 As per Section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962, if any goods brought into India from a place outside India are not cleared for home consumption or warehoused or transhipped within 30 days from the date of unloading thereof at a port, such goods can be disposed of by the custodian. The Act, however, stipulates that the goods can be sold only after a notice is issued to the importer and the permission from Customs is obtained. The provisions relating to manner of disposal of unclaimed/uncleared goods and apportionment of sale proceeds thereof are contained in Sections 48 and 150 of the Customs Act, 1962.

3. Procedure for sale of unclaimed/uncleared goods:

- 3.1 The Board has laid down a comprehensive procedure for disposal of unclaimed/uncleared goods. The procedure for disposal of cargo which are unloaded at a Customs Station after being brought from outside India on or after 01.04.2018 and which fall in the category of 'unclaimed/ un cleared' in terms of section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962 is as follows:-
 - (i) The concerned custodian of the Customs Station shall prepare a list of cargo lying unclaimed/ un-cleared in the bonded area of the Customs Station for more than 30 days from the date of arrival of such cargo in the Customs Station. This list shall be sent to the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs to intimate as to whether listed goods/cargo can be taken up for disposal through public auction. The list will contain the following details:
 - (a) Bill of Lading No. and date
 - (b) Container number

- (c) Description of goods
- (d) Weight
- (e) Name of the consignor (exporter) and consignee (importer).

These details will be furnished as per the information available from the IGM message of ICEGATE.

- (ii) The custodian shall simultaneously update the list with importer's name and address. In those cases, where the address of the importer is not mentioned in the IGM message from ICEGATE, a notice shall be sent to the respective Shipping Line requesting them to give address of the importer/consignee within one week of receipt of the notice. The Shipping Line will be obliged to respond with the relevant details within 7 days of receipt of letter from the custodian. The Shipping line will also be requested by the custodian to contact the importer and ask him to clear the cargo from the concerned Customs Station.
- (iii) Jurisdictional Commissioner of each customs station shall issue instructions to the officers and staff posted at the station to ensure that details of all goods/shipments which are put on hold for investigation or otherwise by DRI/Preventive/SIIB or any other agency are furnished to the Disposal branch of the customs station and the concerned custodian immediately, under proper receipt and acknowledgement. This will ensure that the Disposal branch and custodian are at all times aware of the goods/shipments/containers for which 'No Objection Certificate' from the concerned agency would be required before initiating disposal process.
- (iv) From the said list, Customs will segregate shipments which are disputed/stayed shipments required to be retained for investigation/adjudication/court procedure etc. Customs shall also segregate shipments containing motor vehicles or other goods requiring Licence/ Permission/ Certification from DGFT or any other Department. Customs will furnish to the custodian within 10 days of the receipt of the said list, the details of shipments not to be included in the auction process. Customs shall also choose 10% shipments from the list of shipments segregated for inclusion for the auction process for which detailed inventory shall be made in their presence for sample check. This will be conveyed to the concerned custodian along with the list of shipments/containers which are required to be retained.
- (v) (a) Based on the intimation received from Customs, the concerned custodian will issue a notice to importer under Section 48 of the Customs Act 1962 advising him to clear the goods within 10 days from the date of issue of the notice failing which the goods will be placed in public auction. Notice will be sent to the importer on the address as given in IGM message available with the custodians, or the address ascertained from the shipping lines in terms of the para 3 (ii) above.

- (b) A copy of the notice issued to the importer under section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962 shall also be affixed on the notice board of the Customs Station.
- (vi) The concerned custodian, in the next 20 days shall prepare a detailed inventory of the shipments which are not required to be retained by Customs for any purpose. In doing so, they will associate the Customs in 10% of the consignments for which Customs has already intimated that inventory has to be drawn in their presence for sample check.
- (vii) Within 7 days of drawing up of inventory, the concerned custodian shall approach the jurisdictional Customs authorities along with the said inventory seeking No Objection Certificate (NOC) in respect of all containers which are to be taken up for auction through the e-auction/tender. The inventory should have a detailed description of the items, to enable Customs to easily identify the regulatory requirements in respect of the consignments mentioned in the inventory and it shall clearly indicate variation in description of goods with respect to description of goods mentioned in the list already forwarded as per para 3 (i), above.
- (viii) Customs shall examine the list and within 15 days of receipt of such request, intimate to the custodian, details of the listed shipments which can straightway be taken up for auction as they do not require any regulatory clearances (NOC from FSSAI, Drug Controller, BIS etc.), or do not need any chemical analysis to identify the contents and fitness for consumption/usage. The consignments for which such unconditional NOCs are issued by Customs, shall be taken up for auction by e-auction through MSTC to ensure maximum outreach and participation. In order to ensure quick and regular turnover, the concerned custodian shall attempt to hold at least one auction each month. In case the list is incomplete and does not have the complete details for Customs to clearly pinpoint the regulatory requirements, Customs shall indicate the deficiencies in the list, within this period of 15 days.
- (ix) In case regulatory clearances from agencies other than Customs are required such as NOC from FSSAI, Drug Controller, BIS etc., or samples of the consignment are required to be chemically analysed to identify the contents and fitness for consumption/ usage, Customs shall identify such requirement and intimate to the concerned custodian within 15 days of the receipt of complete list. The concerned custodian will then approach the jurisdictional Customs officer for assistance in obtaining the said regulatory clearance. If in this process, chemical analysis is required, Customs shall draw the samples and forward the same to the respective agency for testing. The required testing fees or such other charges required to be paid to the concerned agency, shall be paid directly by the concerned custodian to the said agency. The concerned agency will be required to submit the test reports within 15 days of receipt of the samples.
- (x) NOC for such consignments shall be issued by Customs only after receipt of the required clearance/result of chemical analysis from the concerned agency, without which the concerned custodian shall not put the said consignment for auction.

- (xi) In case the result of chemical analysis, or report from FSSAI, Drug Controller, Plant Quarantine etc. indicate that the sample is not fit for consumption/usage, Customs shall inform the concerned custodian about the need for destruction of the same and the concerned custodian shall arrange to destroy the same at their expense, after obtaining the requisite environmental and other clearances as per law. Date of the proposed destruction shall be intimated to Customs at least 15 days in advance, to enable the representative of the Customs to witness the same, should the need for the same be felt.
- (xii) The value of the shipment/lot included in the auction list shall be fixed in next 7 days by a panel of Govt. approved valuers appointed by the concerned custodian which shall include an expert on the product line without involvement of the local Customs authorities. The values assessed by the approved valuers appointed by the custodians shall form the “reserve price”.
- (xiii) The concerned custodian shall fix a date immediately after assessment of value of such shipment/lot, for holding the auction/tender and communicate such date to the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs and the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, Disposal branch of the Customs Station. The Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner shall nominate, if necessary, an officer not below the rank of Superintendent/Appraiser to witness the auction/tender. Customs shall not withdraw any consignment at the last moment from the auction/tender except with the written approval of the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.
- (xiv) The shipment/ lot in respect of which NOC has been given by Customs, shall be taken up for auction. All bids of value equal to or more than the reserve price, or those up to 5% less than the reserve price, shall be treated as successful bids for sale of goods. Remaining shipments/ lots of the list shall again be taken up for second auction against the same reserve price. In case, shipments or lots, where bids are not received up to the reserve price, shall again be taken up for third auction against the same reserve price. Unsuccessful shipments/ lots of third auction, in respect of which three auctions have already taken place, shall be considered for fourth auction against the reserve price fixed before the first auction of such shipments/lots, however, in the fourth auction such shipments/lots are to be necessarily sold for the highest bid regardless of the reserve price fixed. In the event of the shipments/ lots not being disposed of in the first auction, subsequent auction/ tender should be conducted in a time bound manner and such shipments/lots should be taken up in the next auction. Custodian shall furnish shipment/ lot wise bids received in respect of each auction to the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs for approval. Further, if these goods remain unsold and pass into the category of landed-more than one-year prior, the concerned custodian can sell the same following the independent procedure as detailed in para 3 of CBIC Circular No. 50/2005-Cus. dated 01.12.2005 without any reference to Customs, and adjusting the number of auctions/ tenders to which the lot was already subjected to against the prescribed number of four such auctions/ tender. However, even for such goods the requisite NOC from Customs will be obtained by the concerned custodian

following the procedure laid down in paras above.

- (xv) After the successful bidder has been informed about the result of the auction, a consolidated bill of entry, buyer-wise will be filed with the Customs in the prescribed format by the concerned custodian for clearance of the goods as per Section 46 of the Customs Act 1962 read with Un-Cleared Goods (Bill of Entry) Regulations, 1972 (Regulation 2 & 3).
- (xvi) (a) The proper officer of Customs shall assess the goods to duty in accordance with the extant law within 15 days of filing of the Bill of Entry and after assessment inform the amount of duty payable to the concerned custodian.
(b) The auctioned goods shall be handed over to the successful bidder after assessment and out-of-charge orders given by the proper officer, on payment of dues. 4. The above procedure shall be applicable to cargo, which are unloaded at a Customs Station after being brought from outside India on or after 01.04.2018 and which fall in the category of 'unclaimed/ uncleared in terms of section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962. It would also be applicable to all unclaimed/un-cleared goods brought from outside India before 01.04.2018 (unclaimed/ uncleared for a period not exceeding one year) in respect of which: (a) auction process has not started yet; or (b) list of cargo proposed for auction has been sent to Customs by the custodian but Customs has not yet provided the necessary information as referred in the para 3 (i) and 3 (iv) above.

- 3.2 The above procedure is also applicable to all unclaimed/un-cleared goods brought from outside India before 01.04.2018 (unclaimed/ uncleared for a period not exceeding one year) in respect of which:
 - (a) auction process has not started yet; or
 - (b) list of cargo proposed for auction has been sent to Customs by the custodian but Customs has not yet provided the necessary information as referred in the para 3 (i) and 3 (iv) above
- 3.3 The sale proceeds of the auction shall be disbursed as per Section 150 of the Customs Act 1962.
- 3.4 In case the entire process of auction is not concluded within 180 days of the commencement of auction, the custodian shall inform the bidder about further extended time which may be required to conclude the auction process. Where ever, the bidder indicates his unwillingness to wait further, his successful bid will be cancelled and the earnest money, if any deposited with the custodian by the bidder will be returned to the bidder under intimation to Customs. Otherwise, the auction process shall be concluded within the extended time conveyed to the bidder.
- 3.5 Wherever, any amount of earnest money is deposited by the bidder with the custodian, the same shall be refunded to the bidder within one week of announcement of auction results where the bid fails to succeed in the auction.

[Refer Circulars No.50/2005-Cus, dated 1.12.2005, No. 52/2005-Cus, dated 09.12.2005 & No. 49/2018- Customs dated 03.12.2018]

4. Disposal of hazardous waste:

- 4.1 The disposal of hazardous waste is to be carried out in accordance with the directions dated 14- 10-2003 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP No. 657/95. Basically, the Apex Court has directed that such waste is to be categorized as either those that are banned or those that are regulated. The waste in the banned category should be either re-exported, if permissible, or destroyed at the risk, cost and the consequence of the importer. The waste in the regulated category is permitted for recycling and reprocessing within the permissible parameters by specified authorized persons having the requisite facilities under the rules. Disposal of hazardous and other waste regulated by the provisions of Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, shall be in accordance with the provisions of the said rules. In case of illegal import of the hazardous or other waste, the importer shall re-export the waste in question at his cost within a period of ninety days from the date of its arrival into India and its implementation will be ensured by the concerned Port and the Custom authority. In case of disposal of such waste by the Port and Custom authorities, they shall do so in accordance with these rules with the permission of the Pollution Control Board of the State where the Port exists. In case of illegal import of hazardous or other waste, where the importer is not traceable then the waste either can be sold by the Customs authority to any user having authorisation under rules from the concerned State Pollution Control Board or can be sent to authorised treatment, storage and disposal facility.

[Refer Circular No.31/2004-Cus, dated 26.4.2004]

5. Compliance with restrictions/prohibitions under various laws:

- 5.1 The disposal of goods, which are subject to restrictions/prohibitions under any law for the time being in force, can only be made in terms of the relevant statutes.

6. Mechanism for interaction between custodians and Customs:

- 6.1 There would be a formal mechanism for interaction and a quarterly meeting between the custodians and Customs to review the pendency of uncleared cargo and to reconcile/update the status of pending consignments by matching the pendency with the custodian with the figures of uncleared consignments as per Customs records.

[Refer Circulars No.31/2004-Cus, dated 26.4.2004, No.50/2005-Cus, dated 01.12.2005, No.52/2005- Cus, dated 9.12.2005, No.11/2006-Cus, dated 16.2.2006 and Instruction F.No.450/97/2010- Cus.IV, dated 22.7.2010]



22

Intellectual Property Rights

Chapter 22: Intellectual Property Rights

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 India is a signatory to the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which was brought into force on 1st January, 1995. Articles 51 to 60 of TRIPS [Annex 1C of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization] relate to border measures (i.e. measures required to be taken for providing protection against infringement of IPRs at the border).

2. Legal provisions:

- 2.1 Copyright Act, 1957, the Trade Marks Act, 1999, the Designs Act, 2000 and the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 have provisions prohibiting import of goods infringing Intellectual Property Rights under the respective Acts.
- 2.2 Central Government has been empowered under Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962 to issue notifications for prohibiting either absolutely or subject to such conditions as may be specified in the notification, the import or export of goods of any specified description. Section 11(2) of the said Act details the purpose for which such a notification may be issued by the Central Government which, inter-alia, covers the following purpose:
- (i) Protection of patents, trademarks and copyrights. [Section 11(2)(n)]; and
 - (ii) Prevention of the contravention of any law for the time being in force [Section 11(2)(u)].
- 2.3 Notification No. 51/2010-Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2010 as amended vide Notification No. 57/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 22.06.2018 prohibits import of goods infringing specified provisions of Trade Marks Act, Copyright Act, Designs Act, and Geographical Indications Act subject to following the procedure prescribed under the Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007 (IPR Rules) issued under Notification No. 47/ 2007-Customs (N.T.) dated 08.05.2007 as amended vide notification No. 56/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 22.06.2018. Goods in transit through India are excluded from its coverage and only goods intended for sale or use in India would be covered under the notification.
- 2.4 The prohibition of imported goods for the purpose of protecting intellectual property rights as specified under Notification No.51/2010-Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2010, does not relate to all infringements under the parent IPR Acts but only to those imports that infringe the specific provisions of various parent Acts governing IPR, mentioned in the notification No. 51/2010- Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2010 as amended vide Notification No. 57/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 22.06.2018. To illustrate, in case of the Trade Marks Act, 1999, prohibitions against infringement of trade marks on import of goods intended for sale or use in

India, that attract the provisions IPR (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007 would apply to:

- (i) Imported goods having applied thereto a false trade mark, as specified in section 102 of the Trade Marks Act, 1999; and
- (ii) Imported goods having applied thereto any 'false trade description' with the meaning of definition provided in clause (i), in relation to any of the matters connected to description, statement or other indication direct or indirect of the product but not including those specified sub- clauses (ii) and (iii) of clause (za), of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Trade Marks Act, 1999.

2.5 In this context, the issue of permitting import of original/genuine products (not counterfeit or pirated) which are sold/ acquired legally abroad and imported into the country, by persons other than the intellectual property right holder without permission/ authorisation of the IPR holder, known in the trade as 'parallel imports' has been clarified by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIP&P), Ministry of Commerce & Industries, which is nodal authority for all matters relating to (i) Trade Marks Act, 1999 and (ii) Designs Act, 2000. CBIC's circular No. 13/2012- Customs dated 08.05.2012 may please be referred.

2.6 The Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007 provide a procedure to be followed by the right holders and Customs officers to prohibit importation of goods infringing Intellectual Property Rights and the action to be taken, by the right holders and Customs Officers, after suspension of release of the infringing goods. These Rules provide for, inter alia:

- (i) Notice to be given by a right holder in writing to the Commissioner of Customs or any Customs Officer authorised by Commissioner requesting for suspension of release of imported goods suspected to be infringing intellectual property rights;
- (ii) Notice to be accompanied by fees of Rs.2,000/-;
- (iii) Within 15 days or extended period additional information to be supplied by the right holder to Deputy/Assistant Commissioner, if missing from the format;
- (iv) Right holder to inform Customs, when his IPR ceases to be valid;
- (v) Time limit for right holders to join proceedings;
- (vi) A single point for registration of the right holder;
- (vii) Adequate protection to the rightful importer and for indemnifying Customs;
- (viii) Suo-moto action by Customs;
- (ix) Disposal of the confiscated goods; and
- (x) Goods of non-commercial nature contained in personal baggage or sent in small consignments meant for personal use would not attract prohibition.

3. Conditions for registration:

3.1 The grant of registration shall be subject to following conditions, namely:

- (i) The right holder or his authorised representative shall execute a bond with the Commissioner of Customs for such amount with such surety and security as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner, undertaking to protect the importer, consignee and the owner of the goods and the competent authorities against all liabilities and to bear the costs towards destruction, demurrage and detention charges incurred till the time of destruction or disposal, as the case may be;
- (ii) The right holder shall execute an indemnity bond with the Commissioner of Customs indemnifying the Customs authorities against all liabilities and expenses on account of suspension of the release of allegedly infringing goods.
- (iii) At the time of registration but prior to importation, it may be difficult to fix the bond amount corresponding to the value of suspected infringing goods not yet imported. Further, this would lock in right holders' money in the form of security. Therefore, the right holders may furnish a General Bond without security [Para 3.1 (i)] The right holder shall also undertake to execute Consignment Specific Bond with the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs at the port of interdiction within three days from the date of interdiction of any allegedly infringing imported consignment. The surety and security shall be on consignment basis and shall be furnished along with the consignment specific bond consequent upon interdiction of the consignment allegedly infringing rights of the right holder.

3.2 The bond amount equal to 110% of the value of goods and security of 25% of the bond value is required to be furnished by the right holder.

3.3 An on-line, system driven, centralized bond management module has been implemented as part of the existing Automated Recordation and Targeting System (ARTS). The main objective of this system is to provide for a single centralized bond and surety/security account that can be used at all ports in India, so that the IPR holders do not have to rush to different customs formations to execute consignment specific bonds and sureties/securities upon receipt of information about an interdiction of allegedly infringing consignment.

3.4 The Commissioner shall notify the applicant within 30 days of receipt of notice or from the date of expiry of extended period whether the notice has been registered or rejected.

3.5 If registration is granted, its validity period would be indicated and the same shall minimum for one year (unless the right holder requests it for shorter period).

3.6 After the grant of the registration of the notice by the Commissioner, the import of allegedly infringing goods into India shall be deemed as prohibited within the

meaning of Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962.

- 3.7 Right holder or his authorised representative shall inform the Commissioner of Customs at the time of giving notice about any amendment, cancellation, suspension, or revocation of the Intellectual Property Right by the authorities under the Intellectual Property Laws or any Court of Law or Appellate Board, or subsequent to its registration with the Customs within one month of the date of communication for any such amendment, cancellation, suspension, or revocation.

[Refer Notification No. 47/2007-Customs (N.T.) dated 08.05.2007 as amended vide Notification No. 56/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 22.06.2018, Circulars No.41/2007-Customs dated 29.10.2007 and No. 10/2011-Customs dated 24.02.2011]

4. Automated monitoring of imports involving IPR:

- 4.1 Besides the legal measures to check import of counterfeit and pirated goods, an automated system facilitates genuine trade and targeting of infringing goods more effectively. Such a mechanism also integrates the Custom clearance procedures with the IPR regime.
- 4.2 A software module called Automatic Recordation & Targeting System (ARTS) has been developed with the following objectives:
- (i) Effective implementation of the IPR (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007;
 - (ii) Integration of IPR enforcement with Customs clearance procedure;
 - (iii) Web-based on-line recordation;
 - (iv) Providing a platform for right holders to record their rights with Customs;
 - (v) Enabling National targeting of suspect consignments;
 - (vi) Creation of a centralized national database containing useful information for enforcement;
 - (vii) Providing access to National data for the Customs field officers; and
 - (viii) Trade facilitation.
- 4.3 ARTS has provision for recording and targeting of Trade Marks, Copyright, Designs and Geographical Indications. ARTS seeks to integrate IPR enforcement with the Customs clearance

procedure being done using the Risk Management System (RMS). The consignments suspected to be infringing the rights of the IPR holders are interdicted through the RMS.

[Refer Notifications No. 47/2007-Customs (N.T.) dated 08.05.2007 as amended vide Notification No. 56/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 22.06.2018, No. 51/2010-Customs (N.T.) dated 30.06.2010 as amended vide notification No. 57/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 22.06.2018 and Circulars No.41/2007-Customs dated 29.10.2007 and No.10/2011-Customs dated 24.02.2011]

23 Duty Drawback

Chapter 23: Duty Drawback

1. Drawback on re-export of imported goods

- 1.1 Duty Drawback on export of duty paid imported goods is allowed in terms of Section 74 of Customs Act, 1962 read with Re-export of Imported Goods (Drawback of Customs Duties) Rules, 1995. The goods are to be entered for export within two years from date of payment of duty on importation thereof. Under certain circumstances this period may be extended upto one year by the Principal Chief Commissioner/Chief Commissioner of Customs and beyond that by the Board.

[Refer Notification No.33/94-Cus(N.T.) dated 01.07.1994]

- 1.2 Application by exporter is required to be made within 3 months from the date on which an order permitting clearance and loading of goods for exportation is made by the proper officer. This period may be extended up to 12 months from such date of order subject to conditions and fee payment.

[Refer Circular No.13/2010-Cus. dated 24.06.2010]

- 1.3 A portion of the Customs duty paid at the time of import is given back as duty drawback, subject to certain procedure and conditions including identification of export goods with those imported on duty payment and their usage. Where the goods are not put into use, ninety eight per cent of Duty Drawback is admissible. Otherwise drawback is granted based on period of use. Used goods do not get Drawback if exported 18 months after import.

[Refer Notification No.19/65-Cus. dated 06.02.1965]

- 1.4 On the issues of compliance to Rules, 1995 relating to manner and time of claiming drawback, identification, determination of and extent of use and other attendant aspects, all cases of drawback processing or denial are to be handled by way of detailed speaking order, following the principles of natural justice. Each such order is examined by the Commissioner for its legality and propriety.

[Refer Circular No.35/2013-Cus. dated 05.09.2013]

- 1.5 The examination report on shipping bill for re-export must be recorded separately in a self- contained and explicit manner on each of the two aspects of identity and use. The examination report should not be made of phrases that are cryptic, generalised or sweeping in nature such as 'as per declaration', 'in such condition', 'found in order', 'found as declared', 'goods are same' etc.

[Refer Circular No.16/2016-Cus. dated 09.05.2016]

- 1.6 In order to prevent dual benefit while sanctioning drawback under Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962, it may be ensured that a certificate duly signed by the Central/State/UT GST officer, having jurisdiction over the exporter is obtained, that no credit of integrated tax /compensation cess paid on imported goods has been

availed or no refund of such credit or integrated tax paid on re-exported goods has been claimed.

[Refer Circular No.21/2017-Cus. dated 30.06.2017]

- 1.7 The Pay and Accounts Office (PAO) under Chief Controller of Accounts, CBIC does the accounting and reconciliation of drawback payments after the receipt of monthly account from the concerned Commissionerate or Customs Houses.

2. Duty drawback on export of manufactured goods:

- 2.1 Duty Drawback rebates Customs and Central Excise duties chargeable on any imported materials or excisable materials used in the manufacture of goods exported. The composite rates of Duty Drawback comprising incidence of Customs and Central Excise duties and Service Tax have been discontinued w.e.f. 1.10.2017. Drawback is now limited to incidence of duties of Customs on inputs used and remnant Central Excise Duty on specified petroleum products used for generation of captive power for manufacture or processing of export goods. Duty Drawback is of two types: (i) All Industry Rate and (ii) Brand Rate. The legal framework is provided by Sections 75, 75A and 76 of the Customs Act, 1962. Customs and Central Excise Duties Drawback Rules, 2017 (Drawback Rules, 2017) (earlier The Customs, Central Excise duties and Service Tax Drawback Rules, 1995) have been issued under the Customs Act, 1962 and the Central Excise Act, 1944.
- 2.2 The All Industry Rates (AIR) are notified, generally every year, by the Government in the form of a Drawback Schedule based on the average quantity and value of inputs and duties (both Customs & Central Excise) borne by export products. The AIRs are essentially average rates based on assessment of average incidence. These AIRs are recommended by a Drawback Committee which is set up by the Government.
- 2.3 AIR are fixed after extensive discussions with stakeholders like Export Promotion Councils, Trade Associations, individual exporters so as to obtain relevant data, which includes procurement prices of inputs, indigenous as well as imported, applicable duty rates, consumption ratios and FOB values of export products. Data is also sought from Customs and Central Excise field formations and Ministries which is taken into account.
- 2.4 The AIR may be fixed as a percentage of FOB price of export product or as specific rates. Drawback Caps are imposed in cases to obviate the possibility of misuse. All claims of duty drawback are filed with reference to the tariff items and description of goods given in the Schedule. The rates of drawback specified in the Schedule are not applicable to export of commodity or product manufactured or exported, among others, in discharge of export obligation under Advance Authorisation or Duty free Import Authorisation issued under Duty Exemption Scheme of relevant Foreign Trade Policy; by a licensed hundred per cent Export Oriented Unit; by units situated in Free Trade Zone, Export Processing Zone or Special Economic Zone, etc. However in case of exports in discharge of export obligation under Special Advance Authorization scheme of DGFT, rates of drawback specified in the Schedule shall apply subject to certain restrictions and modifications.

[Refer Notification No.77/2023-Cus (N.T.) dated 20.10.2023]

- 2.5 The tariff items and description of goods in the Schedule are aligned with the tariff items and description of goods in the First Schedule of Customs Tariff Act, 1975 at four digit level only. The description of goods given at six or eight digits in the Schedule are in several case may not be aligned with the description of goods given in the First Schedule to Customs tariff Act, 1975. The general rules for interpretation of First Schedule to Customs Tariff Act, 1975 apply, mutatis mutandis, for classifying the export goods listed in the Schedule.

[Refer Notification No.77/2023-Cus (N.T.) dated 20.10.2023]

- 2.6 The scrutiny, sanction and payment of Duty Drawback claims at EDI locations is carried out through the EDI system which also facilitates payment directly to the exporter's bank account, if other conditions are fulfilled.
- 2.7 The Brand Rate of Duty Drawback may be fixed in terms of Rules 6 and 7 of the Drawback Rules, 2017 in cases where the export product does not have the AIR of Duty Drawback or the AIR neutralizes less than eighty per cent. of the duties paid on the materials or components used in the production or manufacture of the export goods. Brand rate is fixed by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be, having jurisdiction over the place of export.
- 2.8 An exporter intending to claim Brand rate of Drawback, has to file an application for fixation of the brand rate within 3 months from the date of Let Export Order which can be extended up to 12 months from LEO subject to conditions and payment of fee as provided in the Drawback Rules, 2017. This application has to be made before the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be, having jurisdiction over the place of export.

[Refer Drawback Rules, 2017 and Circular No. 38/2017-Cus dated 22.09.2017]

- 2.9 The application for fixation of Brand rate is to include, inter alia, the proportion in which the materials or components are used in the production or manufacture of goods and the duties paid on such materials or components.
- 2.10 In Brand rate of drawback, the exporter is compensated the incidence of Customs and Central Excise duties actually incurred in the export product based on verification of documents and proof of usage of actual quantity of materials or components utilized in the manufacture of export product and duties/tax paid thereon.
- 2.11 Exporters who file application for fixation of Brand Rate under Rule 6 of the Drawback Rules, 2017 may also apply to the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs for provisional drawback to be granted to him pending determination of amount or rate of drawback. Similarly, exporters claiming Brand rate of duty drawback under rule 7 of the Drawback Rules, 2017 shall be paid a provisional drawback amount, as may be specified by the Central Government, by the proper officer of Customs. He may also apply to the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs for further provisional

drawback.

[Refer Rules 6 and 7 of Drawback Rules,2017]

- 2.12 A time limit of 15 days is prescribed for Customs Commissionerate to issue such provisional Brand rate letters in case of revised simplified procedure and 25 days for final Brand rate letters in the case of normal procedure. The work related to fixation of brand rates should be regularly monitored by the Commissioner of Customs, and by Chief Commissioners, for ensuring concerted and sustained action for disposing Brand rate work. The Brand rate fixation letter issued by Customs Commissionerate has to indicate full and comprehensive description/details of the exported goods and other details.

[Refer Circular No. 14/2003-Cus dated 06.03.2003, D.O. letter No. 609/110/2005-DBK dated 26.08.2005 and Instructions No. 603/01/2011-DBK dated 31.07.2013 and dated 11.10.2013]

3. Procedure for claiming Duty Drawback:

- 3.1 AIR or the Brand Rate may be claimed on the shipping bill at the time of export and requisite particulars filled in the prescribed format of Shipping Bill/Bill of Export. In case of exports under electronic Shipping Bill, the Shipping Bill itself is treated as the claim for Drawback. In case of manual export, triplicate copy of the Shipping Bill is treated as claim for Drawback. The claim is complete only when accompanied by prescribed documents described in the Drawback Rules 2017. If the requisite documents are not furnished or there is any deficiency, the claim may be returned for furnishing requisite information/documents. The export shipment, however, will not be stopped for this reason.

[Refer Rule14 of Drawback Rules, 2017]

- 3.2 Duty Drawback on goods exported by post is also allowed on following the procedure prescribed under Rule 12 of the Drawback Rules, 2017.

4. Supplementary claim of Duty Drawback:

- 4.1 Where any exporter finds that the amount of Duty Drawback paid to him under section 75 is less than what he is entitled to on the basis of the amount or rate of Drawback determined, he may prefer a supplementary claim. This claim has to be filed within 3 months of the relevant date, which is fixed as follows: (i) where the rate of Duty Drawback is determined or revised under Rules 3 or 4 of the Drawback Rules, 2017 from the date of publication of such rate in the Official Gazette; (ii) where the rate of Duty Drawback is determined or revised upward under Rules 6 or 7 of the Drawback Rules, 2017, from the date of communicating the said rate to the person concerned; and (iii), in all other cases, from the date of payment or settlement of the original Duty Drawback claim by the proper officer:
- 4.2 The period of 3 months for filing a supplementary claim may be extended up to 18 months subject to conditions and payment of requisite fee as provided in the Drawback Rules, 2017.

[Refer Rule 16 of Drawback Rules, 2017]

- 4.3 In cases where the drawback claim was made zero-zero without following the normal procedure or principles of natural justice, the Commissioners are required to redress the problem where the exporters have produced the documents/ replied to queries.

[Refer Instruction F. No. 609/14/2014-DBK dated 30.06.2016]

5. Limitations on admissibility of Duty Drawback:

- 5.1 The Customs Act, 1962 and the Drawback Rules, 2017 lay down certain limitations and conditions for grant of duty drawback. No duty drawback shall be allowed where:

- (i) The duty drawback amount due in respect of any goods is less than Rs.50/- (Section 76,ibid.),
- (ii) In respect of any goods the market price is less than the amount of drawback due thereon (Section 76 ibid.),
- (iii) Where value of export goods is less than the value of imported material used in their manufacture. In this regard, if necessary, certain minimum value addition over the value of imported materials can also be prescribed by the Government (Section 75 ibid.) and
- (iv) The drawback amount or rate determined under Rule 3 of Drawback Rules 2017 does not exceed one-third of the market price of the export product (Rule 9 of Drawback Rules, 2017).

- 5.2 In case the Central Government forms an opinion that there is likelihood of export goods being smuggled back into India, the Government may not allow drawback or allow it subject to specified conditions or limitations. Notifications have been issued under Section 76 of the Customs Act, 1962.

[Refer Notification No. 208/1977-Cus dated 01.10.1977]

- 5.3 While prior repatriation of export proceeds is not a pre-requisite for grant of Duty Drawback, the law prescribes that if sale proceeds are not received within the period stipulated by the RBI, the Duty Drawback will be recovered as per procedure laid down in the Drawback Rules, 2017. An exception is made where non-realization of sale proceeds is compensated by the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd. under an insurance cover and the Reserve Bank of India writes off the requirement of realization of sale proceeds on merits and the exporter produces a certificate from the concerned Foreign Mission of India about the fact of non-recovery of sale proceeds from the buyer.

[Refer Rule 18 of Drawback Rules, 2017]

6. Monitoring of realization of export proceeds:

- 6.1 Each Custom House is to have a special cell monitoring realization of export proceeds. EDI locations are also facilitated, via RBI-BRC module under ICES, to retrieve data on exports (made from 1.4.2014 onwards) under Drawback scheme whose remittance is outstanding beyond due date. Notices are to be issued for recovery of drawback paid in respect of export consignments where export proceeds remain unrealized within the prescribed period. Adjudication as well as further actions are to be taken in a methodical and time bound manner by the field formations.
- 6.2 For cases where any notices are returned undelivered as the recipient/address was non existent, the Commissioners should also report names of relevant exporters to the Regional Authorities of DGFT so that action could be initiated under FT (DR) Act as well and the IE Codes got cancelled for furnishing wrong address.

[Refer Circular No.5/2009-Cus. dated 02.02.2009, Instructions F.No.609/119/2010-DBK, dated 18.01.2011, F.No.603/01/2011-DBK, dated 11.10.2013,DG(Systems) etter No.IV(35)/46/2013-Systems dated 25/28.8.2014 and Instruction F.No. 609/59/2012-DBK dated 27.11.2015]

7. Other aspects relating to Duty Drawback:

- 7.1 The Citizen Charter provides for remission of Drawback within 3 days from export in the case of electronic processing of drawback claims and 15 days of filing of manual returns in case of manual processing.
- 7.2 While processing Drawback claims, whether under Section 74 or Section 75, wherever any deficiency is noticed in the claim, it is to be communicated to the exporter in a clear unambiguous manner within a period of 10 days, from the date of filing of the claim. Commissioners of Customs are to undertake a periodic review and monitoring of the status of pending drawback claims.

[Refer Circular No.46/2011-Cus. dated 20.10.2011]

- 7.3 The field formations are to ensure periodic sample checks and verifications with respect to export declarations accepted for AIR drawback purposes and these are to be regarded as audit checks and their proper record maintained. These include checks on value, present market value, verification of actual freight payment certificates when CIF or C&F values are declared, declarations that affect the applicability of AIR itself etc. In the pre- GST era, these declarations included whether goods were or were not manufactured or exported in terms of rule 19(2) of Central Excise Rules or by availing rebate on material used in manufacture or processing in terms of rule 18 of Central Excise Rules. In the post GST era (transition period of July to September 2017), the declarations were to be given w. r. t. the availment of input tax credit of CGST or IGST on the export goods or inputs or input services used in the manufacture of export product, refund of IGST paid on the export goods or carrying forward of CENVAT credit on export product or on inputs or input services used in the manufacture of export product. Random checks with respect to debit notes raised by foreign buyers after initial realization

by exporter, reduction in invoice value after proceeds are negotiated or realized, etc may also be considered by Commissioners. Detections that indicate lower FOB/realization or other information of relevance when benefits under FTP are also involved should also be intimated to Regional Authority of DGFT for necessary action.

[Refer Circular No.46/2011-Cus. dated 20.10.2011, Instruction F.No. 603/01/2011-DBK dated 11.10.2013 and Circular No. 32/2017- Customs dated 27.07.2017]

- 7.4 Further, by way of audit, the Commissioners are also to exercise special checks, in cases of first time exporters, exporters who have taken large amounts of drawback suddenly, sensitive destinations, sensitive products etc., to ensure there is no misuse of the drawback facility.
- 7.5 Commissioners are to ensure that Internal Audit wings achieve desired diligence levels and a significantly improved performance. In Customs these areas include payment of reexport drawback and cases of manual processing of drawback.

[Refer Instruction F.No. 603/01/2011-DBK., dated 11.10.2013]

- 7.6 Field formations are to monitor levels of pendency of EGM not filed, EGM filed in error and no filing of stuffing reports to ensure trade facilitation. The mismatch of declaration made in the Shipping Bill (item details vis-à-vis drawback details) should be verified to avoid the excess payment of drawback on this account.

[Refer Instruction F.No. 603/01/2011-DBK., dated 26.06.2012]

- 7.7 Board has issued an 8 point comprehensive action plan for implementation of Duty Drawback Scheme vide D.O. letter No. F. No. 609/41/2018-DBK dated 27.09.2018. The main action points are briefly as follows:

- (i) EGM to be filed by various stakeholders within a week of let export order,
- (ii) EGM errors should not exceed 1% of total shipping bills,
- (iii) Queries should be resolved well within a month's time and number of queries should be monitored at senior level,
- (iv) Drawback claims must be cleared on a daily basis and scrolls generated by major Customs stations at least twice a week and by others once every week or more,
- (v) Percentage of shipping bills scrolled out within seven days should increase to 75% in the current FY and taken further in next FY,
- (vi) All efforts should be made to reduce the percentage of shipping bills scrolled out beyond thirty days to nil,
- (vii) Focus on disposal of application for Brand rate fixation so that no application remains pending beyond one month at the end of this FY,

- (viii) Timely issuance of SCNs in cases of non- reconciliation of sale proceeds and time bound disposal of SCNs.

8. Implementation of RMS for processing of Duty Drawback claims

- 8.1 Risk-based processing of shipping bills with claim of duty drawback is being initiated with effect from 26.07.2021. In this regard, Systems Directorate and NCTC have made requisite system- based changes for its implementation. In this phase, shipping bills with claim for duty drawback will be routed on the basis of risk evaluation through appropriate selection criteria. For this purpose, after the filing of correct and complete EGM, shipping bills will be sent by ICES to RMS. Subsequent to RMS treatment, ICES will be informed for each shipping bill whether for the processing of the drawback claim, a particular shipping bill will be facilitated without intervention or will be routed to the proper officer (i.e. Superintendent/Appraising Officer or Assistant/Deputy Commissioner as per the threshold amount specified in Circular No. 17/2000-Cus dated 29.02.2000) for further action. For shipping bills routed to the said Customs officers for drawback processing, all necessary checks shall continue to be undertaken by the Customs officers as before. The extant procedure for payment of the duty drawback amount into the exporters' account will also remain unchanged.

[Refer Circular No. 15/2021-Customs dated 15.07.2021]

- 8.2 Disbursal of Drawback amounts into the exporters' accounts through PFMS

Payment of Drawback amounts into exporters accounts will be facilitated via Public Finance Management System (PFMS). This new system will automate the process via the Customs Automated System (CAS) for transmission to the central nodal eDDO and ePAO for final approval and crediting to exporters' bank accounts w.e.f. 5th June 2024. Earlier, Duty Drawback claims were processed through the Customs Automated System (CAS), enumerated in a scroll/ Computerised Customs Drawback Advice (CCDA) and sent to the Authorised Bank branch along with supporting single cheque of consolidated amount, as per the scroll, for payment of duty drawback amounts into the exporters' accounts.

[Refer Instruction No. 15/2024 – Customs dated 29.05.2024]

9. The disposal time limit of drawback claims has been reduced from 7 days to 3 days.

[Instruction No. 21/2020-Customs dated 16.12.2020]

24

Export Promotion Schemes



Chapter 24: Export Promotion Schemes

1. Introduction:

1.1 The Export Promotion Schemes implemented by CBIC relate to those provided in respective Foreign Trade Policies issued from time to time. Presently the broad categories of schemes pertaining to FTP 2009-14 (effective till 31.3.2015), FTP 2015-20 and FTP 2023 are as below:-

- (a) Incentive or Reward schemes under which exporters are granted duty credit through a scrip which is permitted to be utilized for exemption by way of debiting certain duties/tax, subject to conditions.
- (b) Duty exemption schemes like Advance Authorisation (AA) and Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA) which permit duty free import of inputs related to export production. Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme permits duty free import of capital goods against an obligation to export goods in a specific time frame.

2. Reward /Incentive Schemes:

2.1 The provisions of Reward/Incentive Schemes of FTP 2009-14 (effective for exports till 31.03.2015) viz. Served From India Scheme (SFIS), Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana (VKGUY), Agri Infrastructure Incentive Scrip (AIIIS), Focus Market Scheme (FMS), Focus Product Scheme (FPS) and Status Holders Incentive Scrip (SHIS) Schemes have been dealt at paras 2 to 7 of Chapter 23 of the Customs Manual 2014.

2.2 Under the FTP 2015-20,

- (a) Merchandise Exports from India (MEIS) Scheme rewards export of notified goods listed in Appendix 3B of Handbook of Procedures generally @ 2% or 3% or 5% or 7% or 10% of certain FOB value of exports. It includes reward on export via foreign post offices or international courier terminals of specified items that are transacted using e-commerce platforms, subject to value limit of Rs. 5 lakh per consignment. In order to claim reward under MEIS, it is mandatory that exporter declares intent to claim reward at the time of export on shipping bills/bills of export that are filed on or after 1.6.2015.
- (b) Service Exports from India (SEIS) Scheme incentivizes export of notified services listed in Appendix 3D of Handbook of Procedures by service provider located in India who have specified minimum net free foreign exchange earnings in preceding financial year. Only services rendered in the manner as per Para 9.51(i) and Para 9.51(ii) of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20 are eligible. The entitlement is either 3% or 5% or 7% of net foreign exchange earned.
- (c) Under these two schemes, based on FOB value of exports/net foreign exchange earnings, DGFT issues duty credit scrips viz. MEIS & SEIS scrips. Both, MEIS and SEIS scrips are freely transferable and can be

used for payment of Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on import of any item except those listed in Appendix 3A of Foreign Trade Procedures, or for domestic procurement of items that continue to be subject to Central Excise duties in GST regime. Basic Customs duty paid through debit under these scrips is allowed to be adjusted as Duty Drawback. Additional Customs duty/ post GST remnant excise duty paid through debit in these scrips is also allowed to be adjusted as CENVAT Credit or Duty Drawback.

[Refer Notifications Nos. 24 and 25/2015-Customs, Nos.20 and 21/2015-C.E., all dated 08.04.2015]

- (d) Duty Credit Scrips issued under FTP 2015-20 can also be utilized/debited for payment of Customs duties in case of EO defaults for authorizations issued under Chapter 4 and 5 of FTP 2015-20. However, Duty Credit Scrips cannot be used to discharge penalty or interest which are required to be deposited in cash.

[Refer Circular No. 11/2015-Customs dated 01.04.2015]

- (e) Clearance of goods from Customs Bonded warehouses using MEIS and SEIS duty credit scrips for duty payment is allowed as per the same procedure as is prescribed for DEPB scrips.

[Refer Para 3.11 of Foreign Trade Procedure 2015-20 and Circular No 68/2000 dated 18.8.2000 and 72/2003-Cus dated 11.8.2003]

2.3 Verification related to duty credit scrips:

Where export of goods under specific shipping bills/bills of export (not filed electronically in Customs EDI) shown in annexure/condition sheet of the reward duty credit scrip is involved, the backing shipping bills need to be verified for genuineness. However, if the shipping bills were filled electronically in Customs EDI but scrip was not received simultaneously online through electronic transmission from DGFT, such verification of genuineness of shipping bills shall be restricted to not more than 5% randomly selected scrips for which EDI shipping bill details (irrespective of port of export) shall be viewed in house using the role 'enq_cntry' in ICES v. 1.5, without seeking documents from exporter. The Custom Houses need not verify genuineness of shipping bills when the reward scrip has been simultaneously received online through electronic transmission from DGFT. Customs can also carry out complete verification of scrip only where specific intelligence suggests misuse or requirement of an investigation.

[Refer Circulars No. 5/2010-Cus dated 16.03.2010, No. 17/2012-Cus., dated 05.07.2012, No. 14/2015-Cus. dated 20.04.2015, 12/2016-Cus dated 28.03.2016 and Instruction No. 609/119/2010-DBK dated 18.01.2011]

3. Advance Authorization Scheme:

- 3.1 Advance Authorisations (AA) are issued to allow duty free import of inputs that are physically incorporated in the export product (after making normal allowance for wastage) as well as certain items like fuel, oil, catalysts which

are consumed in the course of their use to obtain the export product. The raw materials/inputs are allowed in terms of Standard Input-Output Norms (SION) or self-declared norms of exporter in relation to the resultant product are allowed on the basis of the criteria mentioned in Para 4.03(b) of FTP, 2023. The AA are issued on pre-export or post export basis in accordance with the FTP and procedures in force on the date of issue.

3.2 AA are issued for physical exports as well as deemed exports. The holder is required to fulfil export obligation (EO) by exporting specified quantity/value of resultant product. The AA and the materials imported are not transferable even after completion of EO.

3.3 AA usually have a minimum of 15% value addition (except for Gems and Jewellery Sector) as prescribed under para 4.09 of FTP The value addition for gems and jewellery and for specified goods is less than 15% as prescribed in Para 4.61 Para 4.60 of Handbook of Procedures. In case of Tea and spices the minimum value addition is 50% and 25% respectively. As per Appendix 11 in HBP 2009-14. (Appendix 4C in HBP 2015-20), Appendix 4C in HBP 2023, higher value addition is prescribed for export for which payment are not received in freely convertible currency.

3.4 Normally, All Industry Rate (AIR) of Duty Drawback is not admissible with AA. However, a new scheme called Special Advance Authorisation for export of articles of apparels and clothing accessories of Chapters 61 & 62 of ITC (HS) is introduced w.e.f. 01.09.2016, wherein exporters are eligible for claiming AIR of Duty Drawback for non-fabric inputs on the exports and the value of any other input (non-fabric inputs) on which drawback is claimed or intended to be claimed shall be more or equal to 22% value of export realized. Further, Brand Rate of Duty Drawback may be claimed in respect of duty-paid inputs (not specified in the norms) which are used in the export product provided such duty paid inputs have been endorsed by RA for drawback payment on the AA This specification ensures value addition norms.

[Refer Circular No. 37/2016 dated 13.08.2016 & DGFT Not. No 21/2015-20 dated 11.08.2016]

3.5 AA are also issued on the basis of annual requirements of exporter, which enables planning for manufacturing/exports on a longer term basis. However, self-declared norms are not permitted under annual requirement under FTP 2015-20 FTP 2023, Advance Authorisation for Annual Requirement is also not available in respect of SION where any item of input appears in Appendix 4-J of FTP 2015-20 FTP 2023.

[Refer Notification No. 4-Customs & 21/2015-Customs both dated 01.04.2015 23/2023-Customs dated 01.04.2023]

3.6 Certain items that are otherwise prohibited for export may be exported under AA scheme, with conditions stricter than otherwise imposed including the export being allowed only from specified EDI enabled ports, subject to pre-import condition under notified SION/prior fixation of norms by Norms

Committee, export obligation period being 90 days from import clearance without extensions and import being subject to non-transfer, including for job work and actual user condition, and the inapplicability of provisions for regularisation of default, etc.

[Refer Notification No. 1/2014-Cus, dated 17.01.2014 and No. 22/2015-Cus., dated 1.4.2015 and Circular No.4/2014-Cus., dated 10.2.2014 24/2023-Customs dated 01.04.2023]

- 3.7 AA are issued either to a manufacturer exporter or merchant exporter tied to supporting manufacturer(s) or to sub-contractors in respect of supplies of goods to specified projects provided the name of such sub-contractor appears in the main contract.
- 3.8 The AA holders are required to file a bond with 100% Bank Guarantee for the duty difference with the Customs at the time of importing duty free inputs. Certain categories of exporters are conditionally exempt from filing Bank Guarantee in terms of CBIC Circular No. 58/2004-Cus dated 21-10-2004 as amended last by Circular No. 15/2014-Cus dated 18.12.2014. In case AA holder exports first by using imported inputs/indigenously procured inputs, he can seek waiver of Bond condition from DGFT in terms of Para 4.47 of HBP 2015-20 HBP 2023. In cases where the AA/DFIA/EPCG authorisation holder is a registered member of an Export Promotion Council, he shall produce a certificate of export performance or payment of duty/GST to claim exemption from furnishing Bank Guarantee from the concerned Export Promotion Council. Those who are not registered with Export Promotion Council, may produce such certificate by a practicing Chartered Accountant who is registered with the GST Department (Centre/State/UT) for payment of GST.

[Refer Circular No. 31/2019-Customs dated 13.09.2019]

- 3.9 Validity of an AA for making imports is 12 months but there is provision for RA to consider request of original authorization holder and grant one revalidation for six twelve months from expiry date as prescribed in Para 4.41 of Handbook of Procedure, 2015-20 Para 4.39 of Handbook of Procedure, 2023. For fulfilment of EO, normally a period of 18 months from the date of issue is specified, with certain exceptions of shorter or longer periods as prescribed in Para 4.42 of Handbook of Procedure 2015-20 Para 4.40 of Handbook of Procedure 2023.
- 3.10 Under the FTP 2015-20 FTP 2023, the exporters of gems and jewellery can import/procure duty free inputs for manufacture of export product under various schemes viz. (i) Advance Procurement /Replenishment of Precious Metals from Nominated Agencies; (ii) Replenishment Authorization for Gems; (iii) Replenishment Authorization for Consumables and (iv) Advance Authorization for precious Metals. Import of gold for jewellery sector under Advance Authorization is on pre-import basis with actual user condition.

[Refer Para 4.39 to Para 4.53 of FTP 2023]

- 3.11 Keeping in view nuances of individual variants of Advance Authorization, individual notifications issued by Revenue have certain variations in conditions, inter alia, related to prevention of dual or unintended benefits.

[Refer Notification Nos. 96 and 99/2009-Cus, both dated 11.9.2009 and No. 112/2009-Cus. dated 29.9.2009 and Nos. 18, 20 and 21/2015-Cus, all dated 01.04.2015. 21, 22, 23, 24 and 27/2023-Cus all dated 01.04.2023]

- 3.12 After introduction of GST, imports are liable to levy of IGST and Compensation Cess. However w.e.f. 13.10.2017, imports under AA are exempted from IGST and Compensation Cess. Such exemption is available only for physical exports and is subject to pre-import condition.

[Refer Notification No. 18/2015-Cus dated 01.04.2015 as amended by Notification No. 79/2017-Cus. Dated 13.10.2017 & DGFT Notification No. 33/2015-20 dated 13.10.2017]

- 3.13 Domestic supplies to holder of AA are treated as deemed export under Section 147 of CGST Act. 2017. Supplier or recipient of such supplies is eligible for refund of GST paid on such supplies.

[Refer Notification No. 47/2017-Central Tax dated 18.10.2017 & Notification No. 48/2017-Central Tax dated 18.10.2017]

4. Duty Free Import Authorisation (DFIA):

- 4.1 DFIA issued under the FTP 2009-14 FTP 2023 are similar to AA in many aspects including requirement of monitoring. However, DFIA has a minimum value addition requirement of 20% and once export obligation is completed, transferability of the authorization and/or material imported against it is permitted. The DFIA is issued only where SION are notified. After the annual supplement 2013 to the FTP 2009-14, the exemption from antidumping duty and safeguard duty is not available when materials are imported against a DFIA made transferable. In case imported materials are transferred, the importer is to pay an amount equal to the anti-dumping and safeguard duty leviable on the material, with interest. These aspects apply subject to specified conditions.

- 4.2 Under the FTP 2015-20 FTP 2023, only post-export transferable DFIA with exemption from only Basic Customs duty is issued by RA. Such DFIA is not available for Gems and Jewellery sector or where SION prescribes actual user condition (for example, fuel). The admissibility of brand rate of duty drawback is as per para 4.26 of the FTP. For transferrable DFIA, prior to registration it is to be verified that the details of the exports given along with the DFIA match the record of exports and is genuine. If any discrepancy is found it need to be first referred to the RA.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2016-Cus dated 28.03.2016 (Refer Circulars No. 11/2009-Cus., dated 25.02.2009 and No.6/2011-Cus dated 18.01.2011 and Notification No.98/2009-Cus dated 11.09.2009 and No. 19/2015-Customs dated 01.04.2015)]

5. EPCG Scheme:

5.1 Under FTP 2015-20 and FTP 2023, -

- (a) Zero duty EPCG scheme allows import of capital goods (except those specified in negative list in Appendix 5F of Handbook of Procedure). The Export Obligation is equivalent to 6 times of the duties/taxes and cess saved on the capital goods imported with EO period of 6 years (extendable by 2 years) from the date of issue of Authorization. A more favourable dispensation for EO is provided for export of specified green technology products as well as units located in North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The EO for spares for imported/domestically sourced capital goods is same as that for capital goods.
- (b) The import of capital goods has to be made within 24 months from the date of issue of the Authorisation.
- (c) EO is to be fulfilled in two blocks i.e. 4 years and 2 years wherein 50% EO is to be fulfilled in the respective blocks. The RA can grant extension of block-wise period or overall period of fulfilment subject to specified conditions. In the case of manufacturer/merchant/service exporters, the EO is required to be fulfilled by exporting goods manufactured or capable of being manufactured or services rendered by the use of capital goods imported under the scheme. The EO is to be over and above the average level of exports achieved in the preceding three licensing years for the same and similar products. Certain sectors as specified in Para 5.12 of the Foreign Trade Policy 2023 are not required to maintain average level of exports.
- (d) The Authorizations are issued to manufacturer exporters with or without supporting manufacturer(s), merchant exporters tied to supporting manufacturer(s), service providers and also available to Common Service Provider (CSP). The authorizations specify the value/quantity of the export product to be exported against it.
- (e) The Authorization holder is required to file bond with 100% Bank Guarantee with the Customs prior to commencement of import of capital goods. Certain categories of exporters get benefit of exemptions from Bank Guarantee in terms of the Circular No. 58/2004-Cus dated 21-10-2004 as amended last by Circular No. 15/2014-Customs dated 18.12.2014. The CG imported are subject to actual user condition and the goods imported cannot be transferred or sold, etc. till the fulfilment of EO.
- (f) Third party exports are permitted with respect to exported goods manufactured by the authorisation holder and conditions have been specified to ensure this aspect.

[Refer para 5.04 of FTP 2023 read with 5.10 of HBP 2023]

- (g) Installation Certificates (ICs) for capital goods are permitted to be obtained from jurisdictional Customs Authority or independent Chartered Engineer at the option of the authorisation holder. At the latter case, the authorization holder would send copy of IC to the jurisdictional Customs office. Capital goods may be installed at supporting manufacturer's premises if prior to

such installation the latter's details are endorsed on the authorisation by RA, who would intimate the change to jurisdictional Customs office and the Customs location where authorisation is registered in terms of para 5.02 of FTP 2023.

- (h) The EPCG Authorization holder is required to indicate the EPCG Authorization No./date on the shipping bill/invoice (in case of deemed exports). After fulfilment of specified EO, relevant documents are to be submitted to RA for obtaining EODC. This is taken into account by Customs authority at port of registration for purposes of redemption of bond/Bank Guarantee, subject to prescribed checks including intelligence-based checks.
- (i) The export obligation is lower by 25% when capital goods are sourced indigenously. This is implemented by RA.
- (j) The EPCG authorisation for annual requirement, the provisions for technological upgradation and for transfer of EPCG capital goods to group companies in certain cases/sectors are discontinued in FTP 2015-20.

[Refer Notifications No. 16/2015-Customs, dated 01.04.2015, 26/2023-Customs dated 01.04.2023]

5.2 After introduction of GST, imports are liable to levy of IGST and Compensation Cess. W.e.f. 13.10.2017, imports under EPCG by all sectors are exempted from IGST and Compensation Cess. This exemption is optional for the EPCG holder. Such exemption is available only for physical exports.

[Notification No. 16/2015-Cus dated 01.4.2015 as amended by Notification No. 79/2017-Cus. Dated 13.10.2017 & DGFT Notification No. 33/2015-20 dated 13.10.2017]

5.3 Domestic supplies to holder of EPCG are treated as deemed export under Section 147 of CGST Act, 2017 Supplier or recipient of such supplies is eligible for refund of GST paid on such supply.

[Notification No. 47/2017-Central Tax dated 18.10.2017 & Notification No. 48/2017Central Tax dated 18.10.2017)

6. Post Export EPCG Duty Credit Scrip Scheme:

6.1 Post Export EPCG Duty Credit Scrip is available to exporters who intend to import capital goods on full payment of applicable duties in cash and choose to opt for this scheme Basic Customs duty paid on Capital Goods shall be remitted in the form of freely transferable duty credit scrip(s), similar to those issued under Chapter 3 of FTP. Upon initial application by an exporter, RA shall issue a post export EPCG authorisation specifying "Not for imports on the body of the authorisation and specify average EO if any. Specific EO shall be 85% of the applicable specific EO as mentioned in the authorisation. EO period shall commence from the authorisation issue date. Installation and use of the imported capital goods and other conditions including non-disposal of

the capital goods till the date of last export shall be applicable to this authorisation. Further, all provisions of the erstwhile EPCG Scheme shall apply insofar as these are not inconsistent with this scheme.

- 6.2 Upon completion of the specific as well as average EO mentioned in the authorisation, RA shall issue a freely transferable duty credit scrip equivalent to the proportionate EO fulfilled based on Basic Customs duty paid. The said scrip shall be produced before the proper officer of Customs at the time of import for debit of applicable duties leviable on the imported goods. The validity of the scrip shall be 18 months from the date of issue and the said scrip has to be valid at the date of import for debits.

[Refer Notification No. 17/2015-Customs dated 01.04.2015]

7. General provisions relating to Export Promotion Schemes:

- 7.1 Imports and exports under the Export Promotion schemes are permitted at the ports, airports, ICDs and LCSs, as specified in the respective Customs duty exemption notifications. However, these notifications empower the Commissioners of Customs to permit export/import under these schemes from any other place which has not been notified, on case to case basis by making suitable arrangements at such places. In addition, international courier terminals and foreign post offices, as notified are included as port of export for rewards on exports of goods subject to value limit of Rs. 5 Rs. 10 lakh per consignment.

[Refer DGFT Notification No. 22/2015-20 dated 26.07.2018 and Customs Notification No. 24/2015-Cus dated 08.04.2015 as amended vide Notification No. 63/2018-Cus dated 18.09.2018 and further amended vide Notification No. 22/2023(N.T.)-Cus dated 31.03.2023]

- 7.2 Facility to execute a common bond for specified export promotion schemes like Advance Authorization/Duty Free Import Authorization and EPCG is permitted to authorization holders, subject to certain conditions.

[Refer Circular No.11(A)/ 2011-Cus., dated 25.2.2011]

- 7.3 Facility for suomoto payment of Customs duty in case of bona fide default in export obligation under the Advance/ EPCG authorisations is provided in procedure prescribed vide Circular No. 11/2015-Customs dated 01.04.2015. Para 4,50 and para 5.23 of HBP 2015-2020 para 5.21 of HBP 2023 refer to this facility.

8. Verification and Monitoring related to AA, DFIA, EPCG and Post Export EPCG authorizations:

- 8.1 The AA holder is required to maintain a true and proper account of consumption and utilization of duty free imported/domestically procured goods for a specified minimum period. The AA No./date is to be indicated on the shipping bill/ bill of export or invoice (in case of deemed exports). The imports/exports under AA and their utilization require monitoring. The AA holder is to submit relevant export documents to RA to obtain an Export

Obligation Discharge Certificate (EODC). An AA holder is required to deposit Customs duties with interest in case EO is not fulfilled. The RA informs details of payments to Customs at the port of registration or Commissioner of Customs having jurisdiction over the factory of AA holder, as the case may be. The EODC or redemption letter is taken into account by Customs authority at port of registration for purposes of redemption of Bond/Bank Guarantee, subject to prescribed checks including intelligence-based checks.

- 8.2 The jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs are required to take action to monitor fulfilment of export obligation. Field formations are now also enabled to view in EDI the authorization-wise all India export details which would assist in identifying actionable cases under Advance Authorization and EPCG scheme. Commissioners are to put in place an institutional mechanism for periodical meetings with RA to exchange intelligence, check misuse and pursue issues such as EO fulfilment status in cases where EO period has expired in that quarter/ previous quarter so that concerted action can be taken against the defaulters. In case of defaulters, the field formation may issue simple notice to the Authorisation holder for submission of proof of discharge of export obligation. In case, where the Authorization holder submits proof of their application having been submitted to DGFT, the matter may be kept in abeyance till the same is decided by DGFT. Further, timely action taken in all cases of default is required to be initiated to safeguard revenue. The action to safeguard revenue is monitored through CBIC's Comprehensive MIS formats DGI-Cus 118 11A. All field formations are required to update this data on regular basis.

[Refer Circular No.16/2017-Customs Dated 02.05.2017]

- 8.3 Apart from the checks prescribed in Board's extant instructions, the jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs are also to cause random verification for some of the authorizations issued under EPCG/ DFIA/ Advance Authorization schemes to check correctness of address on the Authorizations. The correctness of installation certificates issued by the Chartered Engineers is required to be verified on a random basis and has been restricted to 5% cases. When address verification or Installation Certificate verification is requested by the Customs authorities in respect of EPCG authorizations, the authorities should include in their verification, a check of the periodical utility bills (containing the address) as one of the means enabling verification of installation/operation/ licensee premises. Wherever aforesaid checks are prescribed, the verification shall be carried out through the jurisdictional Customs authorities.

[Refer Instruction issued vide F. No. 605/71/2015-DBK dated 14.10.2016]

- 8.4 To rule out fabricated export documents used to show fulfilment of EO, the genuineness of shipping bills or bills of export not on Customs EDI (i.e. manual) is to be expeditiously verified while registering a duty credit scrip or post export EPCG duty credit scrip or processing EODC/redemption letters based on document purported to be of Customs non-EDI ports

[Refer Circulars No.5/2010-Cus., dated 16.3.2010, No.25/2012 Cus., dated 06.09.2012, Instruction No. 609/119/2010-DBK, dated 18.01.2011 and Circular No. 14/2015-Cus., dated 20.04.2015]

9. Older Export Promotion Schemes:

- 9.1 Target Plus Scheme (TPS) was introduced for the Star Export Houses w.e.f. 1.9.2004 and provided rewards in the form of duty free credit based on incremental export performance. Initially, the entitlement was 5% to 15% of the incremental growth in exports. W.e.f. 1-4-2005, it was reduced to 5%. The scrip and goods imported are subject to actual user condition. Imports allowed were inputs, capital goods including spares, office equipment, professional equipment and office furniture. The scheme ended on 1-4-2006. The reduction in rate of entitlement and exclusion of certain products retrospectively from the Target Plus Scheme has been set aside by Hon'ble Supreme Court vide judgement dated 27.10.2015. In terms of the aforesaid judgment, DGFT is in the process of issuing Target Plus duty credit scrips.

[Notification No.32/2005-Cus., dated 8.4.2005 as amended]

10. Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies on export of garments and made ups (RoSCTL).

- 10.1 RSCTL is a Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies on export of garments and made-ups notified by Ministry of Textiles (MoT), which has come into effect from 07.03.2019 discontinuing the existing Rebate of State Levies (RoSL) scheme for garments and mad Under this Scheme the benefit to exporters shall be given by DGFT in form of Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) type duty credit scrips.

[Refer Circular No. 10/2019-Customs dated 12.03.2019, Notification No. 14/26/2016-IT (V dated 07.03.2019)]

- 10.2 Electronic Duty Credit Ledger Regulations, 2021 issued vide notification No 75/2021-Customs (N.T.) dated 23.09.2021 have been amended vide notification No. 79/2022-Customs (NT) dated 15.09.2022. As an effect of these amendments, the validity period of scrips is increased from one year to two years from the date of their generation.

[Refer Circulars No. 22/2021-Customs dated 30.09.2021 & No. 22/2022-Customs dated 26.09.2022]

- 10.3 After introduction of RoSCTL scheme, DGFT vide their Public Notice (PN) No. 58/2015-20 dated 29.01.2020 has withdrawn the benefit under Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) for items falling under Chapters 61, 62 and 63 w.e.f. 07.03.2019. Further, with a view to compensate exporters affected under the RoSCTL scheme, vide MoT's notification no. 14/26/2016-IT/Vol. II dated 14.01.2020 has notified the scheme for Additional Ad-hoc Incentive of upto 1% of Foß value to be given to such exports of garments and made- ups. Under the RoSCTL and Additional Ad-hoc incentive schemes, the rebate will be granted by DGFT in the form of electronic duty credit scrips similar to the scrips issued under

MEIS. The benefit under the two schemes will be given in single electronic scrip to be utilized for payment of duties of Customs and Central Excise. The scrips issued under the schemes will be freely transferable.

[Refer Circular No. 13/2020-Customs dated 19.02.2020]

11. Phasing out of physical copies of MEIS/SEIS Scrips

11.1 DGFT phased out physical copies of MEIS and SEIS Duty Credit Scrips issued with EDI port as port of registration to enhance the ease of doing business for exporters, DGFT has issued Public Notice No. 84/2015-2020 dated 03.04.2019 and Trade Notice No. 03/2015-2020 dated 03.04.2019 notifying this change. This shall come into effect for MEIS/SEIS duty credit scrips issued by DGFT from 10.04.2019 onwards for cases where the port of registration is an EDI port. No TRA shall be issued in respect of these paperless scrips issued electronically by DOFT. Consequently, such paperless scrips issued for EDI ports cannot be used for making import at non-EDI ports. DGFT shall continue to issue scrips in physical form on security paper as per current practice for non-EDI ports. The facility of TRA would be available for such physical scrips for making imports at other EDI/non-EDI ports.

[Refer Circular No. 11/2019-Customs dated 09.04.2019]



25
Special Economic Zones

Chapter 25: Special Economic Zones

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Special Economic Zone (SEZ) scheme was announced in April, 2000 with a view to provide an internationally competitive environment for exports. The objectives of Special Economic Zones include making available goods and services free of taxes and duties supported by integrated infrastructure for export production, expeditious and single window approval mechanism and a package of incentives to attract foreign and domestic investments for promoting export-led growth.
- 1.2 Earlier, the policy relating to the Special Economic Zones was contained in the Foreign Trade Policy and incentives and other facilities offered to the Special Economic Zone developer/co developer and units were implemented through various notifications and circulars issued by the concerned Ministries/Department. However, in order to give a long term and stable policy framework with minimum regulatory regime and to provide expeditious and single window clearance mechanism, a Central Act for Special Economic Zones was found to be necessary. Accordingly, the SEZ Act, 2005 was enacted, which was given effect to from 10-2-2006. Thus, activities of SEZs and its units are governed by the provisions of the SEZ Act, 2005 and the rules issued there under viz. SEZ Rules, 2006. SEZ Scheme is administered by the Department of Commerce under Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- 1.3 The Central Government, while notifying any area as a Special Economic Zone or an additional area to be included in the Special Economic Zone and discharging its functions under this Act, is to be guided by the following criteria, namely:
 - (a) Generation of additional economic activity;
 - (b) Promotion of exports of goods and services;
 - (c) Promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources;
 - (d) Creation of employment opportunities;
 - (e) Development of infrastructure facilities.
 - (f) Maintenance of sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State and friendly relations with foreign States.
- 1.4 SEZs may be set up for manufacturing of goods or rendering services or both and may be multi- product, sector specific, or Free Trade and Warehousing Zone. In terms of Section 53 of the SEZ Act, SEZs are deemed to be a territory outside the Customs territory of India for the purpose of undertaking the authorized operations and goods/ services entering it (from DTA) are treated as exports.
- 1.5 Notification of the SEZ Act, 2005 and the SEZ Rules, 2006, a total of 376 SEZs (including 7 Central Government plus 12 State Government) have been notified as on 26.10.2022 (As per Annual Report 2022-23 of Department of Commerce). Further, there are 270 SEZs operational as on 31.06.2022. Out of this, 163 are IT/ITES, 25 Multi product and 82 other sector

specific SEZs. 5,620 units have been setup in the SEZs till 31.03.2023.

2. Board of Approvals

- 2.1 As per Section 8 of the SEZ Act, 2006 the Board of Approval (BOA) is to be chaired by an officer not below the rank of Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce and includes two officers, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India, to be nominated by the Central Government to represent the Ministry or Department of the Central Government dealing with revenue - Members, ex officio as its member. The BOA approves proposals for establishing SEZs and providing infrastructure facilities. Its functions include approving authorized operations of Developer/ Co-developer.

3. Unit Approval Committee:

- 3.1 As per Section 13 of the SEZ Act, a Unit Approval Committee is to be notified for each SEZ, within six months from the date of establishment of such Special Economic Zone. Development Commissioner has administrative control over the SEZ and chairs the Unit Approval Committee.
- 3.2 The Unit Approval Committees (UAC) are, inter-alia, expected to accord approval to the procurement of goods and services by SEZ units indigenously or through imports. The Committee is also required to monitor and supervise compliance of conditions subject to which the letter of Approval (LOA) has been issued. The Jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs or his nominee not below the rank of a joint Commissioner is designated as an ex-officio member of the UAC. However, meetings of the Approval Committee must be attended by the Jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs or Central Excise and never go unrepresented as decisions taken in such meeting have serious revenue implications. It should also be ensured that the view point of revenue is conveyed effectively in each such meeting and that such views are duly reflected in the minutes of these meetings.
- 3.3 The decisions of the Approval Committee are by a 'general consensus' implying thereby that in the absence of a consensus amongst all the Members present in the meeting, the proposal cannot be carried forward and shall stand referred to the Board of Approval.

4. Establishment of SEZs:

- 4.1 The SEZs can be set up either jointly or severally - by the Central Government, State Government, or any person as per Section 3 of the SEZ Act. Such person or body or authority is termed as Developer/Co-developer of the SEZ in terms of Section 2(g) of the SEZ Act. A Co-developer is a person who is allowed to provide any infrastructure facility in the SEZ in accordance with an agreement with the Developer and as approved by the Board of Approval. The State Government is required to forward the proposals received under section 3 of SEZ Act for setting up of a SEZ to the Board of Approval along with its recommendations, within forty-five days of receipt of such proposal and where the Board approves a proposal

received directly under Section 3(3) of the SEZ Act, the person is required to obtain concurrence of State Government within 6 months from the date of approval.

- 4.2 The BOA may approve as such or modify and approve a proposal for establishment of a Special Economic Zone, in accordance with the provisions of Section 3(8) of the SEZ Act subject to the requirements of minimum area of land and other terms and conditions indicated in Rule 5(2) of the SEZ Rules.
- 4.3 All existing Special Economic Zones shall be deemed to be a multi-sector Special Economic Zone.

5. Setting up of SEZ unit:

- 5.1 As per Section 15 of the SEZ Act, any person, who intends to set up a Unit for manufacture of goods or rendering services in a Special Economic Zone, may submit a proposal to the Development Commissioner concerned. On receipt of the proposal, the Development Commissioner is required to submit the same to the Approval Committee for its approval. The Approval Committee may approve or approve with modification or reject a proposal placed before it within fifteen days of its receipt as per conditions prescribed in Rule 18 of SEZ Rules, 2006.
- 5.2 As per Rule 19 of the SEZ Rules, the Letter of Approval shall be valid for one year within which period the Unit shall commence production or service or trading or Free Trade and Warehousing activity and the Unit shall intimate date of commencement of production or activity to Development Commissioner. On receipt of a request from the entrepreneur, further extension can be granted by the Development Commissioner for a further period not exceeding two years. The Development Commissioner may grant further extension of one year subject to the condition that two-thirds of activities including construction, relating to the setting up of the Unit is complete. If the unit has not commenced production or service activity within the validity period or the extended validity period, the Letter of Approval shall be deemed to have been lapsed with effect from the date on which its validity expired. The Letter of Approval shall be valid for five years from the date of commencement of production or service activity and it shall be construed as a license for all purposes related to authorized operations, and, after the completion of five years from the date of commencement of production, the Development Commissioner may, at the request of the Unit, extend validity of the Letter of Approval for a further period of five years.

6. Monitoring of activities of SEZ units:

- 6.1 As per Rules 15 and 54 of the SEZ Rules, the performance of the Unit is to be monitored by the Approval Committee. If Approval Committee comes to the conclusion that a Unit has not achieved positive Net Foreign Exchange Earning or failed to abide by any of the terms and conditions of the Letter of Approval or Bond-cum-Legal Undertaking, without prejudice to the action that may be taken under any other law for the time being in force, the said Unit shall be liable for penal action under the provisions of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

7. Net Foreign Exchange Earnings:

- 7.1 SEZ units shall achieve positive Net Foreign Exchange Earnings (NFE), which is calculated cumulatively for a period of 5 years from the commencement of production, subject to conditions prescribed in terms of Rule 53 of the SEZ Rules.

Nothing contained in rule 53 shall apply-

- a) to a unit in an International Financial Service Centre set up as Alternate Investment Fund or Mutual Fund to the extent of any inflow of investible funds from investors, any investment made from such investible funds and returns on them inclusive of principal return and any return paid to investors from such investments including the original investment.
- b) to a unit in an International Financial Service Centre set up as an International Financial Service Centre Insurance office to the extent of the portion of premium income over and above the amount retained for management expenses within the maximum rate stipulated for expenses of management by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India{Registration and operations of International Financial Service Centre Insurance Offices(IIO)} Guidelines, 2017, Investment made from the said portion of premium income and returns on them, inclusive of principal return and any amount paid towards insurance or reinsurance claims

8. Import and procurement:

- 8.1 A SEZ unit or Developer/co-developer may import or- procure from the Domestic Tariff Area without payment of duty, taxes or cess or procure from Domestic Tariff Area after availing export entitlements or procure from other Units in the same or other Special Economic Zone or from Export Oriented Unit or Software Technology Park unit or Electronic Hardware Technology Park unit or Bio-technology Park unit, various types of goods, including capital goods (new or second hand), raw materials, semi-finished goods, (including semi-finished Jewellery) component, consumables, spares goods and materials for making capital goods required for authorized operations except prohibited items under the Import Trade Control (Harmonized System) and subject to condition prescribed under Rule 26 of the SEZ Rules.
- 8.2 As per Rule 30 the SEZ Rules, The Domestic Tariff Area supplier supplying goods or services to a unit or Developer shall clear the goods or services, as in case of zero-rated supply as per provisions of section 16 of IGST Act, 2017(13 of 2017) either under bond or undertaking or under any other refund procedure permitted under Goods and Service Tax laws or Central Excise laws, or as duty or tax paid goods under claim of rebate, on the cover of documents laid down under the relevant Central Excise law for the purpose of export by an manufacturer or supplier.
- (i) Goods(or services) procured by unit or developer, on which (GST) exemption

has been availed but without any availment of export entitlement, shall be allowed admission into SEZ on the basis of documents referred to in above rule.

- (ii) The goods procured by a unit or developer under claim of export entitlement shall be allowed admission into SEZ on the basis of documents referred above and a bill of export filed by the supplier or on his behalf by the unit or developer which is assessed by authorized officer before arrival of the goods.

A copy of the documents referred to above rule or copy of Bill of Export as the case may be, with an endorsement by authorized officer that goods have been admitted in full into SEZ shall be treated as proof of export and a copy with such endorsement shall also be forwarded by unit or developer to the GST or the Central Excise officer having jurisdiction over the DTA supplier within forty-five days failing which the GST or Central Excise officer shall raise demand of tax or duty against the DTA supplier.

9. Exports:

- 9.1 As per Rule 45 of the SEZ Rules, a unit may export goods or services as per the terms and conditions of Letter of Approval including agro-products, partly processed goods, subassemblies and components except prohibited items under the Import Trade Control (Harmonized System) Classification of Export and Import Items and the Unit may also export by-products, rejects, waste scrap arising out of the manufacturing process.

10. Sub-contracting:

- 10.1 As per rule 41 of the SEZ Rules, a unit may sub-contract a part of its production or any production process, to a unit in the Domestic Tariff Area or in a Special Economic Zone or Export Oriented Unit or a unit in Electronic Hardware Technology Park unit or Software Technology Park unit or Bio-technology Park unit with prior permission of the Specified Officer to be given on an annual basis. No permission is necessary if subcontracting is done through units in same SEZ but both the supplying and receiving units should maintain proper account of goods involved in the sub- contracting. A Developer/co-developer on their behalf their contractor, may also temporarily remove the goods, procured or imported duty free by them for their authorized operations, to a place in the Domestic Tariff Area or a unit in the same or another Special Economic Zone or Export Oriented Unit or a unit in Electronic Hardware Technology Park Unit or Software Technology Park Unit or Bio-technology Park Unit, for sub-contracting a process, with prior permission of and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the Approval Committee.

11. Sub-contracting for DTA unit for export:

- 11.1 A Unit may on the basis of annual permission from the Specified Officer undertake subcontracting for export on behalf of a Domestic Tariff Area exporter subject to conditions prescribed in Rule 43 of the SEZ Rules.

11.2 As per Rule 47(2) of the SEZ Rules, scrap or dust or sweepings of gold or silver or platinum may be sent to Government of India Mint or Private Mint from a Unit and returned in standard bars in accordance with the procedure specified by Customs authorities or may be sold in the Domestic Tariff Area on payment of duty on the gold or silver or platinum content in the said scrap.

12. DTA sale:

12.1 A Unit may sell goods and services including rejects, wastes, scraps, remnants, broken diamonds, by-products arising during the manufacturing process, or 111 connections therewith, in the Domestic Tariff Area on payment of applicable Customs Duties under Section 30 of the SEZ Act and subject to fulfillment of condition laid down in the SEZ Rules.

13. Valuation of goods cleared into DTA:

13.1 As per Rule 48 of the SEZ Rules, valuation of the goods and/or services cleared into Domestic Tariff Area shall be determined in accordance with provisions of Customs Act and rules made Thereunder as applicable to goods when imported into India. If goods procured from Domestic Tariff Area by a Unit are supplied back to the Domestic Tariff Area, as it is or without substantial processing, such goods shall be treated as re-imported goods and shall be subject to such procedure and conditions as applicable in the case of normal re-import of goods from outside India.

14. Temporary removal of goods into the DTA:

14.1 As per Rule 50 of the SEZ Rules, the SEZ units can remove the goods from the Zone into the DT A temporarily without payment of duty for the purpose of inter-alia display, export promotion, exhibition job work, test, repair, refining, calibration or subject to conditions as prescribed. If a unit fails to bring back the goods into SEZ within the prescribed period, the unit is liable to pay applicable duty on such goods.

15. Duty remission on destruction of goods:

15.1 As per Rule 39 of the SEZ Rules, after advance intimation to the Specified Officer, a Unit may destroy, without payment of duty, goods including capital goods, procured from Domestic Tariff Area or goods imported or goods manufactured/produced by the Unit including rejects, waste, scrap subject to prior environmental clearance if any required for such destruction. Where it is not possible to destroy goods within the Special Economic Zone, destruction of goods shall be carried out, outside the Special Economic Zone with the permission of Specified Officer and in the presence of the Authorized Officer. However, destruction of precious metals, diamond, precious stones and semi-precious stones is not allowed. The officers supervising destruction are required to ensure that goods are destroyed fully rendering them unfit for further use and give certificate to that effect. The Unit shall be required to pay back the drawback and Duty Exemption Pass Book credit availed in case goods procured from Domestic Tariff Area are destroyed due to natural calamities.

16. Exit of units:

- 16.1 As per Rule 74 of the SEZ rules, the Unit may opt out of Special Economic Zone with the approval of the Development Commissioner and such exit shall be subject to payment of applicable duties and taxes on the imported or indigenous capital goods, raw materials, components, consumables, spares and finished goods in stock and if the unit has not achieved positive Net Foreign Exchange, the exit shall be subject to penalty that may be imposed under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992. The unit opting out of SEZ shall execute a legal undertaking in Form L. Under Rule 11B, inserted vide the Special Economic Zones (Fifth Amendment) Rules, 2023, demarcation of a portion of the built-up area in an IT/ITES SEZ as a non-processing area is permitted subject to certain conditions mentioned thereunder.
- 16.2 In the event of a gems and jewellery unit ceasing its operation, gold and other precious metals, alloys, gem and other materials available for manufacture of jewellery is required to be handed over to an agency nominated by the Central Government at a price to be determined by that agency.
- 16.3 Development Commissioner can permit a Unit, as one time option to exit from Special Economic Zone on payment of duty on capital goods under the prevailing Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme under the Foreign Trade Policy subject to the Unit satisfying the eligibility criteria under that Scheme.

17. Drawback on supplies made to SEZs:

- 17.1 Section 26(d) of the SEZ Act provides that every Developer and entrepreneur is entitled to Drawback of duties on goods brought from the DT A into an SEZ. The triplicate copy of the assessed Bill of Export is to be treated as the Drawback claim and processed in the Customs section (Specified Officer) of the Special Economic Zone. Dy./Asstt. Commissioner of Customs posted on deputation at the SEZ being the Dy./ Asstt. Commissioner of Customs at the Customs Station of export could sanction such Drawback claims. Thus, Drawback claim in respect of such supplies are not to be processed or sanctioned by the Customs and Central Excise formations.
- 17.2 Drawback can also be claimed by the DTA supplier on the basis of the disclaimer issued by the SEZ Unit Developer. In such cases, the Commissionerate of Customs and Central Excise/ Central GST having jurisdiction over the DT A unit would sanction the Drawback. The jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs in consultation with the Pay and Accounts Officer shall make arrangements for issue of authorization and drawback cheque books.
- 17.3 The office of Principal CCA has issued instructions regarding banking arrangements for payment of refund / Drawback cheques and accounting procedure to be followed in that regard. Accordingly, the PAOs are issuing cheque books to each Customs & Central Excise/Central GST formations for payment of refund / Drawback claims and the same cheque book can be used for making refunds and payment of Drawback. The cheque issuing officer is required to submit separate list of payment for Central Excise (0038) and Customs (0037) to their jurisdictional PAO.

18. Other administrative guidelines:

- 18.1 The Customs/Central Excise/Central GST Officers nominated to the Approval Committee of SEZs should ensure that the decisions taken at the Committee are within the provisions of law and should be made keeping in mind the revenue implications of such decisions.
- 18.2 The Customs/Central Excise/Central GST Officers are advised to conduct verification of credentials of the entrepreneurs proposing to set-up SEZ units and provide inputs on past history to the Committee for taking appropriate decision.
- (i) While granting assent to the approval, the representatives of DOR should ensure whether the particular process to be carried out by the unit constitutes manufacture or not in terms of Section 2 (r) of the SEZ Act.
 - (ii) The Committee approves the import or procurement of goods from the DTA in the SEZ for carrying on the authorized operations by a developer. It should be ensured that the authorized operations are covered under the provisions of SEZ Act and Rules. Activities like Housing, etc, should only be allowed in phases of 20 of approval at a time and Commensurate with the needs of SEZs. In case of activities like setting up of hospitals, hotels and other such social infrastructure, no duty free material is permitted for Operation and maintenance of such facilities.
 - (iii) Any activity outside the SEZ cannot be allowed as Authorized Operation.
 - (iv) No tax benefits would be available for measures taken to establish contiguity.
 - (v) Field formations (Range/Divisions) should follow the specified procedure laid down for movement of goods from SEZ to DT A and from DT A to SEZ.
 - (vi) No unit should be allowed to start functioning till the walls and specified entry/exit points and the offices of the Development Commissioner (including the Customs officers posted under him) are in place. Only one entry/exit gate should be permitted in view of security and revenue loss concerns.

19. Social & Commercial Infrastructure In Non-Processing Area For Use By DTA entities

- 19.1 Social and commercial infrastructure located in the Non-Processing Area of an SEZ can be used by SEZ entities as well as DTA entities provided that all duty benefits availed in setting up of such infrastructure has been refunded back by the developer in full as certified by the jurisdictional Development Commissioner.

20. Advantage

- 20.1 Being in a SEZ can be advantageous to a certain extent when it comes to taxes. Any supply of goods or services or both to a Special Economic Zone developer/unit will be considered to be a zero-rated supply. That means these supplies will attract Zero tax rate under GST. In other words, supplies into SEZ are exempt from GST and are considered as exports.

Therefore, the suppliers supplying goods to SEZs can:

- (a) Supply under bond or LUT without payment of IGST and claim credit of ITC; or
- (b) Supply on payment of IGST and claim refund of taxes paid.

Any supply of goods or services or both to or by an SEZ developer/unit to DTA are chargeable to duties of customs under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 as leviable on such goods when import into the country (Refer Section 30 of the SEZ Act, 2005).

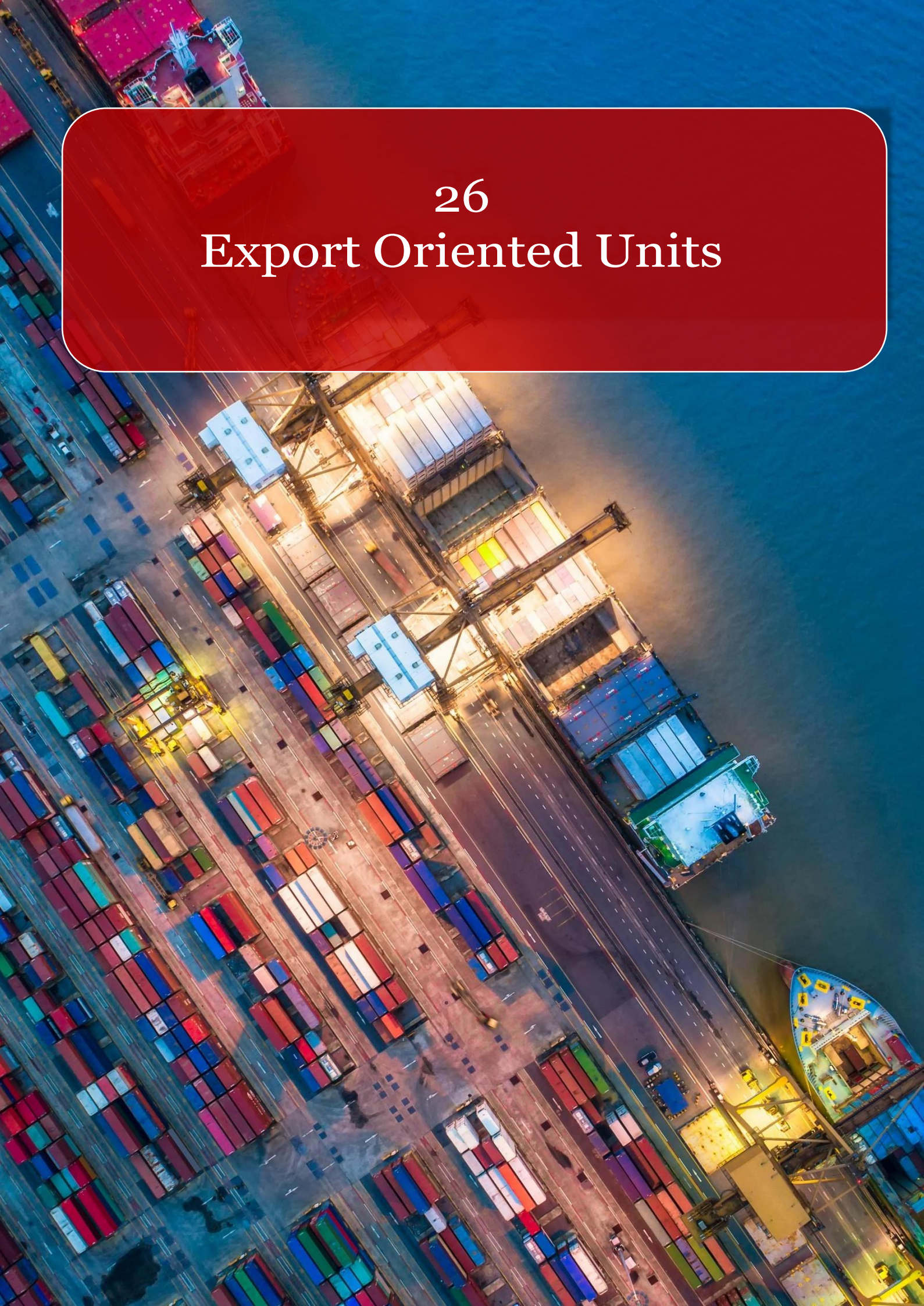
21. E-Way Bill and SEZ

21.1 Under GST, transporters should carry an E-Way Bill when moving goods from one place to another if the value of these goods are more than Rs. 50,000. SEZ supplies are treated in the same manner as the other inter-state supplies are treated. The SEZ units or developers will have to follow the same EWB procedures as others in the same industry follow.

21.2 In case of supplies from SEZ to a DTA or any other place, the registered person who facilitates the movement of goods shall be responsible for the generation of e-Way bill.

26

Export Oriented Units



Chapter 26: Export Oriented Units

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Export Oriented Units (EOU) scheme was introduced vide Ministry of Commerce Resolution dated 31-12-1980. The purpose of the scheme was basically to boost exports by creating additional production capacity. It was introduced as a complementary scheme to the Free Trade Zones/ Export Processing Zone (EPZ) Scheme introduced in the sixties, which had not attracted many units due to locational restrictions. The exporters showed willingness to set up units with long term commitment to exports under Customs bond operations provided they had the freedom to locate them in places of their choice and given most of the benefits as provided to units set up in the Zones.
- 1.2 The EOUs are governed by the provisions of Chapter 6 of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) and its procedures, as contained in the Handbook of Procedure (HBP). Provisions of the said Chapter 6 and its procedures have also been made applicable to the Electronics Hardware Technology Parks (EHTPs), Software Technology Parks (STPs) and Biotechnology Parks (BTPs). Hence the scheme is for EOU/STP/EHTP/BTP and is referred in common parlance as EOU scheme.
- 1.3 Over the years, the EOU Scheme has undergone various changes and its scope has also expanded substantially as compared to the initial Scheme, which was basically for manufacturing sector with certain minimum value addition in terms of export earnings. Presently, the units undertaking to export their entire production of goods are allowed to be set up as an EOU. These units may be engaged in the manufacture, services, development of software, repair, remaking, reconditioning, re- engineering including making of gold/silver/platinum jewellery and articles thereof, agriculture including geoprocessing, aquaculture, animal husbandry, biotechnology, floriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, viticulture, poultry, sericulture and granites. The EOUs can export all products/ services except prohibited items of exports in ITC (HS).
- 1.4 Some benefits that are extended to the EOUs to impart to them a competitive edge to compete in export market are, as follows:
 - (i) EOUs are allowed to import raw materials/ capital goods duty free (including exemption from IGST and Compensation cess), and also allowed to procure excisable goods without payment of duty indigenously;
 - (ii) Reimbursement of Central Sales Tax (CST);
 - (iii) CENVAT credit of excise duty/ITC of GST on the goods and service and refund thereof;
 - (iv) Fast track clearance facilities; and
 - (v) Exemption from Industrial Licensing for manufacture of items reserved for micro and small enterprises.
 - (vi) The DTA supplier or recipient EOU can avail refund of GST paid on supplies to EOUs.

2. Customs and Central Excise exemptions:

- 2.1 EOUs/EHTPs/STPs are entitled to import duty free (including exemption from IGST & Compensation cess) raw materials, capital goods and office equipment etc. vide Customs Notification No. 52/2003- Cus., dated 31.3.2003 and procure indigenous excisable goods duty free vide Central Excise Notification No. 22/2003-CE., dated 31.3.2003.

3. Setting up of an EOU:

- 3.1 Projects having a minimum investment of Rs. 1 Crore and above in plant and machinery are usually considered for establishment under EOU Scheme. Minimum investment criteria is to be fulfilled at the time of commencement of production by the unit. The minimum investment criterion does not apply for certain sectors like Electronic Hardware Technology Park unit, Software Technology Park unit, Biotechnology Park units, Handicrafts, Agriculture, Floriculture, Aquaculture, Animal Husbandry, Information Technology, Services, Brass Hardware and Handmade jewellery sectors. Setting up of trading units is not permitted under EOU scheme. Board of Approval (BOA) may allow establishment of EOUs with a lower investment criteria.
- 3.2 EOUs are normally permitted to be set up by a Unit Approval Committee headed by the Development Commissioner. Jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs & Central Excise is a member of the said committee. Proposals for setting up EOUs requiring industrial license also require clearance by the Board of Approval (BOA) and Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) is permitted through Automatic Route. Applications for conversion into an EOU/EHTP/STP/BTP unit from existing DTA units, having an investment of Rs. 50 crores and above in plant and machinery or exporting Rs. 50 crores and above annually, shall be placed before BOA for a decision.
- 3.3 For setting up of an EOU, three copies of the application in the prescribed form (ANF6A) are required to be submitted to the Development Commissioner. In certain cases, approval of the Board of Approval (BOA) is required. Applications for setting up of Electronic Hardware Technology Park/ Software Technology Park units are submitted to the officer designated by the Ministry of Electronic & Information Technology (MeitY) for this purpose. After approval of the application and issuance of Letter of Permission, the applicant is required to execute a legal undertaking (Appendix-6E) with the Development Commissioner/ Designated Officer concerned within the prescribed time period. On execution of legal undertaking, a Green Card is issued to the unit.
- 3.4 On approval for setting up an EOU by Unit Approval Committee, a Letter of Permission (LOP/LOI) is issued by the jurisdictional Development Commissioner. It mentions inter alia the capacity and items of manufacture and export, capital goods permitted to be imported/ procured. Thereafter, the unit has to execute a legal undertaking with the Development Commissioner. The LOP/ LOI issued is construed as a license for all purposes. After obtaining the LOP and execution of legal undertaking, the unit is required to execute a general purpose B-17 bond with the jurisdictional Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Central Excise. This bond was notified vide Notification No. 6/98 Central Excise (N.T.),

dated 02.03.1998 under the erstwhile Central Excise Rules, 1944. A revised B-17 (General Surety/Security) bond updated with references to GSTIN, present FTP provisions and Notification No. 52/2003- Customs dated 31.03.2003 etc., has been notified vide Notification No. 01/2018 CE(NT) dated 05.12.2018 under the present Rules 7, 9, 21 and 22 of the Central Excise Rules, 2017. This new bond will be applicable to the new EOUs. The existing EOUs shall continue with the earlier B-17 bond already executed by them so that there is no disruption in their working. Also, all relevant instructions applicable for the old B-17 bond will be mutatis mutandis applicable to the new B-17 bond.

[Refer Circular No. 50/2018- Customs dated 06.12.2018]

- 3.5 In terms of para 6.38 (a) of HBP, the conversion to EOU from DTA unit having EPCG licence, would, apart from other conditions, be permitted only if either the DTA unit has fulfilled the stipulated export obligation and obtained EODC or the DTA unit has made payment of applicable duties, taxes and compensation cess on capital goods imported under the EPCG Scheme. Appendix 6M has been suitably modified vide DGFT Public Notice No. 10/2023 dated 26.04.2023.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2023-Customs dated 24.05.2023]

4. Import/ procurement and warehousing:

- 4.1 Under the EOU scheme, the units are allowed to import or procure from bonded warehouses in DTA/ International exhibitions in India, without payment of duty all types of goods including capital goods, raw materials, components, packing materials, consumables, spares and various other specified categories of equipment including material handling equipment, required for export production or in connection therewith. However, the goods prohibited for import are not permitted. In the case of EOUs engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, floriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, viticulture, aquaculture, poultry, sericulture, gem & jewellery manufacture and granite quarrying, only specified categories of goods mentioned in the relevant notification are permitted duty-free import. Indigenous excisable goods specified in Notification no. 22/2003-CE dated 31.03.2003 can be procured duty free.
- 4.2 The Customs exemption Notification No. 52/03-Cus. (for imports) and Central Excise exemption Notification No. 22/03-CE, both dated 31-3-2003 prescribe several conditions to be fulfilled by the beneficiaries keeping in view the objective of the EOU scheme and to prevent abuse. EOUs are also provided various flexibilities in the matter of taking out the materials for job work and inter-unit transfer. The EOUs/ EHTPs/ STPIs/ BTPs are required to be positive net foreign exchange earner except for sector specific provision of Appendix 6 B of FTP where a higher value addition shall be required as per the provisions of FTP. NFE earnings is calculated cumulatively in blocks of 5 years from the commencement of commercial production according to a prescribed formula as per para 6.10 of HBP.
- 4.3 The EOUs are licensed to manufacture goods within the premises for the purpose of export. The period of LOP is initially for five years after the unit has commenced production, which is extendable by another five years by the Development

Commissioner. On completion of the LOP period, it is for the unit to decide whether to continue under, or to opt out, of the scheme. Where unit opts to continue, DC will extend approval period. If no intimation in this regard is received from unit within a period of six months of expiry of approval period, DC will take action, suo motu, to cancel approval under EOU scheme and take further action in this regard. Where units give their option to continue after expiry of six months as stipulated above, DC will grant extension after obtaining approval of BOA.

- 4.4 Inputs imported or procured duty free are required to be accounted for in accordance with SION. For the items having no SION, consumption of inputs is allowed subject to generation of waste, scrap and remnants up to 2% of input quantity. However, if any item in addition to those given in SION are required as input or where generation of waste, scrap and remnants is beyond 2% of the input quantity, consumption is allowed on the basis of self-declared norms for a period of three months till the jurisdictional Development Commissioner fixes ad hoc norms subject to an undertaking by the unit that the self-declared/ ad hoc norms shall be adjusted in accordance with norms as finally fixed by the Norms Committee in DGFT for the unit. Further, a provision has also been made to consider such cases by the Board of Approval for appropriate decision in case of difficulty in fixation of SION by the Norms Committee. The norms fixed by the Norms Committee shall be applicable to the specific unit.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2008-Customs dated 24.07.2008]

5. Monitoring and administrative control:

- 5.1 The EOUs basically function under the administrative control of the Development Commissioner of the Special Economic Zones, whose jurisdiction has been notified by the Ministry of Commerce. In all, there are seven Development Commissioners at Mumbai, Gandhidham, Chennai, Cochin, Visakhapatnam, Noida and Kolkata, who supervise the functioning of the EOUs. The Development Commissioners of the SEZs are the Licensing Authorities in respect of units under the EOU scheme, as per specified territorial jurisdiction as indicated in the FTP.
- 5.2 The Customs function related to EOU which was erstwhile handled by Central Excise officers has been re-assigned to appropriate Customs Authorities.

[Refer : D.O. F.No. 450/17/2017 Custom IV dated 07.11.2017]

- 5.3 On the policy front, all decisions relating to the EOUs are taken by the Board of Approvals (BOA), set up under the Department of Commerce. The BOA is chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. In the case of units engaged in manufacture of electronic hardware and software, the policy decisions are taken by the Inter Ministerial Standing Committee (IMSC) set up under the Department of Information Technology and the same are implemented through its Designated Officers. CBIC representative is a member of both the BOA/IMSC. The availability of any benefit under Customs or Central Excise Acts or the notifications issued thereunder has, however, to be determined by the Commissioner of Customs and Central Excise having jurisdiction over the unit. Appropriate inter-ministerial liaison is maintained for ensuring uniformity as far as possible in the FTP provisions and the provisions built in the relevant Customs and Central Excise notifications.

6. Customs bonding:

- 6.1 The premises of EOU were earlier required to be approved as a Customs bonded warehouse under the warehousing provisions of the Customs Act. The manufacturing and other operations were carried out under customs bond and the unit bears appropriate charges for officers on cost recovery basis. In case of units in Aquaculture, Horticulture, Floriculture, Granite quarrying etc exemption from bonding was given for administrative reasons with certain other safeguards being put in place to check that duty free benefits where availed are not abused. The EOUs were required to execute a multipurpose bond with surety/ security with jurisdictional Central Excise and Customs officers.

[Refer Circular No. 15/95-Cus., dated 23.02.1995]

- 6.2 Recognizing the potential role of these units in the Make in India initiative and as a measure of improving the ease of doing business, it was decided to do away with the need to comply with warehousing provisions by these units. For this purpose, notification 44/2016 Customs dated 29th July 2016 was issued (effective from 13th August 2016) amending the principal notification 52/2003-Customs dated 31st March 2003. As a consequence, these units stand de-licensed as warehouses under Customs Act, 1962, with effect from 13th August, 2016. However, EOUs are still required to execute a multipurpose bond with surety /security with jurisdictional Customs and Central Excise officers.

[Refer Circular No.35/2016-Customs dated 29.07.2016]

7. Items allowed duty free imports/procurement:

- 7.1 Under the EOU scheme, the units are allowed to import without payment of duty, all types of goods including capital goods, raw materials, components, packing material, consumables, spares and various other specified categories of equipment like material handling equipment, UPSs, quality assurance equipment, captive power plants, central air conditioning equipment, security systems, pollution control equipment, modular furniture and parts thereof etc. and also procure indigenous excisable goods without payment central excise duty required for the production/ job-work and other operations in terms of letter of permission (LOP). All goods other than prohibited goods are allowed to be imported by an EOU/STP/EHTP. The specified activities for setting up an EOU/STP/EHTP are as follows:

- (i) Manufacture of articles for export or for being used in connection with the production or packaging or job work for export of goods or services by export oriented undertaking;
- (ii) Manufacture or development of software, data entry and conversion, data processing, data analysis and control data management or call center services for export by Software Technology Park (STP) unit, or a unit in Software Technology Park Complex under the export oriented scheme;
- (iii) Manufacture and development of electronics hardware or electronics

hardware and software in an integrated manner for export by an Electronic Hardware Technology Park (EHTP) unit or a unit in Electronic Hardware Technology Park Complex under the export oriented scheme; production, manufacture or packaging of articles by export oriented undertaking in horticulture, agriculture and animal husbandry sector;

- (iv) Use in aqua-culture farm in connection with operational requirements of such aquaculture farm and export of aquaculture products so produced by export oriented undertaking in aquaculture sector;
- (v) Quarrying of granite by export oriented undertaking engaged in processing and manufacture or production of articles of granite for export;
- (vi) Manufacture of gems and jewellery and export thereof by EOUs in the Special Export Oriented Complex, Jhandewalan and EOUs in gems and jewellery sector.

7.2 Duty free import and procurement of export promotion material like brochures, literatures, pamphlets, hoardings, catalogues and posters of products to the extent of 1.5% of the value of exports of the previous year is also allowed.

[Refer Circular No. 17/2006-Cus dated 01.06.2006 read with Para 6.01 (C) of FTP]

7.3 In terms of para 6.04 (b) (i) of HBP, the EOUs, for setting up, operations or maintenance of wind captive power plant and solar captive power plant would not get tax/duty benefits. Accordingly, the Notification nos. 52/2003– Customs dated 31.03.2003 and Notification no. 22/2023 Central Excise dated 31.03.2003 have been amended vide Notification no. 28/2023– Customs dated 01.04.2023– Customs dated 01.04.2023 and Notification no. 20/2023– Central Excise dated 26.04.2023 respectively.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2023-Cus dated 24.05.2023]

8. Time limit for utilization of imported capital goods and inputs:

8.1 The period of utilization of goods, including capital goods, procured/ imported by the EOU shall be co-terminus with the validity of LoP (Letter of Permission)

[Refer Notification No. 34/2015-Customs dated 25.05.15 and 30/2015-CE dated 25.05.15]

9. Manufacture in bond:

9.1 EOUs used to be private bonded warehouse under provisions of Section 58 of the Customs Act, 1962. To undertake manufacturing or other operations in the warehouse in relation to warehoused goods, the required permission was granted under Section 65 of the Customs Act 1962, read with “Manufacture and Other Operations in Warehouse Regulations, 1966”. The mandatory warehousing has now been done away with w.e.f. 29.07.2016 and EOUs are required to follow the procedure prescribed under Rule 5 of the Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, 2017 for which Notification no. 52/2003-Customs dated 31st March, 2003 has been amended by Notification No. 59/2017-

Customs dated 30th June, 2017. The degree of supervision of the Departmental officers on movement of raw materials, components, finished goods and manufacturing process and accounting in an EOU is aimed at providing operational flexibility, easing restrictions and removing practical difficulties faced by EOUs. Accordingly, the manufacture is now allowed without any physical supervision of the Central Excise and Customs authorities, locking of the warehouse premises, control over the issue and return of imported goods. Further, all movements from and to the units like clearance of raw materials/ components to the job worker's premises, return of goods from the job worker's premises, clearance to other EOUs, export and sale into DTA can be made by the manufacturer subject to recording of each transaction in the records prescribed by the Board/Commissioners or their private records approved by the Commissioner.

[Refer Circular No. 88/98-Cus, dated 2.12.1998]

9.2 Exports by EOUs are allowed on self-sealing and self-certification basis.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2005-Cus dated 4.3.2005]

9.3 The EOUs were allowed self-bonding/self-warehousing without the requirement of physical verification of goods by officers of Customs and Central Excise for both imported as well as indigenously procured goods. This relaxation was available to EOUs with a clean track record having physical export turnover of goods or services is Rs.10 Crores or above in the preceding financial year.

[Circular No. 19/2007-Cus dated 3.5.2007 amended by No. 19/2015-Cus dated 9.6.2015]

9.4 With the removal of mandatory warehousing, EOUs stand delicensed as warehouses under Customs Act, 1962, with effect from 13th August, 2016. EOUs are no longer required to maintain warehoused goods register. Instead the records of receipt, storage, processing and removal of goods is required to be maintained in a prescribed form in digital manner. A digital copy of Form A, containing transactions for the month, shall be provided to the proper officer, each month (by the 10th of month) in a CD or Pen drive, as convenient to the unit. The requirement of sending re- warehousing certificates has also been dispensed with for all EOUs. Instead, upon receipt of goods in the unit, copy of relevant bill of entry shall be provided to the jurisdictional office who shall reconcile the imports with intimation provided under Rule 5 of Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, 2017.

[Refer Circular No.35/2016-Customs dated, the 29.07.2016 and Circular No.29/2017-Customs dated 17.07.2017]

10. B-17 Bond:

10.1 Import/procurement of goods by an EOU for use in manufacture or in connection with production or packaging of goods for export is exempted from payment of customs and central excise duties. EOUs execute a general purpose B-17 bond along with surety or security covering the duty foregone on imported goods. This bond is prescribed under Notification No. 6/98-CE(N.T.), dated 2-3-1998 as General Bond to be executed by the EOUs for provisional assessment of goods to Central Excise duty, for export of goods and for accounting/disposal of

excisable goods procured without payment of duty. This bond also takes care of the interest of revenue against risks arising out of goods lost in transit, goods taken into Domestic Tariff Area for job work/ repair/ display etc but not brought back. Basically the B-17 bond is an “all purpose” bond covering liabilities of the EOU both under Customs and Central Excise Acts. However, it does not cover the differential duty amount against advance DTA sale for which a separate bond is to be executed.

- 10.2 The B-17 bond is executed with the jurisdictional Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Central Excise and Customs, as the case may be. The bond is taken for an amount equivalent to 25% of the duty forgone on the sanctioned requirement of capital goods plus the duty forgone on raw materials required for three months. Surety or security equivalent to 5% of the bond amount in the form of bank guarantee or cash deposit or any other mode of security recognized by the Government is required to be given by the EOUs. In the case of surety, a letter from the person standing surety duly certified by a Chartered Accountant for solvency is also required to be submitted.
- 10.3 Units which have achieved positive NFE and have been in existence for at last three years having export turnover of Rs. 5 Crores or above and have not been issued a show cause notice or a confirmed demand, during the preceding 3 years are exempted from furnishing Bank Guarantee etc. or Surety along with B-17 bond. However, this facility will not be available to the Units where a show cause notice or a confirmed demand has been issued on grounds other than procedural violations, under the penal provision of the Customs Act, CGST/SGST/UTGST//IGST Acts, the Central Excise Act, the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992, the Foreign Exchange Management Act, the Finance Act, 1994 covering Service Tax or any allied Acts or the rules made thereunder, on account of fraud / collusion/ willful mis-statement / suppression of facts or contravention of any of the provisions thereof.

This facility of exemption from furnishing Bank Guarantee at the time of import or going for job work in DTA by EOU/EHTP/SPT/BTP has been extended to the units having AEO certification subject to certain conditions in Para 6.11 (d) of FTP.

[Refer Circulars No. 14/98-Cus, dated 10.3.1998, No. 42/98-Cus, dated 19.6.1998, No.66/98-Cus, dated 15.9.1998, No.76/99-Cus, dated 17.11.1999, No. 54/2004-Cus, dated 13.10.2004 No. 36/2011-Cus, dated. 12.8.2011 and Circular no. 12/2023-Customs dated 24.05.2023]

- 10.4 The B-17 bond, being a general purpose running bond will serve the requirement of continuity bond to be submitted under Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, 2017, and therefore EOU/STP/EHTP units are not required to submit separate continuity bond.

The waiver of bank guarantee/ surety to EOUs would continue to be governed by various circulars issued from time to time by CBIC with regard to B-17 bonds executed by EOUs and will not be guided by the Circular no. 48/2017-Customs dated 08.12.2017 which governs the general importers and not the EOUs.

[Refer Circular No. 29/2017-Customs dated 17.07.2017 and Circular no. 27/2018-Customs dated 14.08.2018]

- 10.5 Original B-17 bond is to be kept safely after allotting Bond Nos. and bond values to be mentioned in the bond register for the purposes of debit/credit of duty foregone on the goods imported/procured duty free. Debits for duty foregone are to be made at the fresh import or at the time of local procurement of excisable goods under CT-3. For debit only 25% of the duty foregone (for Capital Goods) should be taken and not the entire duty amount. Similarly credits of duty foregone may be allowed for the duty contained in inputs used in the manufacture of finished goods exported or cleared in DTA on payment of applicable duties and taxes. Monitoring of Bond is to be done by AC/DC of Cus/CE on broad basis and it is to be ensured that Bond is discharged at the time of final debonding.

[Refer Circulars No. 76/99-Customs dated 17.11.1999 and Circular No. 50/2000 - Customs dated 24.05.2000]

- 10.6 In case of B-17 bond executed by EOU/STP/EHTPs in capacity of Proprietorship or partnership firm, surety cannot be given by Proprietor/ partner himself. Such sureties must be given by an independent legal entity other than the Proprietor/ Partner of the concerned Proprietorship/ Partnership EOU firm.

[Refer Circular No. 03/2021-Customs dated 03.02.2021]

11. Monitoring of export performance / foreign exchange realization:

- 11.1 The EOUs basically function under the administrative control of the Development Commissioner of the SEZ as per the jurisdiction notified by the Ministry of Commerce. The Development Commissioner is the licensing authority in respect of EOU. In respect of STP / EHTP units, the designated officer (Director) of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is the licensing authority. These authorities are also responsible for monitoring the export performance of the units in terms of Para 6.12 of HBP read with Appendix 6F of FTP.
- 11.2 The concept of NFEP and EP has been replaced with Net Foreign Exchange Earning (NFE) from 2003-04. Further, duty liability is fixed in proportion to shortfall in NFE. Now the unit has to achieve a positive NFE i.e. their foreign exchange earning has to be more than the foreign exchange outflow. The NFE is calculated cumulatively in the block of 5 years. If the unit is not NFE positive, Development Commissioner is required to inform the Customs authorities for recovery of the proportionate duty. This provision is not only more equitable but also prevents a unit to become unviable on account of huge demand without taking into account the exports performance achieved.
- 11.3 The Development Commissioner is responsible for monitoring foreign exchange realization/remittances of EOUs in coordination with the General Manager, RBI concerned.

[Refer RBI Circular No. COEXD.3109/05.62.05/1999-2000, dated 21.02.2000]

11.4 The Unit Approval Committee headed by the Development Commissioner is responsible for monitoring the performance of EOUs.

12. Import and export procedures:

12.1 Pre-GST and pre-removal of warehousing provision for EOUs, with regard to clearance of import cargo, the EOUs are placed in a special category, eligible for fast track clearance through the Customs on the strength of procurement certificate issued by the jurisdictional Assistant/Deputy Commissioner. Generally, the EOU cargo is not examined at the gateway port/airport and in case of loose cargo, marks and numbers on the packages are verified. As for sealed containers, the seal number and container number are verified with the Bill of Lading. If the seal is found intact, the container is allowed clearance. The imported cargo so cleared and brought into the unit's premises were earlier used to be examined by the jurisdictional Central Excise and Customs officials. After examination (percentage check only), the goods were allowed to be used for export production. Re-warehousing certificate was to be submitted to the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner in charge of the port of import within 90 days of the issue of procurement certificate.

[Refer Circulars No. 63/97-Cus, dated 21.11.1997, No. 14/98-Cus, dated 10.03.1998]

12.2 Post GST, the EOUs are required to follow Rule 5 of Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, 2017 The system architecture with respect to the said rule in respect of EOUs is under development and shall be implemented in due course. Till such date, procurement certificates can continue to be submitted by the EOUs for import of goods in lieu of generating IIN in the system.

[Refer Circulars No. 29/2017-Customs dated 17.07.2017, No. 25/2017-Customs dated 30.06.2017, No. 10/2018-Customs dated 24.04.2018 and Para 6 of Circular No. 04/2022-Customs dated 27.02.2022]

12.3 Prior to removal of mandatory warehousing, EOUs were required to file Into - Bill of Entry at port of importation and detailed examination of imported goods were done at factory premises leading to issuance of Re-warehousing certificate. But with removal of mandatory warehousing for EOUs in 2016 the system of re-warehousing was done away vide Circular no. 35/2016-Customs dated 29.07.2016. Now EOUs are required to file a Bill of Entry for Home Consumption at the port of importation. EOUs being no longer bonded premises and goods being cleared from port of import as final for home consumption, hence there is no scope of examination at premises of EOU as was envisaged earlier when EOUs were bonded premises. Hence, the procedure/method for import by EOUs is at par with other importers except that their criterion for RMS selection could be different from normal importers.

12.4 On the export side, the units having status of a Super Star Trading House, Star Trading House, Trading House, and Export House were allowed the facility of self-sealing of their export containers.

[Refer Circulars No.90/98-Cus, dated 08.12.1998]

13. Goods imported / exported and found defective:

- 13.1 Subject to grant of GR waiver by the RBI, the EOUs are allowed to make free replacement of the goods exported by them earlier and found defective, damaged or otherwise unfit by the overseas buyer. However, such defective, damaged or otherwise unfit for use goods are required to be brought back subsequently, to the country. The units are also allowed to re-import part consignment/full consignment in case of failure of the foreign buyer to take delivery.
- 13.2 The EOUs are also allowed to receive free replacement of the goods imported and found defective, damaged or otherwise unfit for use prior to re-export of the same. However, such damaged, defective goods are required to be re-exported subsequently. In case the supplier of such goods does not insist for re-exportation, such goods are required to be either destroyed or cleared into DTA on payment of full Customs duty.

[Refer Circular No. 60/99-Cus, dated 10.09.1999]

14. Procurement of indigenous goods under CT-3 procedure:

- 14.1 The EOUs earlier were required to procure excisable goods from DTA without payment of Central Excise duty on strength of CT-3, which was issued by the Superintendent of Central Excise in charge of the EOU. Such goods were required to be brought directly from the manufacturer/ warehouse into the unit's premises under A.R.E.-3 procedure. To avoid separate permission every time, the EOUs were issued pre-authenticated CT-3 in booklet form and against such pre-authenticated CT-3. Now, supplies to EOUs by a registered person have been made to be treated as deemed export supplies under Section 147 of CGST Act for which Notification No. 48/2017- Central Tax dated 18.10.2017 has been issued. The EOUs are allowed to procure capital goods, raw materials, consumables etc. on payment of GST by following the procedure as prescribed in Circular no 14/14/2017-GST dated 06.11.2017. As per this procedure, recipient EOU has to give prior intimation of goods to be procured in a prescribed form to registered supplier as well as jurisdictional GST officers of supplier as well as of EOU. The supplies will then be made under the tax invoice. After receipt of goods at EOU, tax invoice will be endorsed by EOU, a copy of which will be given to all to whom original intimation of procurement was given. Goods procured from DTA and found to be defective can be returned to the manufacturer as prescribed by Central Excise law/GST law.

15. DTA sale:

- 15.1 EOUs are allowed to sell goods in Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) upon fulfilment of certain conditions in terms of Para 6.07 of the FTP read with Para 6.14 and Appendix 6G of the HBP.
- 15.2 The EOUs (other than gems & jewellery units) are allowed to sell goods (including rejects, scrap, waste, remnants and by-products) in DTA on payment of applicable central excise duty or applicable GST alongwith reversal of Basic Customs Duty on inputs used in finished goods (including by-products, rejects, waste and scraps arising in the course of production, manufacture, processing or packaging of such

goods) if they are NFE positive. Gems and Jewellery units may sell up to 10% of FOB value of export of preceding year subject to fulfilment of positive NFE.

- 15.3 For a newly set up unit, Advance DTA sale is also allowed on the basis of the projection of export in the first year. For pharmaceutical units, advance DTA sale is allowed on the basis of the projection of export in the first two years. The advance DTA sale is to be adjusted within two years from the date of commencement of production by an EOU. However, in case of pharmaceutical units, this period for adjustments is three years. For this purpose, a separate bond is to be executed with the Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner to cover the difference of duty paid on the advance DTA sale and the duty payable on such goods.
- 15.4 The DTA sale facility is not available for certain products namely, pepper & pepper products, marble and such other items as are notified from time to time. This facility is also not available to units engaged in the activities of packaging/ labelling/ segregation/ refrigeration/ compacting/ micronisation/ pulverization/ granulation/ conversion of monohydrate form of chemical to anhydrous form or vice versa.
- 15.5 Specified supplies of goods in DTA as provided in Para 6.08 of FTP and are counted for fulfilment of positive NFE, are also allowed on payment of applicable duties/taxes leviable on these goods.

16. Valuation of goods sold in DTA:

- 16.1 Section 3 of the Central Excise Act, 1944, provides that the valuation of excisable goods manufactured in the EOU and cleared into DTA is to be done in accordance with the provisions of the Customs law. Thus, when the invoice price of the goods under assessment is in the nature of transaction value, such invoice value can be accepted.
- 16.2 For goods other than those falling under fourth schedule of Central Excise Act, 1944, the valuation will be as per applicable GST Act.

[Refer Circulars No.23/84-CX-6, dated 29.05.1984 and No. 330/46/97-CX dated 20.08.1997 and Instruction F.No. 268/35/92-CX-8, dated 17.08.1994]

17. Duty liability on DTA clearances/sales:

- 17.1 In terms of proviso to Section 3(1) of the Central Excise Act, 1944, duty payable on goods falling under Fourth schedule to the Central Excise Act' 1944 cleared in DTA is equal to the aggregate of the Customs duties which would be leviable under the Customs Act, 1962 or under any other law for the time being in force, on like goods produced or manufactured outside India, if imported into India. The value for payment of duty (after granting applicable depreciation on capital goods) is arrived at in accordance with the provisions of the Customs Act, as if these are imported goods. In case of clearance of goods under GST, DTA sale will be on payment of applicable GST alongwith reversal of Basic Customs Duty foregone on inputs used in finished goods (including by-products, rejects, waste and scraps arising in the course of production, manufacture, processing or packaging of such goods) and applicable cesses. An amount equal to anti dumping duty foregone on

the goods at the time of import shall also be paid on the equivalent quantity of goods used for manufacture of any goods which are cleared into DTA or on such quantity of goods which are cleared as such into DTA.

- 17.2 On fulfillment of positive NFE, the EOUs other than Gem and Jewellery units can sell goods including rejects, waste, scrap, remnants, by-products and services in DTA. However, Gem and Jewellery units may sell upto 10% of FOB value of export of the preceding year in DTA, subject to fulfillment of positive NFE. The words "FOB value of exports" refers to physical exports only. Therefore, the value of deemed exports made by the unit is not considered while determining the FOB value of exports.

[Instruction vide F.No. 305/48/2000-FTT dated 07.04.2000]

- 17.3 Sales made to a unit in SEZ is also taken into account for purpose of arriving at FOB value of export by EOU provided payment for such sales are made from Foreign Exchange Account of SEZ unit. Sale to DTA would also be subject to mandatory requirement of registration of pharmaceutical products (including bulk drugs). An amount equal to Anti Dumping duty under section 9A of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 leviable at the time of import, shall be payable on the goods used for the purpose of manufacture or processing of the goods cleared into DTA from the unit.

- 17.4 For services, including software units, sale in DTA in any mode, including on line data communication, is also permissible up to 50% of FOB value of exports and/ or 50% of foreign exchange earned, where payment of such services is received in foreign exchange. However, sale in DTA in respect of services classified under Chapter Heading 9988 and 9989 under GST, but covered in LOP/para 11.31 of FTP as manufacturing of goods, will continue to be covered under para 6.07(a) of FTP. At the time of DTA clearance, applicable GST and compensation cess as per GST classification would apply.

[Refer Notification No. 10/2015-2020 dated 07.06.2018 of DGFT]

- 17.5 In case of new EOUs, advance DTA sale are allowed not exceeding 50% of its estimated exports for first year, except pharmaceutical units where this will be based on its estimated exports for first two years.

- 17.6 Supplies of specified items such as accessories like tags, labels, printed bags, stickers, belts, buttons or hangers produced or manufactured in an EOU are allowed on payment of GST to a unit in DTA for use in the manufacture or processing of goods which are exported and thereupon such supplies shall be counted towards fulfillment of positive NFE of EOU.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2008-Cus., dated 24.07.2008]

- 17.7 The concessional rate of duties for goods falling under Fourth Schedule to the Central Excise Act' 1944 sold in DTA by an EOU are prescribed under Notification No. 23/2003 CE, dated 31.3.2003.

- 17.8 EOU shall also be required to pay Agriculture Infrastructure and Development

Cess (AIDC) in the manner of payment of BCD against the goods imported under Notification No. 52/2003– Cus dated 31.03.2003 under various situations like DTA sale of finished goods, clearance of inputs, capital goods, etc or exit from scheme.

[Refer Circular No. 07/2021-Customs dated 22.02.2021]

18. Goods manufactured from indigenous materials in EOUs:

18.1 Excisable goods manufactured out of wholly indigenous excisable inputs are allowed clearance into DTA on payment of only Central Excise duty.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2008-Cus., dated 24.7.2008]

18.1.1 The indigenous goods supplied to the EOUs/EPZ/SEZ/EHTP/STP units after availing the deemed export benefits are to be treated as 'imported goods' and accordingly, duty as applicable to the imported goods is liable to be paid. Once the goods are treated as imported goods and applicable Customs Duty is paid at the time of their transfer/sale back into DTA or exit, there is no requirement of refund of the deemed export benefits availed on such goods or for the production of a certificate from the Development Commissioner regarding refund or nonavailment of deemed export benefits at the time of clearance of such goods or exit.

18.1.2 Alternatively, the EOU/STP/EHTP units would also be allowed to clear the domestically procured goods or on exit, on payment of Excise Duty as per Notification No. 22/2003CE dated 31.03.2003 only on production of certificate from Development Commissioner to the effect that deemed export benefits have been paid back or not availed, as the case may be, as envisaged in Circular No.74/2001-Cus dated 04.12.2001.

[Refer Circular No.13/2017-Cus F. No. DGEP/FTP/07/2015(Part-I)
Date:10.04.2017]

18.2 Where goods are either non-excisable or are leviable to nil rate of import duty, no exemption in respect of inputs utilized for manufacture of such goods is allowed. An EOU is required to pay back the duty foregone on the inputs used in manufacture of goods cleared in DTA on which no duty is leviable.

18.3 Proviso to sub-section (1) of section 5A of the Central Excise Act, 1944 states that unless specifically provided in a notification, no exemption therein shall apply to excisable goods which are produced or manufactured by an EOU and cleared to the DTA. Further, EOUs are eligible for duty free import or domestic procurement of their inputs or raw materials under Notification No. 22/2003-CE dated 31.3.2003 and Notification No. 52/2003- Customs dated 31.03.2003. However, as per a proviso [the second proviso to para 6 in case of Notification No. 22/2003-CE and first proviso to para 3 in case of Notification No. 52/2003- Customs], if the goods produced or manufactured by EOUs and cleared to DTA if imported are either non-excisable or leviable to Nil basic customs duty [BCD] and additional duty of customs [CVD], then EOUs cannot avail the exemptions under these notifications on inputs utilized in manufacture/processing/packaging etc. of such goods [cleared to DTA]. In addition, there are a number of customs and excise duty

exemption notifications which prescribe concessional [including Nil] duty rates on specified goods [inputs/raw materials etc.] for use in manufacture of specified goods, subject to conditions prescribed. EOUs were not able to avail benefit of such exemptions on inputs imported or procured domestically by them.

The matter has been clarified vide Annexure III of D.O. F.No. 334/7/2017-TRU dated 12-2017 of JS(TRU-I). Non-applicability of exemptions under notifications issued under section 5A of the Central Excise Act, 1944 is only in respect of excisable goods produced or manufactured by an EOU and cleared to DTA and not in respect of inputs/raw materials procured by them domestically and utilised for production/manufacture of goods which are cleared by them to DTA. In view of the above, it has been clarified that EOUs will also be eligible to import or procure raw materials/inputs at other concessional/Nil rate of BCD, excise duty/CVD or SAD, as the case may be, provided they fulfill all conditions for being eligible to such concessional or Nil duty. For these purposes, if an EOU is already registered with the jurisdictional Central Excise Authority, it will not be required to take any fresh registration under the Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty for Manufacture of Excisable Goods) Rules, 2016 or the Central Excise (Removal of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty for Manufacture of Excisable and Other Goods) Rules, 2016, as the case may be. Further, there will be no need for an EOU to separately comply with the Central Excise (Removal of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty for Manufacture of Excisable Goods) Rules, 2016 for availing the CVD exemption, if the procedure under the Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty for Manufacture of Excisable Goods) Rule, 2016 is followed by it for availing exemption / concession from BCD on imports of inputs/raw materials.

19. Clearance of by-products, rejects, waste, scrap, remnants, non-excisable goods, etc.:

- 19.1 Scrap/ waste/ remnants arising out of production process or in connection therewith are allowed to be sold in DTA, as per SION notified by Directorate General of Foreign Trade (under Duty Exemption Scheme), on payment of concessional duties/GST as applicable. Such sales of scrap/ waste/ remnants shall not be subject to achievement of positive NFE. In respect of items not covered by SION norms, Development Commissioner may fix ad-hoc norms for a period of six months and within this period, norm should be fixed by Norms Committee and ad-hoc norms will continue till such time. Sale of waste/ scrap/ remnants by units not entitled to DTA sale, or sales beyond DTA sale entitlement, shall be on payment of full duties. Scrap/ waste/ remnants may also be exported. However, no duties/ taxes on scrap/ waste/ remnants are charged, in case same are destroyed with permission of Central Excise & Customs authorities.
- 19.2 The DTA clearance of by-products and rejects is not allowed to the EOUs, which have failed to achieve the positive NFE.
- 19.3 DTA clearance of goods manufactured by the EOUs which are not excisable the duty on inputs and consumables etc. procured/ imported duty free under exemption notifications, which have gone into production of such non- excisable goods cleared into DTA, is recovered, besides payment of GST.

19.4 In case of Gems and Jewellery EOUs and EHTP/STP units, scrap, dust or sweepings of gold/ silver/ platinum generated in the unit is allowed to be forwarded to the Government Mint or Private Mint for conversion into standard gold bars and return thereof to the unit subject to the observance of procedure laid down by the Commissioner of Central Excise & Customs. The said dust, scrap or sweepings are also allowed clearance into DTA on payment of applicable customs duty on the gold/ silver/ platinum content in the said scrap, dust or sweepings. Samples of the sweepings/ dust are taken at the time of clearance and sent to mint for assaying. The assessment is finalized when the reports are received from the mint.

[Refer Circular No.19/99-Cus, dated 29.04.1999]

19.5 The rate of duties for excisable by-products, rejects, waste etc, cleared in DTA by an EOU are prescribed under Notification No. 23/2003-CE, dated 31.3.2003.

20. Special concessions for certain waste products and other goods:

20.1 Gems and Jewellery units may sell jewellery upto 10% of FOB value of exports of the preceding year in DTA, subject to fulfilment of positive NFE. In respect of sale of plain jewellery, studded jewellery, EOU shall pay duty and taxes as applicable to sale from nominated agencies.

21. Reimbursement of Central Sales Tax (CST) / Drawback:

21.1 Supplies from DTA to EOUs are regarded as “deemed exports” and considered for discharge of any export obligation on the supplier. For such supplies, the DTA supplier (or the EOU if the DTA supplier gives a disclaimer) is eligible for the following benefits:

- (i) Supply of goods against Advance Authorisation/ Advance Authorisation for annual requirement / DFIA;
- (ii) Deemed Export Drawback;
- (iii) Exemption from terminal excise duty where supplies are made against ICB. In other cases, refund of terminal excise duty.

21.2 Goods manufactured in India and supplied to EOU are eligible for reimbursement of CST.

21.3 All the above benefits are administered and disbursed by the Development Commissioner/ Regional Authority of DGFT under the Ministry of Commerce.

22. Clearance of samples:

22.1 EOUs may on basis of records maintained by them, and on prior intimation to jurisdictional Central Excise and Customs authority:

- (i) Supply or sell samples in DTA for display/ market promotion on payment of applicable duties/taxes.
- (ii) Remove samples without payment Central Excise of duty, on furnishing a

suitable undertaking to jurisdictional Central Excise and Customs authorities for bringing back samples within a stipulated period.

- (iii) Export free samples, without any limit, including samples made in wax moulds, silver mould and rubber moulds through all permissible mode of export including through courier agencies/ post. For statutory requirement of Stability & Retention sample with manufacturer, an EOU may re-import without payment of duty, those samples, which were exported by it, under intimation to Custom Authorities, and FOB value of such samples shall not be counted for NFE purpose and other export benefits, if any.
- (iv) Send samples to other EOUs for display on returnable basis within a period of 30 days.

22.2 EOUs are allowed to send samples abroad through the courier. The packages containing such samples are sealed in the presence of the departmental officer and are handed over to the representative of the courier company authorised by the Commissioner of Central Excise & Customs for presentation to the Customs at the port of export. These sealed samples are not normally examined again before "let export" is given if the seals are found intact and not tampered. The representative of the courier company later hands over the proof of export to the jurisdictional Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner.

[Refer Circulars No.22/98-Cus dated 27.03.1998; and No.52/99- Cus, dated 20.08.1999]

23. Clearance of Fax/ Laptop Computers outside approved premises:

23.1 EOUs may:

- (i) Install one fax machine at a place of choice, outside the premises of unit, subject to intimation of its location to concerned Customs Central Excise authorities.
- (ii) Temporarily take out of premises of unit, duty free laptop computers and video projection systems for working upon by authorized employees.
- (iii) Install personal computers not exceeding two in number, imported/ procured duty free in their registered / administrative office subject to CBEC guidelines.
- (iv) For IT and IT enabled services, persons authorized by software units may access facility installed in EOU/EHTP/STP/BTP unit through communication links.

24. Sale of surplus/ unutilized goods:

24.1 EOUs are allowed to sell surplus/unutilized goods and services, imported or procured duty free, into DTA on payment of duty but for exemption, in case the unit is unable, for valid reasons, to utilize the goods. The permission for such DTA sale is given by the jurisdictional Assistant / Deputy Commissioner of Central Excise and Customs.

24.2 Unutilized goods and services may also be transferred to another EOU/EHTP/STP/BTP/ SEZ unit or exported. Such transfer to another such unit would be treated as import for receiving unit.

24.3 The inter unit transfer would be on invoice on payment of applicable GST taxes. However, such transfer would be without payment of custom duty. The supplier unit will endorse on such documents the amount of custom duty, availed as exemption, if any, on the goods intended to be transferred. The recipient unit would be responsible for paying such basic customs duty, as is obligated under Notification no. 52/2003-Cus dated 31.3.2003 (as amended), when the finished goods made out of such goods or such goods are cleared in DTA.

[Refer Circular no.29/2017-Customs dated 17.07.2017]

24.4 Obsolete/ surplus capital goods and spares can either be exported, transferred to another EOU/EHTP/STP/BTP/SEZ unit or disposed of in the DTA on payment of applicable duties. The benefit of depreciation, as applicable, will be available in case of disposal in DTA only when the unit has achieved positive NFE. Duty is not charged in case of obsolete/ surplus capital goods, consumables, spares, goods manufactured, processed or packaged and scrap, waste, remnants are destroyed within the unit after intimation to Central Excise & Customs authorities or destroyed outside unit with the permission of Central Excise & Customs authorities.

25. Destruction of flowers/ horticulture products:

25.1 Flowers, vegetables and agricultural products have a very short shelf life and are prone to malformation, injury, damage, infection etc. These products cannot be preserved for a longer period. There are circumstances (especially in case of floriculture units) when the EOUs do not find the goods exportable/marketable for various reasons such as malformation, injury, damage, infection by pest and diseases etc. and the units have to resort to forced destruction of flowers, vegetables etc. In such cases, duty is not charged from the EOUs.

25.2 At times, the flowers and floriculture products deposited in the warehouse of the airlines at the international airports for the purpose of exports are not exported owing to various reasons, such as, delay in flights, cancellation of flights etc. In such cases, the units are allowed to sell such flowers and floriculture products in DTA on payment of applicable duty/taxes. For such DTA sales, the unit must have DTA sale entitlement under the scheme. The unit is required to obtain permission from the concerned Development Commissioner for such DTA sale and shall clear the goods on payment of duty assessed by the concerned Assistant Commissioner / Deputy Commissioner in charge of the cargo. The DTA sale is allowed against documents as are used for DTA sale by EOUs in the manner as if the goods cleared from the unit itself.

[Refer Circular No.31/2001-Cus., dated 24.05.2001]

26. Sub-contracting:

26.1 EOUs, including Gems and Jewellery units, are allowed to sub-contract their

production process to DTA. These units may also sub-contract upto 50% of the overall production of previous year in value terms for job work in DTA. For this, permission is to be obtained from the jurisdictional Customs authorities. Sub-contracting of both production and production process are also allowed to be undertaken through another EOU or SEZ unit on the basis of records maintained by the unit. The units are also allowed to sub-contract part of the production process abroad and also export therefrom with the permission of Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner of Customs/ Central Excise having jurisdiction over the unit. The intermediate goods so removed to sub- contractor abroad shall be allowed to be cleared under export documents

[Refer Circular No. 12/2008-Cus., dated 24.07.2008]

26.2 To help utilize the idle capacity, an EOU can undertake job work for export, on behalf of DTA exporter, provided the goods are exported directly from EOU's premises and export documents are prepared jointly in the name of DTA/EOU. For such exports, the DTA unit is entitled for refund of duty paid on the inputs by way of Brand rate of duty Drawback.

26.3 Sub-contracting by EOU Gems and Jewellery units through other EOUs, or SEZ units, or units in DTA shall be subject to following conditions:-

- (i) Goods, finished or semi finished, including studded jewellery, taken out for sub- contracting shall be brought back to the EOU within 90 days.
- (ii) No cut and polished diamonds, precious and semiprecious stones (except precious, semi- precious and synthetic stones having zero duty) shall be allowed to be taken out for sub- contracting.
- (iii) Receive plain gold/ silver/ platinum jewellery from DTA/ EOU/ SEZ units in exchange of equivalent quantity of gold/ silver/ platinum, as the case may be, contained in said jewellery.
- (iv) EOUs shall be eligible for wastage as applicable as per para 4.60 of HBP for subcontracting and against exchange.
- (v) DTA unit undertaking job work or supplying jewellery against exchange of gold/ silver/ platinum shall not be entitled to deemed export benefits.

[Refer Circulars No. 65/2002-Cus. dated 07.10.2002 and No. 26/2003-Cus dated 01.04.2003]

27. Temporary removal of goods:

27.1 The EOUs, STP, EHTP units engaged in development of software are allowed to remove imported laptop computers and video projection system out of the premises temporarily without payment of duty subject to following the prescribed procedures.

[Refer Circulars No.17/98-Cus dated 16.03.1998. No.84/2000-Cus., dated 16.10.2000 and No. 17/2003-Cus.dated 24.03.2003]

28. Inter-unit transfer:

28.1 Inter-unit transfer of manufactured and capital goods from one EOU unit to another

EOU/SEZ unit is permitted in terms of Para 6.12 of the FTP. Sale of unutilized goods is also allowed from one EOU to another EOU/SEZ unit in terms of Para 6.14 of FTP. Interunit transfer of the raw material is not allowed in normal course. However, where a unit proves that it is not able to utilize the raw material, same can also be allowed to be transferred.

- 28.2 Inter-unit transfer is allowed without payment of duty. Goods supplied by one unit to another unit are treated as imported goods for the receiving unit in terms of Para 6.12(c) of the FTP. Further the value of goods obtained from another EOU is to be included in the import value for fulfilment of NFE in terms of Para 6.10 of the HBP. Further, such supplies are also counted towards FE earning provided these are permissible in terms of Para 6.15 of the HBP. However the applicable GST shall be payable.
- 28.3 In respect of a group of EOUs / EHTPs / STPs / BTP Units which source inputs centrally in order to obtain bulk discount and / or reduce cost of transportation and other logistics cost and / or to maintain effective supply chain, inter unit transfer of goods and services may be permitted on a case-to-case basis by the Unit Approval Committee. In case inputs so sourced are imported and then transferred to another unit, then value of the goods so transferred shall be taken as inflow for the unit transferring these goods and as outflow for the unit receiving these goods, for the purpose of calculation of NFE.
- 28.4 Capital goods and goods manufactured, produced, processed, or packaged in an EOU can be taken to another EOU/ SEZ unit without payment of duty under the cover of the usual commercial documents, such as, invoice & delivery challan for manufacture and export there from or for use within the unit after giving intimation to the proper officer. Both the units have to keep account of such removal and receipt Upon receipt of goods, copies of documents shall be provided to the jurisdictional office of the sending and receiving unit by way of intimation. However the applicable GST shall be payable.

29. Repair, reconditioning and re-engineering:

- 29.1 EOU/EHTP/STP/BTP units may be set up with approval of UAC to carry out reconditioning, repair, remaking, testing, calibration, quality improvement, up-gradation of technology and re- engineering activities for export in foreign currency. Provisions of 6.07, 6.08, 6.09, 6.12, 6.13 of FTP and para 6.29(a), (b), (c) and (d) of the FTP and para 6.28 of the HBP shall not, however, apply to such activities. In other words the unit undertaking these activities are not permitted sale in DTA and some other benefits.

30. Replacement/repair of imported /indigenous goods:

- 30.1 EOUs may send capital goods abroad for repair with permission of Customs authorities. Any foreign exchange payment for this purpose will also be allowed. However, no permission will be required for sending capital goods for repair within the country.
- 30.2 Removal of capital goods by all units irrespective of status within the country for the purpose of test, repair, calibration and refining on the basis of prior intimation

to the proper officer subject to maintenance of proper accounts of removal and receipts of goods is also allowed.

[Refer Circular No. 17/2006-Cus, dated 01.06.2006]

31. Special provisions relating to Gems and Jewellery EOUs:

31.1 The EOUs in Gems and Jewellery sector are allowed certain special facilities as mentioned below, with prior permission of Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner of Central Excise and Customs.

- (i) An authorized person of the EOU can import gold in primary form, upto 10 Kgs in a financial year through personal carriage, as per guidelines prescribed by RBI and DOR;
- (ii) The items of gems and jewellery to be taken out temporarily into DTA without payment of duty for the purpose of display and to be returned thereafter;
- (iii) Personal carriage of gold/ silver/ platinum jewellery, cut & polished diamonds, semi-precious stones, beads and articles as samples upto US\$ 1 million for export promotion tours and temporary display/ sale abroad with the approval of development Commissioner subject to the condition that the exporter would bring back the goods or repatriate sale proceeds within 45 days from the date of departure through normal banking channel and that the unit shall declare personal carriage of such samples to Customs while leaving country and obtain necessary endorsement;
- (iv) Export of jewellery including branded jewellery for display and sale in the permitted shops setup abroad, or in the showroom of their distributors or agents provided that items not sold abroad within 180 days, shall be re-imported within next 45 days;
- (v) Gems and jewellery manufactured in the EOUs situated in the municipal limits of Calcutta, Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai and sold to a foreign-bound passenger are allowed to be transferred to the retail outlets or showrooms set up in the departure lounge or Customs warehouse at international airports for being handed over to the said passenger for the purpose of export.
- (vi) Removal of moulds, tools, patterns, and drawings into the DTA for jobwork without payment of duty and to be returned to the unit thereafter.

32. Cost Recovery charges:

32.1 Cost recovery charges are the amount recoverable from the EOU on account of the expenses incurred by the Government for the posting of Central Excise & Customs staff at its premises to supervise their operations. The cost of posts created for EOUs has been determined at an amount equivalent to the actual salary and emoluments of the staff deployed i.e. the average pay and allowances including D.A., H.R.A etc. The EOUs pay in advance the cost recovery charges determined for the entire year. Generally, one Central Excise and Customs officer supervises the functioning of four to five units and the cost recovery charges are shared amongst them.

[Refer Instructions F.No.305/105/85-FTT, dated 10.06.1986 and F. No. 11018/63/87-Ad IV, dated 11.01.1988]

33. Supervision by Departmental officers:

- 33.1 In terms of the Manufacture and Other Operations in Warehouse Regulations, 1966 operational flexibility is provided to EOUs and they do not need to carry out manufacturing operations under physical supervision of Central Excise and Customs officers and are also exempt from locking of the warehouse, control over the issue of imported goods etc. by these officers. All the movements from and to the EOU like clearance of raw materials/ component to the job workers premises, return of goods from the job-workers' premises, clearance to other EOUs, export and sale in DTA are allowed to be made by the EOU subject to maintenance of the records.
- 33.2 In absence of physical control greater stress is given on proper maintenance of prescribed records & accounts and non-maintenance of the accounts by the units is viewed seriously. The officers incharge of EOUs are required to scrutinize/examine the accounts/ records and transactions of the EOU at least once a month and ensure that all movements of goods are recorded in the proper register. The Chief Commissioner is empowered to order special audit of the EOU by Cost Accountant nominated in this regard. Cost audit is employed as a tool to check the correctness of raw materials, quantity used, finished goods produced or other such situation.

[Refer Circular No.88/98-Cus, dated 02.12.1998]

34. Monitoring of EOUs:

- 34.1 In terms of 6 F of Appendices and ANFs, the performance of EOUs is to be reviewed by the Unit Approval Committee (UAC) of the SEZ headed by the Development Commissioner which consists of Commissioner of Central Excise and Customs or his nominee as one of the members. The purpose of review is to ensure that the performance of EOUs is effectively monitored and action is taken against the units which have contravened the provisions of the FTP/HBP and the Customs Law/ Procedures. Besides, such monitoring gives an opportunity to the Government to discuss and help resolve the problems/ difficulties being faced by the EOUs. The idea is to remove all bottlenecks in export promotion efforts while not jeopardizing the interests of revenue.
- 34.2 In terms of Appendix- 6E, EOUs are required to submit to concerned Development Commissioner quarterly performance report [QPR] for the period ending March/June/September and December every year within 30 days of close of quarter, and annual performance report [APR] within 90 days of close of financial year failing which further imports and DTA sale are not permitted. Appendix - 6E was amended by DGFT vide Public Notice no. 36/2015-2020 dated 04.09.2018 requiring EOUs to submit a copy of QPR/APR to Jurisdictional AC/DC of Customs/Central Excise.

35. Recovery of duty forgone and penal action for abuse/diversion etc.:

35.1 EOUs are required to achieve positive NFE as stipulated in the FTP and in case of failure to do so, the duty forgone under the EOU scheme along with interest is recoverable from the units. Further, the duty is recoverable from the units in case of non receipt of imported/ indigenously procured goods in the factory premises after import/ procurement, loss of goods in transit, non accountal of imported/ indigenously procured goods, unauthorized DTA sale, clandestine removal etc. Duty can also be demanded in case of failure to utilize duty free imported/ indigenously procured goods including capital goods within the prescribed time limit. The duty is also recoverable on goods removed for job work/ display/ testing/ quality testing, but not received back in the unit within the specified period of time.

35.2 Apart from recovery of duty forgone, the law also provides for taking penal action where any EOU is found to have indulged into any fraudulent activities e.g. clandestine removal of production into DTA without payment of duties, diversion of duty free materials in transit to the unit after customs clearance or after receipt etc., not only the offending goods can be seized and confiscated, but even units penalized heavily/ prosecuted.

36. De-bonding of goods/ exit from EOU scheme:

36.1 An EOU can clear any capital goods to any other place in India or de-bond in accordance with FTP with the permission of the Development Commissioner and on payment of duty, taxes and cess but for exemption on the depreciated value.

36.2 Clearance or debonding of capital goods is allowed on payment of duty but for exemption on the depreciated value thereof, if the unit has fulfilled the positive NFE criteria taking into consideration the depreciation allowable on the capital goods at the time of clearance or deboning. In case of failure to achieve the said positive NFE, the depreciation shall be allowed on the value of capital goods in the same proportion as the achieved portion of NFE.

36.3 Clearance/ debonding of capital goods on the depreciated value proportionate to the NFE achieved by the unit which is arrived at after taking into consideration the rate of depreciation allowable on such capital goods is allowed. In case the unit has not achieved positive NFE in the above manner, the duty foregone at the time of import shall be paid on such value of goods in proportion to the non-achieved portion of NFE.

36.4 Clearance or de-bonding of capital goods in the event of Exit from EOU scheme to Export Promotion Capital Goods scheme is also allowed only when EOU has fulfilled positive NFE criteria on the date it wishes to de-bond or migrate to EPCG scheme. Thus, if a unit has not achieved NFE taking into consideration rate of depreciation allowable, it cannot exit to the EPCG scheme.

36.5 A unit is also allowed clearance or de-bonding of capital goods in the event of Exit to Advance Authorization scheme as a one time option provided the unit has fulfilled NFE criteria. Thus, if a unit has not achieved positive NFE taking into consideration rate of depreciation allowable on capital goods, it cannot exit to the Advance Authorization scheme.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2008-Cus., dated 24.7.2008]

36.6 The depreciation of computers and capital goods shall be allowed in straight line method as specified below:

(i) For computer and computer peripherals:

For every quarter in the first year @ 10%
 For every quarter in the second year @ 8%
 For every quarter in the third year @ 5%
 For every quarter in the fourth and fifth year @ 1%.

(ii) For capital goods other than computer and computer peripherals:

For every quarter in the first year @ 4%
 For every quarter in the second year @ 3%
 For every quarter in the third year @ 3%
 For every quarter in the fourth and fifth year @ 2.5 %
 and thereafter for every quarter @ 2%

36.7 For the purpose of computing rate of depreciation for any part of a quarter, a full such quarter is taken into account. There is no upper limit for such depreciation and depreciation upto 100% could be allowed.

36.8 Raw materials, semi-finished and finished goods including empty cones, containers suitable of repeated use lying in stock at the time of de-bonding can also be cleared on payment of duty but for exemption

36.9 Used packing materials such as cardboard boxes, polyethylene bags of a kind unsuitable for repeated use can be cleared without payment of duty.

36.10 As per para 6.17(e) of FTP and 6K of Appendices and ANFs, an EOU can opt out of the scheme after taking approval of the Development Commissioner. Such exit is permitted subject to payment of the duties and the industrial policy in force at the time of exit. The Development Commissioner first gives permission for "in principle" de--bonding then unit is required to pay all pending Customs/ Central Excise duties to obtain no-dues certificate from Central Excise & Customs authorities. Thereafter the Development Commissioner permits final de-bonding.

36.11 If the unit has not achieved the export obligation, it is also liable to pay penalty under Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act at the time of exit.

36.12 After obtaining in principle de-bonding order, the unit is required to assess the duty liability by itself and submit such details to jurisdictional Customs/ Central Excise authority. The Assistant/ Deputy Commissioner of Central Excise and Customs is required to confirm the duty liability within 15 days of the receipt of the details of assessment from the unit and issue 'No dues Certificate' to the unit. In case of any discrepancy, it has to be conveyed to the unit within 15 days.

[Refer Circular No. 07/2006-Customs dated 13.01.2006]

27

International Passenger Facilitation



Chapter 27: International Passenger Facilitation

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Customs is mandated to ensure passengers entering or leaving India carry on person/handbag or accompanied baggage, goods in accordance with the permissible quantity/value and legal provisions and do not attempt to smuggle prohibited or banned or sensitive goods. Also, all passengers including businessmen, trade delegations, professionals expect speedy Customs clearance. Thus, Customs officials at the airports have a challenging role of ensuring quick clearance and passenger facilitation, as well as enforcing the Customs Act, 1962 and various allied laws that protect the interests of society/economy/revenue.
- 1.2 Over the time Indian Customs have aligned its procedures in tune with the best international practices in terms of duty free baggage allowances and other facilities and procedures. Steps have also been taken to educate general public and incoming and outgoing passengers of the extant Customs rules and regulations. In this direction Customs prominently display the relevant provisions/baggage allowances and list of prohibited/restricted items (endangered species or articles made from flora and fauna such as ivory, musk, reptile skins, furs, shahtoosh, antiques, satellite phones, etc.) at all international airport, with the “dos and don’ts” for benefit of passengers. A booklet on “Customs Guide to Travelers” is also brought out periodically and circulated at airports as well as to our Embassies/Consulates abroad. Passenger related Customs information is also made available on the CBIC's web-site www.cbic.gov.in.

2. Clearance of arriving passengers:

- 2.1 Airlines generally provide the Customs Baggage Declaration Form to the passengers in the aircraft itself. All passengers who come to India and have anything to declare or are carrying dutiable or prohibited goods must fill up the same clearly mentioning the quantity and value of goods brought.

On landing, the passenger takes delivery of baggage, if any, from the conveyer belt and approaches the Customs where the passenger exercises the option of seeking clearance through the Green Channel or through the Red Channel.

- 2.2 The Green Channel or Walk Through Channel applies to passengers who have nothing to declare and are carrying dutiable goods within the prescribed free allowance. On the basis of their Oral Declaration/Declaration on Customs Baggage Declaration Form such passengers cross the Green Channel without any question being asked by Customs and exit the airport after handing over the Customs Baggage Declaration Form to the Customs Officer/Sepoy at the exit.
- 2.3 The Red Channel is meant for passengers who have something to declare or are carrying goods in excess of the duty free allowance. The passenger hands over Customs Baggage Declaration Form to the officer on duty at this Channel. In case the Form is incomplete the Customs Officer helps record the Oral Declaration (O.D) of the passenger and thereafter countersigns/stamps the same, after taking the passenger's signature. In order to identify the frequent “short visit” passengers

the Customs Officer also scrutinizes the passport/ other travel documents of the passengers. The declaration of goods and their values is generally accepted and duty assessed. On payment of applicable duty the passenger is allowed clearance.

- 2.4 Any passenger found walking through the Green Channel with dutiable/prohibited goods or found mis declaring the quantity, description or value of dutiable goods at the “Red Channel” (the baggage is examined where misdeclaration is suspected), is liable to strict penal action including arrest/prosecution apart from seizure/confiscation of the offending goods depending upon gravity of violation detected. In case the passenger brings any goods in baggage that are essentially for commerce and not for personal use, or imports goods in commercial quantity, these goods become liable to confiscation and the passenger liable to strict penal action. Only bonafide baggage items for personal use or use by members of his family are allowed to be imported as baggage. In case of frequent “short visit” passengers and repeat offenders, the Customs officers would impose higher levels of fines and penalties and for deterrent effect even consider prosecution in a Court of law.

[Refer Circular No. 08/2016-Customs dated 08.03.2016]

3. Duty free allowances and entitlements for Indian Residents and Foreigners Residing in India:

- 3.1 The duty free entitlement of passengers “Indian resident or a foreigner residing in India or a tourist of Indian origin, not being an infant” includes articles in his bona fide baggage i.e. used personal effects (excluding required for satisfying the daily necessities of life, and travel souvenirs. In addition, articles other than those mentioned in Annexure I of the Baggage Rules, 2016 valued at up to Rs. 50,000/- are allowed free of duty if carried as accompanied baggage of such passenger. However, a tourist of foreign origin is allowed articles other than those mentioned in Annexure I valued at up to Rs. 15,000/- free of duty if carried as accompanied baggage.

Passengers i.e. an Indian resident or a foreigner residing in India or a tourist, not being an infant arriving from Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar, by routes other than by land, the free allowance for articles other than those mentioned in Annexure I is Rs. 15,000/- and for such passengers arriving by land, only used personal effects shall be allowed duty free. An infant passenger (child not more than two years of age) shall be allowed only personal effects duty free.

The free allowance of a passenger shall not be allowed to pool with the free allowance of any other passenger.

- 3.2 In addition to the above, such passengers are allowed the following quantities of tobacco products and alcohols within the aforesaid duty-free allowances:
- (i) 100 cigarettes sticks or 25 cigars or 125 gms tobacco.
 - (ii) Alcoholic liquor and wines upto 2 litres.
- 3.3 The items that are not allowed free of duty include firearms, cartridges of firearms, cigarettes/ cigars/ tobacco or alcoholic liquor and wines that is in excess of what is allowed within the free allowance, gold or silver, in any form (other than

ornaments) unless specified otherwise.

- 3.4 The bonafide baggage items that are in excess of the duty free allowance can be cleared on payment of a uniform rate of Customs duty that is currently @35%, except for items like liquor, cigarette etc. that are charged to a higher rate of duty as applicable to imports other than as baggage.
- 3.5 Duty free baggage allowances and entitlements for Indian Residents and Foreigners Residing in India has been disallowed in respect of Flat Panel (LCD/LED/Plasma) Television.

[Refer Notification No. 84/2013-Cus(N.T.), dated 19.08.2013]

4. Import of jewellery/gold/silver:

An Indian passenger who has been residing abroad for over 1 year is allowed to bring jewellery, free of duty, in bonafide baggage upto a weight of twenty grams with a value cap of Rs.50,000/- in the case of a male passenger or forty grams with a value cap of Rs.1 lakh in the case of a lady passenger.

5. Allowances and entitlements on Transfer of Residence (TR):

A person who is engaged in a profession abroad, or is transferring his residence to India shall, on return, be allowed clearance free of duty in addition to what he is allowed under Rule 3 or as the case may be, under Rule 4, articles in his bonafide baggage to the extent mentioned in column (2) subject to the conditions, if any, as mentioned in column (3) and the relaxation to the extent mentioned in column 4 of the given Appendix in Baggage Rules,2016 given as per Notification No. 30/2016-Customs (N.T.) dated 1.3.2016 as amended by Notification No. 43/2016-Customs (N.T) dated 31.3.2016 read with corrigendum dated. 1.4.2016.

6. Import of baggage of deceased person:

- 6.1 In terms of Notification No.21/2002-Cus, dated 1-3-2002 used, bonafide personal and household articles of a deceased person are allowed free of duty subject to the condition that a certificate from the concerned Indian Embassy / High Commission is produced regarding the ownership of the goods by the deceased person.

7. Import of unaccompanied baggage:

- 7.1 The unaccompanied baggage is required to have been in the possession abroad of the passenger and dispatched within 1 month of his/her arrival in India or within such further period as the Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs may allow. The unaccompanied baggage may land in India upto 2 months before arrival of the passenger or within such period, not exceeding 1 year, as may be permitted by the Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs by recording the reasons if he is satisfied that the passenger was prevented from arriving in India within the period of 2 months due to circumstances beyond his control which necessitated a change in the travel schedule of the passenger.
- 7.2 No free allowance is admissible in respect of unaccompanied baggage, which is charged the normal baggage rate of duty (35% ad valorem, at present).

8. Import of foreign exchange/currency:

- 8.1 Any person can bring into India foreign exchange without any limit. However, declaration of foreign exchange/currency is required to be made in the prescribed Currency Declaration Form in the following cases:
- (a) Where the value of foreign currency notes exceeds US\$ 5000/- or equivalent; and
 - (b) Where the aggregate value of foreign exchange (in the form of currency notes, bank notes, traveler cheques etc.) exceeds US\$10,000/- or its equivalent.

9. Import of Indian currency:

- 9.1 The import of Indian currency is prohibited, however, passengers i.e. any person resident in India who are returning from a visit abroad (other than from Nepal and Bhutan) may bring Indian currency not exceeding Rs.25000/-.
- 9.2 A person resident outside India, not being a citizen of Pakistan and Bangladesh and also not a traveller coming from and going to Pakistan and Bangladesh, and visiting India, may bring notes of Government of India and Reserve Bank of India notes up to an 25,000 (Rupees twenty five thousand only) while entering only through an airport.

[Refer Circular No 3/2015- Customs, dated 16.01.2015]

10. Import of fire arms as baggage:

- 10.1 Import of firearms is strictly prohibited. Import of cartridges in excess of 50 is also prohibited. However, in the case of persons transferring their residence (as per conditions specified in the rules) to India for a minimum period of 1 year, one firearm of permissible bore can be allowed to be imported subject to the conditions that:
- (i) The firearm was in possession and use abroad by the passenger for a minimum period of 1 year and also subject to the condition that such firearm, after clearance, shall not be sold, loaned, transferred or otherwise parted with before 10 years of import of such firearm;
 - (ii) The firearm is subjected to applicable duty; and
 - (iii) The passenger has a valid arms licence from the local authorities in India.
- 10.2 The facility is import of firearm through baggage route under transfer of residence shall be available only once in the lifetime.
- 10.3 Passengers importing a firearm as baggage on transfer of residence are permitted to dispose the same after 10 years of import. The disposal will be to persons legally entitled to possess the firearm. The condition that no disposal can take place till ten years of import may be endorsed on the arms licence of the passenger at the time of granting the facility under transfer of residence.

[Refer Circular No.4/2013-Cus, dated 15.01.2013]

11. Import of pet animals as baggage:

- 11.1 Import of domestic pets like dogs, cats, birds etc. (two numbers) is allowed as baggage only by persons transferring their residence to India after two years of continuous stay abroad subject to production of the required health certificate from the country of origin and examination of said pets by the concerned Quarantine Officer at this end.
- 11.2 Re-import of pets as baggage is allowed subject to establishment of identity of pets by Customs authorities, production of the required health certificate from the country of export and examination of said pets by the concerned Quarantine Officer at this end.

[Refer Circular No.15/2013-Cus, dated 08.04.2013 and Circular No. 25/2013-Cus dated 01.07.2013]

12. Detained baggage:

- 12.1 There may be occasions when the passenger is not in a position to clear his baggage for any reason e.g. inability to pay the Customs duty demanded. In such a situation, the passenger may request the Customs to detain his baggage either for re-export at the time of his departure from India or for clearance subsequently on payment of duty. The detained baggage would be examined and its full details inventoried before being taken in the custody of Customs.

13. Mishandled baggage:

- 13.1 There are numerous occasions when passenger baggage gets lost or mishandled by the Airlines. In all such cases the passenger is required to obtain a certificate to that effect from the airlines and get it countersigned by Customs indicating specifically the unutilized portion of the free allowance. This would enable the passenger to avail the unutilised portion of the duty free allowance when his baggage is delivered by the airlines.

14. Clearance of departing passengers:

- 14.1 On the departure side, the principal task of Customs is enforcement related. These include checks to prevent narcotic drug trafficking, smuggling of other sensitive items such as Indian including foreign currency, wild life products, antiques etc. Customs also plays an important role in facilitating the re-import of the high valued articles including jewelry, being carried out of the country by issuing to the departing passengers a re-export certificate.

15. Export of gold jewellery as baggage:

- 15.1 There is no value limit on the export of gold jewellery by a passenger through the medium of baggage so long as it constitutes the bonafide baggage of the passenger

16. Export of currency:

- 16.1 Export of Indian currency is strictly prohibited. However, Indian residents going abroad are allowed to carry Indian currency not exceeding Rs.25,000/-
- 16.2 Indians going abroad are permitted to take with them foreign currency without any

limit so long as the same has been purchased from an authorized foreign exchange dealer

- 16.3 Tourists while leaving India are allowed to take with them foreign currency not exceeding the amount brought in by them at the time of their arrival in India.
- 16.4 A person resident outside India, not being a citizen of Pakistan and Bangladesh and also not traveller coming from and going to Pakistan and Bangladesh, and visiting India may take outside India notes of Government of India and Reserve Bank of India notes up to an amount not exceeding Rs. 25,000 (Rupees twenty five thousand only while exiting only through an airport.

[Refer Circular No 3/2015- Customs, dated 16.01.2015]

17. Customs Baggage Declaration Form:

- 17.1 The Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations, 2013 which is notified to be effective from 1-3- 2014 prescribes a Baggage Declaration Form that will be required to be filled up by all incoming passengers. This new Form has been necessitated on account of the BOI/ MHA deciding to dispense with the common Immigration/Customs declaration form.

[Refer Notifications No. 90/2013-Cus(N.T.), dated 29.08.2013, No.133/2013-Cus (N.T.), dated 30.12.2013, No. 30/2016- Customs (N.T.), dated the 01.03.2016, No. 31/2016 Customs dated 01.03.2016, No. 43/2016- Customs dated 31.03.2016 and Circular No. 5/2014 Cus., dated 27.02.2014]

18. Application of Baggage Rules to members of the crew. _

- 1) These rules shall also apply to the members of the crew engaged in a foreign going conveyance for importation of their baggage at the time of final pay off on termination of their engagement.
- 2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-rule (1), a member of crew of a vessel or an aircraft other than those referred to in sub-rule(1), shall be allowed to bring articles like chocolates, cheese, cosmetics and other petty gift items for their personal or family use which shall not exceed the value of one thousand and five hundred rupees.

19. Setting up of Help Desk:

- 19.1 For a renewed emphasis on improving the efficiency of Customs officers as well as their behavior towards international passengers, it was decided that:
- (i) The Chief Commissioners of Customs with international airports in their charge shall ensure that every Customs officer newly posted at the international airports mandatorily undergoes training in the relevant rules and regulations as well as in the manner of dealing with international passengers. The emphasis should be on sensitizing the Customs officers to deal with all arriving passengers and especially international passengers in a polite, professional and pro-active facilitative manner. These training programmes should be repeated on 6-monthly intervals. Since multiple agencies function at international airports, it would also be useful to coordinate interactive sessions involving officials of other agencies so that collectively a good

impression is made on international passengers. The Chief Commissioner of Customs should coordinate these training programmes with NACEN, but should also take initiative to organize in-house programmes. ‘

- (ii) Customs should set up a “Help Desk” in a prominent place immediately after immigration in the arrival hall and similarly in the departure hall of international airports. There should also be a signboard to guide the international passengers to the “Help Desk”. Further, the Customs officer(s) manning the “Help Desk” should be properly selected and must have in his/her possession required forms and information to guide international passengers.

[Refer Instruction F.No. 450/148/2014-Cus IV/ dated 19.09.2014]

28

Setting up of ICDs/CFSs/AFS



Chapter 28: Setting up of ICDs/CFSS/AFS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) under ministry of Commerce and Industry was constituted in 1992 to act as a single window for clearance of proposals to set up Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Container Freight Stations (CFSs) and Air Freight Stations (AFSs). The Ministry of Commerce and Industry Guidelines, 1992 prescribed the requirements for setting up of the ICDs and CFSs. The matters relating to setting up of ICDs/CFSS/AFSs were brought under CBIC in 2018. Accordingly, the Board had reconstituted the Inter-Ministerial Committee vide order issued under F.No. 434/04/2018-Cus.IV dated 20.06.2018.
- 1.2. In the last two decades, both the cargo volumes and capacities of ICDs/CFSS have increased manifold. A few key initiatives transforming the manner of trade in recent years, such as implementation of the Authorized Economic operator (AEO) programme, rising penetration of the Direct Port Delivery (DPD) and Direct Port Entry(DPE) initiatives, Self-Sealing (RFID seals), Self- Assessment, Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS) and RMS based facilitation have completely changed the operation of Export-Import logistics. The CBIC is also targeting higher DPD, DPE numbers with minimum but more effective Customs interventions aided by technological measures.
- 1.3. Similarly, physical infrastructure has undergone exponential improvements with the development of expressways, national highways connecting ports to hinterland. Many new private ports & terminals within the existing ports have come up on both Western and Eastern coasts of the country. The operationalisation of Western and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridors in near future is expected to completely change the dynamics of cargo movement.
- 1.4. At present, majority of CFSs are located up to 50 kms away from the port and are concentrated in high numbers in the western and southern India. ICDs on the other hand are concentrated in the northern hinterland. Similarly, the traffic across ICDs is also not distributed evenly, only 25 ICDs cater 83% of the total volume (in terms of Shipping Bills and Bills of Entries).
- 1.5. Therefore, on account of plethora of changes in the policy, technology landscape and the logistics ecosystem over the time, there is a need for revising the policies and procedure for setting up of new ICDs/CFSS/AFSs to meet the requirement of the changing paradigm and the aspirations of the trade.
- 1.6. Accordingly, the new policy:
 - i. takes into account the present capacity, future growth potential and regional imbalances and also addresses the need for bringing uniformity, transparency and seamless approval process;
 - ii. addresses the identified regulatory and logistics concerns associated with the hard and soft infrastructure of ICDs/CFSS/AFSs in India;
 - iii. establishes a framework of functional requirements pertaining to the design and operation of dry ports, as well as establish certain processes to enable

sustainable growth of the sector; and

- iv. aims to lay down appropriate institutional, administrative and regulatory frameworks for development and smooth operation of ICDs/CFSs/AFSs, including procedures for regulatory inspection and the execution of applicable customs control and formalities.

2. Distinction between ICD, CFS and AFS

2.1. Inland Container Depot (ICD)

- 2.1.1. An off seaport (or port) facility having such fixed installations or otherwise, equipment, machinery etc. providing services for handling / clearance of laden import, export containers for home use, warehousing, temporary admissions, re-export etc under customs control and with storage facility for customs bonded or non-bonded cargo.
- 2.1.2. An ICD is a “self-contained Customs station” like a port or air cargo unit where filing of Customs manifests, Bills of Entries, Shipping Bills and other declarations, assessment and all the activities related to clearance of goods for home use, warehousing, temporary admissions, reexport, temporary storage for onward transit and outright export, transshipment, etc., take place. An ICD would have its own automated system with a separate station code (such as INTKD6, INSNF6 etc.) being allotted by Ministry of Commerce and with in-built capacity to enter examination reports and enable assessment of documents, processing of manifest, amendments, etc.

2.2. Container Freight Station (CFS)

- 2.2.1. An off seaport (or port) facility having such fixed installations or otherwise, equipment, machinery etc., providing services for handling / clearance of laden import, export containers for home use, warehousing, temporary admissions, re-export etc under customs control and with storage facility for customs bonded or non-bonded cargo.
- 2.2.2. Though by definition, both ICD and CFS are similar, a CFS is only a Customs area notified under section 8 of the Customs Act, 1962, located in the jurisdiction of a Commissioner of Customs exercising control over a specified Customs port, airport, LCS/ICD while an ICD is notified under section 7 of the Customs Act, 1962. A CFS cannot have an independent existence and has to be linked to a Customs station within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Customs. It is an extension of a Customs port set up with the main objective of decongestion. In a CFS only a part of the Customs processes mainly the examination of goods is normally carried out by Customs besides stuffing/de-stuffing of containers and aggregation/segregation of cargo. Thus, Custom’s functions relating to processing of manifest, import/ export declarations and assessment of Bill of Entry/Shipping Bill are performed in the Custom House/Custom Office that exercises jurisdiction over the parent port/airport/ICD/LCS to which the said CFS is attached. In the case of Customs Stations having facility of automated processing of documents, terminals are provided at such CFSs for recording the result of examination, etc. In some CFSs, extension Service Centers are

available for filing documents, amendments etc. However, the assessment of the documents etc. is carried out centrally.

- 2.2.3. An ICD may also have several CFSs attached to it within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Customs just as in the case of a port.

2.3. Air Freight Station (AFS)

- 2.3.1. An off-airport common user facility equipped with fixed installations of minimum requirement and offering services for handling and temporary storage of import and export cargo etc.

- 2.3.2. While CFS handles maritime cargo, an AFS is meant to handle air cargo.

2.4. Important centers of activity relating to ICDs/CFSs/AFSs

- 2.4.1. Rail Siding (in case of a rail-based terminal): The place where container trains are received, dispatched and handled in a terminal. Similarly, the containers are loaded on and unloaded from rail wagons at the siding through overhead cranes and / or other lifting equipment.

- 2.4.2. Container Yard: Container yard occupies the largest area in the ICD/CFS. It is stacking area where the export containers are aggregated prior to dispatch to port, import containers are stored till Customs clearance and where empty containers await onward movement. Likewise, some stacking areas are earmarked for keeping special containers such as refrigerated, hazardous, overweight/over-length etc.

- 2.4.3. Warehouse: Public warehouse appointed under section 57 or private warehouse licensed under section 58 is a covered space/shed where export cargo is received and import cargo stored/delivered; containers are stuffed/stripped or reworked; LCL exports are consolidated and import LCLs are unpacked; and cargo is physically examined by Customs. Export and import consignments are generally handled either at separate areas in a warehouse or in different nominated warehouses/sheds.

- 2.4.4. Gate Complex: The gate complex regulates the entry and exits of road vehicles carrying cargo and containers through the terminal. It is place where documentation, security and container inspection procedures are undertaken.

3. Functions and benefits of ICDs/CFSs/AFSs

- 3.1. The primary functions of ICD/CFS/AFS include receipt and dispatch/delivery of cargo, stuffing and stripping of containers, transit operations by rail/road to and from serving ports; customs clearance, consolidation and desegregation of loose Container Load (LCL) cargo, temporary storage of cargo and containers, reworking of containers; and maintenance and repair of container units.

- 3.2. ICD/CFS/AFS, inter alia, offer the following benefits to the trade, namely, serving as concentration points for long distance cargo movement and transit facility,

making available customs clearance facility available near the centers of production and consumption free movement of cargo at gateway ports and decongesting the ports, reducing the costs of transport, inventory, demurrage and level of pilferage; enabling intermodal transshipments & repositioning of containers for shipping lines.

4. Criteria for new ICDs/CFSS/AFSS

4.1. Geographical Criteria for approvals

- 4.1.1. It has been seen in the past that the tendency of developers to set up facilities in few selected areas led not only to proliferation at those centers but also has resulted in investments being made near big cities/ports, far from the manufacturing/exporting units. Moreover, such distorted penetration results in higher costs for inland units apart from creating manpower issues for the departments.
- 4.1.2. Therefore, it has been decided to group the country in three types of areas for the purposes of opening of new ICDs/CFSS as under following:
- Green Zone: States low on ICD/CFSS infrastructure. These will be open for proposals (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Telengana, Tripura and West Bengal, and Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh);
 - Blue Zone: States where the proposals can be accepted only for specific trade generating locations with no existing facilities or with over utilized facilities (Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala Odisha, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh and Union Territories of Diu and Daman, Pudhucherry); and
 - Red Zone: The identified states have adequate ICD/CFSS infrastructure. These may be closed for any new CFSS development indefinitely. However, in exceptional cases IMC may approve the setting up of ICDs in trade generating locations with high export & import potential and need of new facilities (all the states and union territories not listed in Green and Blue Zones).
- 4.1.3. Distance of ICD from ports - Rail transport is price competitive with road transport when the lead distance is more than 200 kms. Rail connected ICDs are favored at hinterland locations with lead distances up to 1,500 kms in north India. The development of ICDs within 200 kms of a connecting/Nearest serving seaport shall be discouraged. The measure is expected to further encourage DPD & DPE movement between hinterland & ports. For calculation of distance, the chargeable route by rail and shortest road (National Highway / State Highway) from serving port shall be considered. This rule shall be applicable across all geographical zones.
- 4.1.4. Distance between ICDs - No Greenfield ICD shall be permitted to be established within 100kms distance from existing ICD. Distance will be referred as chargeable railways route (both directions) between ICDs and shortest road distance (National Highway / State Highway, both directions) in case of road linked ICD. This rule shall be applicable across all Geographical zones.

- 4.1.5. Development in States with low Logistics Infrastructure - To support infrastructure development in states with limited logistics infrastructure, priority should be given to Identifying and promoting ICD/CFS/AFS facilities where presence of such facilities is limited. These are clustered in Green Zone as proposed above. IMC can give relaxation on Distance rules in Green Zone.
- 4.1.6. National Logistics Action Plan/Policy - The approval and notification of all new ICD/CFS, including existing and new MMLPs will be processed in consonance with the national logistics action plan/policy.
- 4.1.7. Inland National Waterways - Development of ICDs based on Inland National Waterways as mode of transportation will be encouraged with relaxation being given on Geographical Zone& Distance rules.
- 4.1.8. Railways Freight Corridors - Approval of Greenfield ICDs directly along/Linked with DFCs (Eastern & Western DFCs and any new operationalized railways freight corridor) will be accorded with no more than one ICD directly connected with these corridors within chargeable distance of 100 kms in both directions. It is expected that some of existing ICDs will get connected directly to freight corridors and while some will operate in Hub & Spoke model in future. With priority of increasing utilization of Freight corridors as they operationalize and lowering the logistics costs, IMC can accord approvals to these facilities in any zone while maintaining distance rules on the corridors.
- 4.1.9. Exceptions - IMC can approve creation of additional facilities near existing ICDs (all 3 zones) if the demand exceeds the existing capacity of ICDs/CFSs in trade generating location/area. This can be determined by analyzing the existing utilization of ICDs in designated trade generating location/area.
- 4.1.10. In no case a new CFS shall be set up which is linked to an ICD. Only CFSs connected to ports in the permissible Zones (as mentioned above) shall be allowed after considering existing capacity and utilization parameters.
- 4.1.11. AFSs are relatively new to India, hence, in the case of AFSs, the IMC while considering the application, will only take into account the demand-supply gap and take appropriate decision.

4.2 Volume

- 4.2.1. The facility must be economically viable to manage and attractive to the users, to the railways for full train load movements; to other transport operators; seaports; shipping lines; freight forwarders etc. and must operate at certain minimum amount of traffic. The applicants must therefore study carefully the viability of the project from the point of view of the TEU traffic availability.
- 4.2.2. In the time of growing international trade, the creation of any infrastructure facility must commensurate with the generation of demand in actual terms. This is particularly important as such facilities have a long gestation period for being fully operationalized. Accordingly, the minimum threshold

performance shall be 7200 TEUs/consignments¹ per year (two way) for an ICD and 1200 TEUs/consignments per year (two way) for a CFS. However, no such threshold performance is prescribed for an AFS.

4.3 Land

- 4.3.1. The minimum area requirement is seven hectares for ICD having minimum area of four hectares as Customs Notified Area and minimum one hectare nominated for DPD & DPE nominated space. For states in Green Zone, ICD with three hectares for customs notified area and one hectare for DPD & DPE may be considered. The minimum area requirement shall be two hectares for a CFS. For AFS 1000 Sq. meters of covered area each for imports and exports respectively shall be made available.
- 4.3.2. Ownership of Land - The applicant must have the legal rights over the land which is proposed for ICD/CFS construction. If the land is not owned and the land is leased, the lease agreement with lessor must be for period of 30 years. Change of Land Use certificate, wherever required shall accompany the application and land should be free from acquisition proceeding at date of application. The land parcels should be contiguous with only exception for setting up nonbonded storage facility.

4.4 Other Criteria

- 4.4.1. Legal entity- The applicant must be a legal entity in India under applicable law. The entity must possess a valid GST registration and should have been operating for a minimum period of three years.
- 4.4.2. Prior experience - The applicant must have prior experience of operating as CCSP or should have other trans-border logistics experience such as logistics service provider including customs brokers, transporters, freight forwarders, shipping lines and port terminal operators.

5. Application and Approval Procedures

5.1 Setting up of new ICD/CFS/AFS

- 5.1.1. The application for setting up of new ICD/CFS/AFS shall be submitted to the Member (Customs), CBIC, Office of the Joint Secretary(Customs), Room No. 156B, North Block, New Delhi email: jscus@nic.in, in the format provided in Annexure-I. Application shall also accompany a Detailed Project Report (DPR) in format provided in Annexure-II. The application should be submitted in six copies with one advance copy to jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs for his recommendation on feasibility and five copies to Member (Customs), CBIC. No application fee will be charged from the applicants. Without waiting for the report from jurisdictional Commissioner, the other copies of the application shall be sent by office of the Joint Secretary(Customs) to all the members of IMC for their comments.
- 5.1.2. Applicants shall familiarize themselves with statutory Customs requirements in relation to bonding, transit bond, security, insurance, other

¹ Consignments here refers to Shipping Bill/ Bill of Entry

necessary procedural requirements and cost recovery charges payable before filing the application.

5.1.3. The jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs, upon receipt of the advance copy, will examine the feasibility of the proposal and send his recommendations, along with reasons thereof, to Member (Customs), CBIC, within 30 days of receipt of the application. The recommendations of jurisdictional Commissioner shall take into account manpower availability, existing ICD/ CFS/AFS capacity and its utilization, future projections, reduction in logistics cost and the impact on local trade stakeholders of the new proposed facility in lines with policy. The jurisdictional Commissioner shall do his own analysis based on historical data and existing facilities working in the vicinity. The jurisdictional Commissioner while forwarding his recommendation shall make a categorical statement whether an application merits consideration or rejection.

5.1.4. On receipt of the proposal, the members of the IMC will furnish their comments within 30 days.

5.1.5. Proposals for setting up ICD/CFS/AFS will be considered on merits by the IMC. Normally, the IMC meetings will be held twice in a year. The committee may approve or refuse to grant approval for setting up of ICD/CFS/AFS. The recommendations of the jurisdictional Commissioner will be a relevant factor but not necessarily binding on the IMC. The IMC can independently decide about approval/rejection of any project based on the valid considerations.

The applicant shall not make any investment before obtaining the approval from IMC. The “in principle” approval from the jurisdictional Customs Commissioner regarding the feasibility of the proposed facility shall not be considered as final. Any investment made by the prospective developer before the approval of IMC shall be at the risk of developer and as a result would not constitute a relevant factor for approval of the facility.

5.1.6. On approval of a proposal, a Letter of Intent (LOI) will be issued to the applicant with conditions as may be considered necessary, which will enable applicant to initiate steps to create infrastructure. The applicant would be required to set up the infrastructure within one year from the date of approval.

5.1.7. The LOI will have a validity of 12 months. It will be further extendable by a maximum of 12 months once only. Only in exceptional cases, IMC would further extend it by 6 months in one go for maximum 2 terms. Therefore, no extension after this time will be provided and proposal will be deemed as rejected. Once rejected, new proposal must be submitted afresh.

5.1.8. The IMC has right to suspend or revoke the approval granted in the following cases:

- i. on breach of any conditions of applicable law or contained herein; or
- ii. the setting up/continuance of the ICD/CFS/AFS would be prejudicial to public interest; or

- iii. if the ICD/CFS/AFS entity or any of its promoters is convicted of an offence under the provision of any Act in force.

5.2 Applications for other purposes

5.2.1. Change of CFS to ICD and vice versa and notification of AFS in Existing ICD - When a CFS operator wants to upgrade the facility to ICD or convert the ICD to CFS, he shall approach the IMC for approval for such change. Such applications shall be processed in the similar manner as that of a new facility.

5.2.2. Change in Ownership - Jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs can approve the change of custodian of existing facilities under section 45 of the Customs Act, 1962 and the change may be informed to the Joint Secretary(Customs). There will be no need to approach IMC for change in ownership provided the residual entity meets turnover and other requirements established within the framework of this policy. However, any pre-condition prescribed in this policy which the original developer is required to fulfill, shall be met by the new owner as well. The new owner shall ensure and confirm that all the liabilities under the Customs Act, 1962 and regulations thereof, payable by the existing operator are duly discharged before such change of ownership.

5.2.3. Change in Location - For change of location of an existing facility, the operator of the facility shall approach IMC. If the new location is in the same locality of the existing cluster of CFSs/AFSs, and serves to the same gateway port, the IMC after consulting the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs, may approve such request. However, in case such change of location involves substantial geographical change (outside existing District or involves change of port to which the CFS serves), it should be treated as closure of the existing facility and setting up of a new facility.

6. Post Approval Obligations

6.1. Operationalising the facility

6.1.1. The applicant shall take all necessary actions to operationalise the facility within the validity period of the LOI. The applicant must put up the required infrastructure and meet the regulatory requirements in compliance with applicable law to become functional. The Check list for various requirements is given at the Appendix-III.

6.1.2. The applicant, after receipt of LOI, shall send monthly progress report to jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs in the proforma as may be prescribed by him. Failure to submit progress report would have an adverse effect in cases where extension is to be sought. Noncompliance to send reports shall be a valid ground for rejection of request for extension.

6.1.3. After development of infrastructure as per requirements, applicant shall

apply to CBIC for notification of facility as ICD or AFS under Section 7(aa) of Customs Act, 1962 through the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.

- 6.1.4. Further, applicant will approach jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs to issue notifications under section 8 of the Customs Act 1962 for approving landing place and specifying limits of Customs area and under Section 45(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 for declaration as “Custodian”
- 6.1.5. These notifications will be issued only if the Board or the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be, is fully satisfied with the readiness of the facility and fulfillment of compliances under the Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations (HCCAR), 2009.
- 6.1.6. Further, after the issuance of LOI and before the issuance of the notifications as mentioned above, the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs shall coordinate with the Directorate General of Human Resource Development (DGHRD) for creating the required numbers of cost recovery posts.
- 6.1.7. The jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs while forwarding the recommendation for issuance of notification shall:
 - a. satisfy himself about the readiness of the facility including fulfillment of the requirements listed at Annexure-III;
 - b. ensure that the required number of cost recovery posts are created; and
 - c. confirm that once the facility is notified the Commissionerate will be able to deploy the officers.

6.2. Regulatory and other compliances

- 6.2.1 The facility operator who is appointed as custodian of the goods meant for import and export shall be required to comply with provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, rules and regulations thereof and circulars/instructions issued from time to time by the Board in relation to the custody, storage, handling and disposal of cargo including the Handling of Cargo in Customs Area Regulations, 2009.
- 6.2.2 The operator shall comply with the laws relating to Indian Railways (for safety of siding and smooth rake operations in the facility), labor, environment (including the laws relating to the storage of hazardous goods, legal metrology (certification for installed weighing instruments including weight bridges etc.) food safety (certification of facility by FSSAI for storage) etc.
- 6.2.3 The operator shall also comply with the circulars/instructions issued by the Board on cost recovery charges from time to time for the officers deployed. The payment of cost recovery charges for the officers and staff deployed and exemption from such payment shall be governed by the extant rules, policy and circulars in this regard.

6.2.4 No alteration of the plan of the ICD / CFS shall be made without the concurrence of the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs. Further, no reduction in minimum prescribed physical area shall be allowed.

6.2.5 For Rail linked ICDs, investors will be required to provide at their own cost all infrastructure facilities including land, track, and maintenance of assets including track, rolling stock, etc. as per extant railway rules applicable to such sidings. The cost of the railway staff would be governed as per the prevailing Indian Railways policy.

6.2.6 The custodians should strictly follow any guidelines/directions issued on account of force- majeure of Government of India from time to time.

6.3. Record keeping handling, receipt and storage

6.3.1 For the proper discharge of duties, the custodian shall execute a Bond covering the value of the goods stored in the ICD/CFS with the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs. The custodian shall ensure that all goods held in the ICD/CFS are adequately covered as per extant circulars issued by the Board.

6.3.2 The custodian shall provide safe, secure and spacious place for loading, unloading and storage of the cargo.

6.3.3 The custodian shall also provide sufficient modern handling equipment in operating condition for handling the cargo in the notified area.

6.3.4 The custodian shall be responsible for the proper receipt, handling, storage and shall be accountable for the loss of imported goods after the landing and before clearance, and also for goods meant for export/transshipment. They shall also maintain proper records of all such goods including the records of goods which are cleared with the permission of the Customs or disposed of, under section 48 of the Customs Act 1962 or otherwise. Further, custodians shall share available data with the Government Departments/Agencies ensuring reasonable commercial and individual privacy.

6.3.5 If any imported goods are pilfered or lost after unloading in the customs area while in the custody of the custodian, then in terms of provisions of section 45(3) of the Customs Act 1962, they shall be liable to pay the duty on such pilfered goods.

6.4. Infrastructure and other facilities

6.4.1 The custodian shall also take steps to bring about necessary improvements in the infrastructural facilities and other amenities required to be provided to the trade and to Customs staff, as may be necessitated from time to time, consequent upon the growth in the volume of Import and Export Trade handled at the ICD/CFS.

6.4.2 In case the custodian wants to sublet any of the functions inside the customs area or connected with the customs area, the same should be done with prior approval of the Commissioner of Customs and the custodian shall remain responsible for the omissions and commissions of the said agency.

6.5. Performance Monitoring

6.5.1. The Commissioner of Customs shall ensure that annual audit/inspection of the notified facilities are conducted in terms of the circulars/ instructions issued in this regard.

6.5.2. The jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs shall, based on the findings of the annual inspection report or otherwise, take necessary remedial action including penal action, for any contravention, under the Customs Act, 1962 read with HCCAR, 2009. It may be noted that each violation shall be treated as separate for the purpose of initiating penal actions.

6.5.3. The jurisdictional Commissionerates must list out functional, non-functional and approved count of ICDs on their websites, latest figures of volume handled, Infrastructure profiles, compliance with HCCAR 2009 rules to be maintained on month on month basis on the Commissionerate's web-portal.

7. Term, renewal and de-notification of the facility

7.1. The duration of the award for the operation of the facility shall be governed by HCCAR 2009 unless otherwise mentioned in any other guidelines. The applicant shall get the award renewed by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.

7.2. At the time of renewal, the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs shall satisfy himself about the functioning of the facility including the minimum volume projected at the time of initial proposal.

7.3. The ICDs not meeting the minimum prescribed threshold performance for four consecutive financial years will be considered for de-notification by the Board based on the recommendation of the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs. As regards CFSs, jurisdictional Commissioner can de-notify the facility if it failed to meet the prescribed minimum threshold performance for four consecutive financial years. In the case of AFSs, the Board may analyze the performance of the facility and may consider the de-notification wherever necessary, based on the recommendation of the Jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs.

7.4. The jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs can order for closure of a facility when requested by a custodian. Such requests should be approved within 6 months subject to clearance of dues of Cost Recovery Charges, disposal of detained/Seized cargo & cases against CCSP if any. Jurisdictional Commissioner will take no dues certificate thereafter commissioner may denotify any CFS/AFS and in the case of ICD he shall forward the proposal for de-notification to the Board.

8. Scope and applicability

8.1. The policy and guidelines prescribed here will be applicable to all the new

proposals that are submitted to IMC after the date of issue of this circular. The proposals already submitted but are yet to be considered by the IMC shall also be governed by these guidelines. As regards the existing facilities and the proposals for which Letter of Intent has already been issued but the facilities are yet to commence their operations, shall also be governed by these guidelines to the extent to which they are applicable (such as post approval obligations, term, renewal and denotification etc). The proposals which have been approved by IMC will be scrutinized under old policy.

[Refer Circular No. 50/2020-Customs dated 05.11.2020]

9. Inspection of ICDs/CFSS/AFSS

9.1. It is necessary that each ICD/CFS is closely monitored by way of some sort of audit /visits to ensure that the performance of ICDs/CFSS is of desired standards and requested to put a system in place and take necessary action in a time bound manner.

9.2. Therefore, Board has decided to put in place a proper system for regular inspection for ICDs/CFSS. Such a system would ensure better functioning of ICDs/CFSS in future and would be of great benefit to the importers and exporters using these facilities. Periodical inspections and remedial actions would also avoid these kinds of audit objections. It will bring accountability, standardization and better facility for cross-border trading and in turn improve case of doing business.

9.2.1 The jurisdictional Commissioner at the beginning of every financial year shall chalk out an action plan to conduct inspection of ICDs/CFSS in their jurisdiction, by an officer of the rank of Deputy / Assistant Commissioner or above (who is not in-charge of such ICD/CFS) once every financial year probably in the first quarter of the financial year.

9.2.2A report on the inspection conducted shall be submitted to the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs with copy to Chief Commissioner concerned in the proforma given as per Appendix IV.

9.2.3The jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs upon receipt of the inspection report shall take remedial action wherever deficiencies are noticed including penal action on the defaulting ICDs/CFSS.

9.2.4Normally the operations and records in respect of the previous financial year shall be covered in the inspection.

9.2.5For the ICDs/CFSS, which have not been inspected/audited so far, the initial inspection shall be for the period of last five years or from the date of commencement whichever is earlier.

9.2.6The Directorate General of Performance Management during the inspections of field commissionerates, done by them shall also examine the records relating to the inspections of ICDs/CFSS.

[Refer Circular No. 44/2020-Customs dated 08.10.2020].

10. Denotification of ICDs/CFSs/AFSs

- 10.1. ICDs and CFS play a vital role in the exim trade as they store and clear import and export goods. These facilities are notified under the Customs Act, 1962 and are administered by the Customs authorities. However, at times a custodian may like to close (de-notify) the facility. The disposal of un-cleared, seized and confiscated goods import/export are prerequisites for the de-notification. Noting that this process was taking a long time which caused difficulties for the custodians, a Circular No. 20/2021-Customs dated 16.08.2021 has been issued to streamline the procedure of closure of these facilities.
- 10.2. Circular No. 20/2021-Customs dated 16.08.2021 requires a custodian intending to wind up the operation to submit an application to jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs for de-notifying the ICD/CFS. A Nodal Officer at the level of Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs would then facilitate the de-notification by coordinating the disposal of the goods lying at the facility in a time bound manner.
- 10.3. In case of ICD/AFS, the Board is the competent authority for de-notification of ICDs/AFSs and the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs can revoke the approvals granted under Sections 8 and 45 of the said Act for these facilities.
- 10.4. In the case of CFSs, the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) gives the approval for setting up of the facility. Thereafter, the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs grants approvals under Sections 8 and 45 of the said Act. Therefore, these approvals which would be akin to de-notification can be revoked by the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs without referring to the Board. However, post revocation of these approvals, an intimation shall be sent to the Board in this regard within a week of such revocation.
- 10.5. There can be two situations where de-notification of an ICD/AFS can be initiated namely, (a) on application from the custodian and (b) on the report of the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs in terms of the para no. 7.3 of Circular No. 50/2020- Customs dated 05.11.2020. Likewise, the custodian of a CFS can seek de-notification or the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs can de-notify such facility Customs in terms of the said para no. 7.3.
- 10.6. A custodian intending to wind up the operation shall submit an application to jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs in the format prescribed in the **Annexure-I** of Circular No. 20/2021-Customs dated 16.08.2021. Where a facility has not been exempted from payment of Cost Recovery Charges in terms of Circular No. 02/2021-Customs dated 19.01.2021, all pending payments, if any, of Cost Recovery Charges shall be paid upto the date of de-notification. Also, in terms of relevant guidelines prescribed vide Circular No.

02/2021-Customs dated 19.01.2021 jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs are required to assess the workload and accordingly deploy the required number of officers/staff and the payment of Cost Recovery Charges shall be for such number of officers/staff only. This guideline may be especially relevant to facilities to be de-notified due to the reduction in the work load. The application for de-notification should clearly mention that the payment of Cost Recovery Charges is up-to-date as on the date of application as well as for the subsequent period till the date of de-notification, as it is prescribed in general that such payment must be made in advance.

- 10.7. On the date of de-notification, there shall be no pending consignment of un-cleared cargo in the facility beyond the time stipulated under the said Act. Thus, the custodian should have taken all the efforts to dispose of the un-cleared cargo by following the procedure prescribed vide Circular No. 49/2018–Customs, dated 03.12.2018. However, it may so happen that the un-cleared cargo could not be disposed for want of no-objection certificates (NOC) from Customs or for any other reasons including impending auctions as per the extant guidelines. Further, there may be goods detained, seized or confiscated by various agencies lying in the facility. Even Customs office equipment, records etc. may be present in the facility. Thus, the application for de-notification shall be accompanied by three lists of goods that may be present in the facility, as per the format in **Annexure-II** of Circular No. 20/2021-Customs dated 16.08.2021.
- i. List 1: Uncleared goods pending disposal for want of Customs NOCs;
 - ii. List 2: Uncleared goods pending disposal for completion of required number of auctions; and
 - iii. List 3: Goods detained, seized or confiscated by various agencies and pending disposal.
- 10.8. Upon receipt of an application for de-notification, which shall be duly acknowledged, the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs would nominate a nodal officer of the rank of a Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs to facilitate the de-notification exercise. Such nodal officer shall act as single point of contact for the custodian during the entire process of de-notification.
- 10.9. The nodal officer, who could also be the officer in-charge of the facility, shall tally the lists of goods aforementioned with the records maintained in the facility in terms of Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009 (HCCAR). S/he shall also actively coordinate with all the agencies concerned for speedy disposal of the un-cleared, detained, seized or confiscated goods, if any. S/he shall also ensure, to the extent possible, that all the goods that are ripe for disposal are disposed of by following due procedure within four months from receipt of the application. S/he shall immediately bring any difficulty or lack of response from any agency to the notice of the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs for taking remedial action.
- 10.10. The nodal officer shall take stock of other goods such as goods detained, seized or confiscated by any agency of CBIC, samples, office equipment, furniture, office records etc. that are to be removed from the premises to be de-notified. The

jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs shall make necessary arrangements for disposal/removal of these items expeditiously.

10.11. The custodian shall, take all steps to speedily dispose all uncleared goods as per law. The facility shall not be de-notified till the disposal is completed in terms of the Circular No. 49/2018-Customs dated 03.12.2018. However, if for any substantive reason the goods are not disposed even by the end of third month of application for de-notification, the custodian would have the option to apply to the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs to allow the shifting of these uncleared goods to its own or some other facility (ICD/CFS/AFS) within the same jurisdiction. This option would be available only in exceptional cases as ordinarily the goods should be disposed after maximum four auctions. This option would be available subject to the conditions that the custodian shall get a 'no objection' in this regard from the custodian receiving the consignments; the receipt of goods by the receiving facility shall be acknowledged and accounted properly; the safe transfer and receipt of goods shall be the sole responsibility of the custodian of the facility being de-notified; and the legal responsibility of disposal of the said uncleared goods shall remain with the custodian of the facility being de-notified unless it is legally and wholly transferred to the custodian of the transferee facility with the latter's explicit acceptance to the satisfaction of the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs.

10.12. The jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs shall make best efforts to ensure removal/disposal of goods detained, seized or confiscated by any agency of CBIC, samples, office equipment, furniture, office records etc. If for some reason the disposal is not possible, steps would be taken to transfer these goods to some other secure location. Such transfer of location shall be carried out by taking all the precautions to ensure that all the relevant laws are complied with, interest of revenue is safeguarded and prosecution cases, if any are not jeopardized. The disposal/transfer shall be timed such that the facility is vacated before the end of four months from the receipt of the application. It is emphasized that the de-notification of a facility shall not be held up on account of delay on the part of the Customs to dispose/remove the goods for which it is responsible including goods detained, seized or confiscated by any agency of the CBIC.

10.13. Thus, to sum up, a facility will become ripe for de-notification if the following conditions are met, namely,

- i. The application for de-notification is complete in all respects,
- ii. There are no dues, including the duties on the uncleared goods that are eventually sold, pending to be recovered from the custodian,
- iii. All the uncleared goods lying at the facility have been cleared from the facility by disposal and/or shifting to any other facility in the jurisdiction of the Commissionerate,
- iv. All the detained/seized/confiscated goods lying at the facility are disposed and/or shifted out of the facility to another location for safe custody, and
- v. All the other items belonging to Customs such as office records, furniture etc. are removed from the facility.

- 10.14. In order to ensure undue cost overruns are avoided and the custodian intending to get the facility de-notified is not put to hardship, the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs, shall facilitate the de-notification of a facility within maximum of four months from the date of receipt of application or from the date of de-notification requested by the custodian, whichever is later. Also, it shall be ensured that there shall be no disruption in the Exim operations, if any, at the facility while the while the formalities of de-notification are being completed.
- 10.15. The jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs shall, after satisfying herself/himself that the facility is ripe for de-notification shall:
- i. revoke the approvals granted under Sections 8 and 45 of the said Act;
 - ii. forward a proposal to Director General of Human Resource Development (DGHRD), CBIC so that the sanctioned/regularized posts are surrendered in time; and
 - iii. forward (in the case of ICD and AFS) a proposal to the Board for de-notification of the facility at least two weeks before the expiry of four months from the date of application.
- 10.16. The custodian's bond and security (such as bank guarantee), if any, shall be kept live by the Customs till the resolution of disputes (show cause notice, adjudication, appeal or court case or any other liability), if any, against the custodian. Further, before cancellation of the bond and return of the security, it must be ensured that all the goods for which the custodian has taken responsibility to dispose are duly disposed as per law.

[Refer Circular No. 20/2021-Customs dated 16.08.2021, Annexure -I of CBIC Circular No. 50/2020-Customs for Appendix -I Format of Application for Setting up of an Inland Container Depot/Container Freight Station/Air Freight Station, Refer Annexure -II of CBIC Circular No. 50/2020-Customs for Appendix -II Instruction for submission of the Detailed Project Report for setting up of ICD/CFS/AFS, Annexure -III of CBIC Circular No. 50/2020-Customs for Appendix -III Checklist for the infrastructural requirements and regulations compliance, Circular No. 44/2020 dated 08.10.2020 for Appendix -IV PROFORMA FOR INSPECTION OF ICD/CFS/AFS]



29

Customs Cargo Service Providers

Chapter 29: Customs Cargo Service Providers

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in its 27th Report (2005-06) recommended formulating appropriate legal provisions and guidelines to control the activities of custodians. In pursuance of these recommendations, the Government inserted a new Section 141(2) to the Customs Act, 1962 and thereafter under its authority framed the Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009 (HCCR, 2009).
- 1.2 The HCCAR, 2009 provide for the manner in which the imported goods/ export goods shall be received, stored, delivered or otherwise handled in a Customs area. The regulations also prescribe the responsibilities of persons engaged in the aforesaid activities.

2. Salient features of the HCCAR, 2009:

- 2.1 The HCCAR, 2009 apply to all “Customs Cargo Service Providers” (CCSPs), who are persons operating in a Customs area and engaged in the handling of import/export goods. These include the custodians of imported/export goods and those handling such goods and all persons working on their behalf such as fork lift or material handling equipment operators, etc. Consolidators/ break bulk agents and other persons handling imported/export goods in any capacity in a Customs area are also covered.
- 2.2 The HCCAR, 2009 indicate various responsibilities and conditions for different kinds of CCSPs. The conditions prescribed under its Regulation 5 apply to the CCSPs who desire to be approved as custodians of imported/export cargo and thus handle goods in Customs areas. These conditions shall not apply to persons who only provide certain services on their own or on behalf of the custodians.
- 2.3 Responsibilities prescribed in Regulation 6 of the HCCAR, 2009 apply to both custodians and persons who provide various services, though certain responsibilities specifically apply to one or the other category. For example, the responsibility for safety and security, pilferage of goods under their custody, disposal of un-cleared, unclaimed or abandoned goods within the prescribed time limit, payment of cost recovery charges of the Customs officers posted in the facility are applicable to an approved custodian who handled imported or export goods. On the other hand, responsibilities for publishing or display of the schedule of charges for the activities undertaken in respect of imported/ export goods shall apply to both categories of persons. These responsibilities are aimed at expeditious clearance of goods, reduction of dwell time, transaction cost and safeguarding revenue.
- 2.4 As specified in Regulation 3 of the HCCAR, 2009, these regulations shall apply to handling of imported goods and export goods in Customs area specified under Section 8 of the Customs Act, 1962. This would cover all Customs facilities such as ports, airports, ICDs/CFSS and LCSs. Also, imported goods would cover goods under transshipment and all goods held under the custody of CCSP. However, these regulations do not apply to Customs bonded warehouse or to

the warehoused goods covered by Chapter IX of the Customs Act, 1962.

- 2.5 Major ports notified under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 and airports notified under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994 will continue to be authorized to function as custodians under their respective Acts and these regulations shall not impact their approval as a custodian. Thus, in terms of Section 45 of the Customs Act, 1962, the Port Trusts of the notified major ports and the Airports Authority of India shall not be required to make an application under Regulation 4 or 9 of the HCCR, 2009 for approval or renewal under these regulations. However, they would be required to discharge the responsibilities cast upon them as specified in its Regulation 6.
- 2.6 Regulation 5 of the HCCAR, 2009 provides the conditions to be fulfilled by an applicant who wishes to be appointed as a custodian of the imported/ export goods in a Customs area. This contains an exhaustive list of infrastructure and operational requirements for efficient handling of imported or export goods, though sufficient discretion is provided for the Commissioner of Customs to decide on the nature of infrastructure and equipment required. The requirement may vary between Customs areas at different places in the country. The Commissioner of Customs can also specify general standards or requirements such as height of boundary wall, quantum and specifications of material handling and other equipment etc., to ensure the facilities are adequate for effective and efficient handling of cargo.
- 2.7 Under Regulation 5(1) of the HCCAR, 2009, the infrastructure required to be provided by the custodian shall include the civil and electrical infrastructure including properly air-conditioned office space, cabins with proper furniture, power backup facilities, hardware, networking and secure connectivity to Customs data centres for Customs officers and service centres specified by Customs. Facilities required for secure exchange of electronic information between the custodian and Customs shall also be provided. In addition, the custodian would undertake site preparation including civil works, electrical works, electrical fittings, air-conditioning, etc. and provide DG Set for power back up and link to the Customs EDI server. The networking, communication equipment, UPS, computers/personal computers/thin clients, servers, printers and other computer peripherals as may be specified by the Directorate General of Systems shall also be provided by the custodian.
- 2.8 Board has clarified that custodians already exempted from payment of cost recovery charges under Circular No.27/2004-Cus., dated 6-4-2004 and Para 5.3 of Circular No.13/2009-Cus., dated 23.3.2009 would continue to avail the exemption even after issue of Circular No.4/2011-Cus., dated 10.1.2011.
- 2.9 The Commissioner of Customs, subject to his satisfaction, should not insist for residential accommodation for staff from CCSP in cases where concerned facility of CCSP is located in the city area. The underlying idea is to provide for residential facilities for staff deployment at Customs facilities located in far flung and remote areas where it is difficult to have appropriate residential facility and which cannot be easily commuted by the officers. Therefore, requirement of residential accommodation should not be insisted upon in cases where the location is commutable from the base town/city. Commissioner of Customs concerned should exercise due diligence before enforcing provisions of 5(1)(i)(b) of

Notification No.96/2010-Cus(NT)., dated 12-11-2010. The type of residential accommodation to be provided to Customs staff would be determined as per entitlement of the officer of Central Government.

[Refer Circular No.29/2011-Cus., dated 18.7.2011, Notification No. 29/2019-Cus dated 01.04.2019]

The CCSPs are required to have weigh bridges installed at their facilities preferably near the entry/exit gate and all containers must be weighed.

[Refer Instruction F.No.450/81/2011-Cus.IV, dated 18.8.2011]

- 2.10 In a large number of cases, containers detained by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Special Intelligence & Investigation Branch (SIIB) or Preventive formations are not being released for considerable time and this has caused undue hardship to shipping companies by paying exorbitant demurrage charges. One reason for longer detention can be lack of adequate space for storing such goods in a Customs area. In this regard, Board desires that sufficient space for custody / storage of detained imported / export goods should be provided by Customs Cargo Service Provider (CCSP) as per regulations 5 (1) (o) of the HCCAR, 2009 so that detained goods may be stored after de-stuffing from the containers and empty containers be returned to the concerned Shipping Line. Further, in terms of regulation 6 (1) (l) of the HCCAR, 2009 CCSP shall subject to any other law for the time being in force not charge any rent or demurrage on detained goods. In case containers are detained / seized under the Customs Act, 1962, the same may be considered for provisional release subject to furnishing of Bond and Bank Guarantee under the Customs Act, 1962.

[Refer Instructions F. No.450/24/2012-Cus.IV, dated 14.3.2012]

- 2.11 Regulation 5(2) of the HCCAR, 2009 requires the custodian to pay cost recovery charges in respect of the Customs officers deployed at the ICD/CFS/port/airport etc., unless exempted by a specific order or a circular or instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance. Presently, payment of cost recovery charges in respect of ports and airports has been exempted for three categories of custodians, as follows:
- (i) Custodians notified under Section 45 of the Customs Act, 1962 prior to 26.6.2002 and there is no change in custodianship or area after 26.06.2002;
 - (ii) Custodians notified prior to 26.06.2002 but part or whole of the same premises is transferred (on lease or otherwise) to new custodian on or after 26.06.2002 (e.g. AAI, custodian of Mumbai Air Cargo Complex prior to 26.06.2002 later transferred part custodianship to Air India); and
 - (iii) Custodians notified prior to 26.06.2002 but premises extended after 26.6.2002 under the same custodianship.

[Refer Circular No.27/2004-Cus., dated 6.4.2004]

- 2.12 The Greenfield Airports Policy framed by the Government and notified by the Ministry of Civil Aviation specifies that the applicant for setting up of a greenfield airport will obtain clearance from the Department of Revenue for provision of Custom services and the cost of providing these services will be borne by the

Airport Company.

- 2.13 Regulation 6(1)(m) of the HCCAR, 2009 deals with disposal of imported or export goods lying unclaimed, un-cleared or abandoned in ICDs/CFSS/Customs areas by the CCSP who is holding custody of such goods. Proper and timely disposal of unclaimed, un-cleared or abandoned goods is to be ensured.

[Refer Circular No.50/2005-Cus., dated 01.12.2005]

- 2.14 In order to ensure security of premises and to prohibit unauthorized access of person in the Customs area all CCSP/ Custodians should provide CCTV/ Video Camera and give video footage of the same to the Customs Officer who shall monitor it regularly.

[Refer Circular No 3/2013-Cus., dated 01.01.2013]

- 2.15 Cases of lease, gift, sale or subletting or transfer of the premises in any other manner, in a Customs area by major ports may be firstly examined to see whether required permission from the Central Government / Ministry / Cabinet Committee has already been obtained or not. In cases where appropriate authority has already given this permission, then necessary written permission may also be given by the Commissioner for such lease or transfer. On the contrary, if no approval of the Government has been obtained, then appropriate action may be initiated against the erring Custodian under the said Regulations and the Customs Act, 1962. Thus, further permission from the Commissioner of Customs would not be required in respect of PPP projects approved by the Government / PPA Appraisal Committee or Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure.

[Refer Circular No.54/2011-Cus., dated 29.12.2011]

- 2.16 The power to exempt the conditions required to be fulfilled by CCSPs is provided under Regulation 7 of the HCCAR, 2009 to the Commissioner of Customs. For example, the requirement of sufficient facilities for installation of scanning equipment may not be an immediate requirement in respect of ICD/CFSS who have established their operations as new custodian. However, when this requirement becomes a necessity, then these conditions may have to be fulfilled by such custodian at that point of time. Hence, the Commissioner of Customs needs to examine individual cases where exemptions are sought to be given to the custodian and record the reasons in writing before providing exemptions. However, no exemption shall be granted in respect of any of the conditions in Regulation 5 where the overall safety and security of the premises are likely to be affected thereby.

- 2.17 In order to overcome situations where clearances of imported/ export goods are getting affected by congestion at a particular Customs facility (e.g. CFS), it has been provided that the Commissioner of Customs may consider regulating the entry of goods in that particular CFS for a temporary period, say, 15 days, in terms of Regulation 7(2) of the HCCAR, 2009. In such cases, the Commissioner of Customs may not allow any import/ export cargo to be received and handled in the facility or may allow such reduced quantity as considered sufficient for being handled efficiently for such temporary period till the congestion is cleared and the delay in clearance of goods is sorted out.

- 2.18 In terms of Regulation 9 of the HCCAR, 2009, at the time of submission of

applications for acquiring custody and handling of imported/export goods, the applicant shall provide complete details of the facility such as extent of the area, equipment, infrastructure etc. for receiving, unloading/loading, stacking, storage, delivery of imported/ export goods including the map. Further, the projected capacity of the cargo or container proposed to be handled at the premises, would form the basis for determining the adequacy of the infrastructural facilities and bond or bank guarantee, wherever applicable. For example, in respect of containers, the volume in terms of Twenty feet Equivalent Units (TEUs) may be ascertained. As regards X-Ray scanning equipment, the custodians are expected to provide for suitable land and other site requirements, but the actual scanning equipment would be installed by the Customs department subject to conditions as may be prescribed.

- 2.19 Only such CCSPs who wish to be appointed as custodian of imported/ export goods need to take approval as specified in Regulation 10 of the HCCAR, 2009. CCSPs who either operate on behalf of the custodian or with his permission, do not require any approval. However, custodian will be responsible for fulfilment of the conditions of these regulations by such CCSPs.
- 2.20 The procedure for approval of appointment, renewal, suspension or revocation of CCSP as per Regulations 10 to 13 of the HCCAR, 2009 is based upon transparency and objectivity. Cases involving outright transfer of custodianship, leasing of premises without informing Customs, subletting, sub-contracting, outsourcing, gift or lease of any of the services of CFS/ICD have to be dealt by the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs. In case of violations of the conditions or obligations prescribed under the regulations, necessary action including imposition of penalty may be taken against the erring CCSP. Further, action would need be initiated against the CCSP, wherever lack of infrastructure facilities is noticed leading to deterioration in services or damage of imported or export goods, loss of value and loss of revenue etc. In case of CCSP authorized under the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programme, the approval under Regulation 10 is valid till such time their AEO authorisation is valid and approval is not suspended or revoked in terms of Regulation 12 of HCCAR, 2009.

[Refer Notification 75/2024-Customs (NT), dated 07.11.2024
Circular No. 22/2024-Customs, dated 08.11.2024]

- 2.21 All the CCSPs are required to publish a schedule of charges associated with various services in relation to imported or export goods in the Customs area and its display at prominent places including webpage or website of the CCSP. It has also been clarified that no exemption is available to existing custodians / CCSPs in so far as the provisions of facilities and fulfilment of prescribed conditions in Regulation 5 & 6, as applicable, within the specified limits are concerned.
- 2.22 Custodians under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963, and Airports Authority of India Act, 1994 shall not be required to make an application under Regulation 4 or 9 for approval or renewal under these regulations, but they are required to necessarily discharge the responsibilities cast upon them in terms of Regulation 5 and 6.
- 2.23 The CCSP will also undertake to indemnify the Commissioner of Customs from any liability arising on account of damages caused or loss suffered on imported

or export goods, due to accident, damage, deterioration, destruction or any other unnatural cause during their receipt, storage, delivery, dispatch or otherwise handling by furnishing an indemnity bond.

- 2.24 No relaxation or exemption from requirements on safety and security of premises shall be allowed by the Commissioner of Customs to the custodians or CCSPs in terms of provisions of Regulation 7 of HCCAR, 2009. Also keeping in view the paramount importance of overall safety and security of imported / export goods, detailed guidelines are prescribed to ensure that all concerned persons ensure that suitable arrangements are put in place for safety and security of premises relating to imported or export goods.
- 2.25 The HCCAR, 2009 provide for levy of penalty in case the CCSP contravenes any of the provisions of the regulations or fails to comply with the regulations. However, these provisions do not impact the past proceedings against the custodian, if any, where necessary action has been initiated against erring custodians.
- 2.26 For the purposes of Regulation 6 (1) of HCCAR, the following officers are notified as Proper Officers as discussed in Table 29.1.

Table 29.1: Notified Proper Officer for purposes of Regulation 6 (1) of HCCAR

S. No.	Clause under Regulations 6(1)	Designation of the Proper Officer
1	a	Inspector of Customs or Preventive Officer or Examining Officer
2	f	Superintendent of Customs or Appraisers
3	g, h, k	Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner of Customs
4	l	Superintendent of Customs or Appraiser or Inspector of Customs or Preventive Officer or Examining officer

- 2.27 Regulation 5(1)(iii) of HCCAR, 2009 provides that CCSPs shall provide to the satisfaction of Commissioner of Customs, insurance for an amount equal to the average value of goods likely to be stored in the customs area based on projected capacity and for an amount as Commissioner of Customs may specify having regard to the goods which are already been insured by the importers or exporters. Board has clarified that the amount of insurance to be provided by CCSPs should be equal to the average value of goods likely to be stored in the Customs area for a period of 5days (based on projected capacity), and for an amount the Commissioner of Customs may specify having regard to the goods already insured by the importers or exporters.
[Refer Circular No. 22/2024-Customs, dated 08.11.2024]
- 2.28 Regulation 5(3) of HCCAR, 2009 mandates CCSPs shall execute a bond equal to the average amount of duty involved on imported goods and 10% of the value of export goods that is likely to be stored in the customs area during a period of 5 days and furnish a bank guarantee or cash deposit equivalent to ten percent of

such duty. Board has appreciated that there is justification in increasing the validity period of the bond, which would remove procedural hassles. Therefore, noting that under Regulation 10 of HCCAR, 2009, the new CCSPs are approved initially for 2 years, which is renewed for 5 years at a time, while existing CCSPs are straightaway approved for 5 years, it is clarified that the custodian bond executed by CCSPs i.e. ICDs/CFSs shall have a validity period of 2 years (in case of new CCSP which can be renewed for 5 years) or 5 years (in case of existing CCSP). Further, the custodian bond executed by CCSPs who are AEO-LO and whose approval under Regulation 10 is valid till such time their AEO authorisation is valid and approval is not suspended or revoked in terms of Regulation 12 of HCCAR, 2009, shall have the validity same as the validity of approval granted under Regulation 10 of HCCAR, 2009.

[Refer Notification 75/2024-Customs (NT), dated 07.11.2024
Circular No. 22/2024-Customs, dated 08.11.2024]

- 2.29 Ministry of Agriculture has raised the issue of temporary ban on Import of Rice and Peanuts from India due to detection of quarantine pest in an import consignment and highlighted that CFSs conducting phytosanitary measures have no designated area for fumigation and separate storage for keeping fumigated/ treated cargo which leads to cross contamination from untreated goods/commodities. Ministry of Agriculture has desired that facilities provided by CFSs should be improved to ensure that treated cargo is adequately sanitized in a separate storage enclosure. Board has therefore decided that all CCSP/Custodians shall provide separate and dedicated storage space for fumigation and post fumigated storage sites to enable Plant Quarantine Authorities to carry out necessary checks for both imported / export goods under the Handling of Cargo in Customs Area Regulations, 2009.
- 2.30 In order to obviate the situation of compromising cargo integrity on account of subcontracting operations relating to handling of import / export cargo, under no circumstances, CCSPs shall lease, gift, sell or sublet or in any other manner transfer any of the premises in a Customs area; or sub contract or outsource functions permitted or required to be carried out by him in terms of these regulations without written approval of the jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs. Jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs are required to review the conditions and obligations to be fulfilled by CCSP under HCCAR, 2009 and promptly initiate remedial action in case non-compliance is noticed. Cases of violation of regulation 6(2) shall be dealt with sternly according to law.
- 2.33 CBIC has prescribed comprehensive guidelines on safety and security of premises where imported or export goods are loaded, unloaded, handled or stored. Pursuant to the decision of the High Court in the Writ Petition No. 3651/2011, a joint Technical Committee comprising of Members from MoEF, Ministry of Shipping, CBIC, Port Trust, etc., was constituted to give recommendations on the distance(s) to be maintained between the hazardous cargo and the general cargo in the customs area on one hand and between the hazardous cargo and the administrative building on the other. Based on the recommendations, Board has accordingly prescribed the distance to be maintained between hazardous cargo including explosives and general cargo or administrative building in a Customs area.

[Refer Circulars No. 52/97-Cus., dated 17.10.1997, No.80/98-Cus., dated 26.10.1998, No.27/2004- Cus., dated 6.4.2004, No.13/2009-Cus., dated 23.3.2009, No.18/2009-Cus., dated 8.6.2009, No.21/2009-Cus., dated 4.8.2009, No.4/2011-Cus., dated 10.1.2011, No. 16/2013- Cus IV, dated 10.4.2013, No.32/2013 Cus., dated 16.8.2013 and No.45/2013Cus., dated 31.12.2013 and Instruction F.No.450/19/2005-CusIV., dated 23.7.2013, Circular 42/2016-Customs dated 31.08.2016, Circular 40/2016-Customs dated 26.08.2016]

- 2.34 As part of Government's initiatives for improving "Ease of Doing Business", it has emerged that introduction of electronic messaging for issue of Delivery Order instead of a paper based Delivery Order will result in considerable simplification in the Customs Clearance process, and can demonstrably reduce transaction costs and time taken in the clearance of Cargo. To implement the electronic Delivery Order System, as a prerequisite, the Custodian should have the technical capability to implement an electronic messaging system for the receipt of electronic Delivery Order. Apart from the above prerequisites, it will facilitate trade if Shipping Lines, Airlines and Consol Agents can adopt a system of electronic invoicing of all charges along with the facility to conclude the payment process using e-Payment facilities. In respect of some categories of imports, namely - unaccompanied baggage, Direct Delivery, and one-time individual importers, the Shipping Line/ Airline may retain manual (i.e. paper copy) of the Delivery Order, if desired. Further, if for technical reasons, in case of any failure of the system of electronic transfer of Delivery Order, the concerned Shipping Line/ Airline or Consol Agent may issue manual Delivery Order, as a purely temporary measure, in order to avoid any difficulty or delay in clearance of imported goods.

[Refer Circular No.24/2015-Customs dated 14.10.2015]

- 2.35 Board has decided to extend 24x7 customs clearance to all bills of entry and not just facilitated bills of entry. It has amended the Customs (Fees for Rendering Services by the Customs Officers) Regulations, 1998 to provide that at 24x7 customs ports, CFSs attached to it and airports, no fee i.e. merchant overtime fee (MOT) shall be collected in lieu of the services rendered by the customs officers. Thus, as on date no MOT charges are required to be collected in respect of the services provided by the customs officers at 24x7 customs ports and airports.

[Refer Circular No.04/2017-Customs dated 16.02.2017]

- 2.36 Gender-specific infrastructure at CFSs, AFSs, and ICDs under HCCAR, 2009, to ensure a safe, inclusive workplace for women. Measures include proper lighting, panic buttons, creches, Internal Complaints Committees, and gender sensitization training. Commissioners are tasked with encouraging custodians to implement these facilities proactively and addressing any challenges in their implementation.

[Circular No. 03/2024- Customs dated 08.03.2024]

3. Posting of staff at Customs areas and collection of Cost Recovery Charges

3.1 Applicability

3.1.1 The requirement that the custodian shall bear the cost of Customs staff posted at Customs area shall apply to all Customs areas such as Seaports, Airports, Air Cargo Complexes, Courier Terminals, Diamond Plazas, ICDs, and CFSs, notified after 26.06.2002.

3.1.2. The requirement that the custodian shall bear the cost of Customs staff posted at Customs area shall not apply in the following cases:

- a. the facility notified under Section 45 of the Customs Act, 1962, before 26.06.2002 with no change in custodianship or area after 26.06.2002;
- b. the facility notified before 26.06.2002 but part or whole of the same premises transferred (on lease basis or otherwise) to a new custodian, on or after 26.06.2002 (e.g. Airport Authority of India is custodian for the whole Mumbai Air Cargo Complex upto 26.06.2002, and after 26.06.2002 they have transferred the custodianship for the part of Air Cargo Complex to Air India); and
- c. the facility notified before 26.06.2002, but premises extended after 26.06.2002 under the same custodianship.

3.1.3 The conditions and obligations already being discharged by the earlier custodian for such facilities such as Air Cargo Complexes, Courier Terminals or Ports to be retained and applied to the new custodian. This shall also be applicable in case of transfer of ownerships.

3.2 Staffing Norms

3.2.1 The staffing norms for sanction of posts on cost recovery basis at various Customs facilities are as discussed below as shown in Table 29.2.

Table 29.2: staffing norms for sanction of posts on cost recovery basis at various Customs facilities

Customs Facility	Deputy/Asst Commissioner	Appraiser/ Superintendent	Examiner/ Inspector	EA	Hawaldar	Total
Sea Port	2	4	12	2	12	31
Air Cargo Complex	2	8	12	4	5	31
Courtier Terminal	4	9	12	4	8	37
Diamond Plaza	1	4	8	2	4	19

ICD (approved for only handling export cargo)	1	1	1	1	2	7
ICD (approved for handling both export and import cargo)	1	2	2	2	2	13
CFS	0	1	1	1	1	4
Class A Airport²	4	38	78	0	24	144
Class B Airport²	4	29	48	0	16	97
Class C Airport³	0	8	16	0	4	28

3.2.2. In the initial stages of operation of a facility due to less volume of work, full strength of the officers may not be required. In such cases, if the facility requests, the Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs may, after his consideration, post less than the sanctioned strength of officers. Gradually, when the business picks up, the full contingent of staff may be posted.

3.3 Creation of posts on the basis of Cost Recovery Charges

3.3.1 Creation of cost recovery posts is essential before issuance of necessary notifications by the jurisdictional Commissioners of Customs to operationalize a facility as a customs area. The jurisdictional Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall forward the proposals for the creation or continuation of posts on cost recovery basis to DGHRD (and not to the Board directly).

3.3.2 Initially, the validity of posts on cost recovery basis is one year. The jurisdictional Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall send the proposals to DGHRD for continuation of the posts created on cost recovery basis at least two months before the expiry of the validity, so that the Department of Expenditure gets sufficient time for considering the proposals; as the Department of Expenditure takes adverse note of delay in seeking permission in cases where such proposals are sent after the expiry

¹ Class A Airport is the one which handles more than 12000 international flights / 10 lakhs passengers per annum.

² Class B Airport is the one which handles 6000 to 12000 international flights/5 to 10 lakhs passengers per annum.

³ Class C Airport is the one which handles less than 6000 international flights/5 lakhs passenger per annum.

⁵ O.M. No. 7(1)/E.Coord.I./2017 dated 12.4.2017

⁶ Board's F.No. A-11018/9/91-Ad.IV dated 1.4.1991

⁷ The average cost shall be calculated based on the pay matrix for the particular post.

of the validity of the posts created.

3.3.3 The proposals for creation/continuation of posts shall be in terms of the Department of Expenditure's stipulations from time to time in this regard⁵. They shall contain all the relevant information as per Appendix-I. DGHRD shall process these proposals without delay and convey the decision thereon to the field formations concerned with a copy marked to the Board.

3.4 Payment of Cost Recovery Charges⁶

3.4.1 The Cost Recovery Charges shall be payable by facilities at the uniform rate of 1.85 times of the monthly average cost^{6F7} of the post plus other allowances (such as Dearness Allowance, House Rent Allowance, etc.) For this purpose, the following factors may also be kept in view for working out the cost regarding all the cost recovery posts:

- i. additional dearness allowance as and when sanctioned by the government should be considered, and arrears shall be recovered; and
- ii. if the relevant staff is in possession of government accommodation and do not draw house rent allowance. Even then, the notional house rent allowance as admissible to them should be taken into account on cost recovery basis.

3.4.2 The Cost Recovery Charges would be payable in respect of officers actually deployed at the facility. Where the officers are posted in excess of norms, Cost Recovery Charges for such excess number of officers shall be payable. However, this situation shall not ordinarily arise. If a particular officer is given charge of more than one facility, the Cost Recovery Charges shall be apportioned amongst the facilities concerned.

3.4.3 Cost Recovery Charges shall be payable from the first day of the month in which the facility commences its operation and it shall be paid in advance for every quarter.

3.4.4 If the facility fails to deposit the Cost Recovery Charges in advance, for any particular quarter, and in case such charges remain unpaid either wholly or partly, the deployment of staff at the facility should not be abruptly put on hold. The Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs concerned may consider the facility operator's financial contingencies and on case to case basis may allow a certain period of delay (not more than three months at a time and not on more than two occasions) in payment with interest. The interest in such cases shall be at the rate specified for delayed payment of duty under the Customs Act, 1962. A public display in this regard shall be made so that the trade can clear the containers that have already entered the facility. And for non-payment of advance, the entry of containers would be restricted till pending dues with interest are paid so that the facility does not have any uncleared containers once it is to be shut down.

3.5 Eligibility for Exemption from Cost Recovery Charges

- 3.5.1 The cost recovery posts should have the Department of Expenditure's specific permission for continuation before seeking/claiming exemption in respect of any given Customs facility.
- 3.5.2 The facilities are eligible to apply for exemption from payment of Cost Recovery Charges upon fulfilling the performance criteria as given in the table below. The facilities shall claim exemption if they meet both the criteria (Criterion-I and Criterion-II) in preceding two financial years or any one of the criteria (Criterion-I or Criterion-II) in preceding four financial years, which are discussed in Table 29.3.

Table 29.3: Eligibility criterion for various facilities to apply for exemption from payment of Cost Recovery Charges

Facility	Criterion - I (Volume/Value of Cargo/flights handled in a year)	Criterion - II (Number of Documents/Passengers handled in a year)
Sea Port	6 lakh metric tons	3000 Documents
Air Cargo Complex	12,000 metric tons	35,000 Documents
Courier Terminal	1.5 lakh packages	20,000 Documents
Diamond Plaza	Rs. 15,000 Cr	12,000 Documents
ICD (both export & import)	7200 TEUs	7200 Documents
ICD (only export)	3600	3600 Documents
CFS	1200 TEUs	1200 Documents
Airport	3500 flights	3 lakhs Passengers

- 3.5.2.1. The exemption from the Cost Recovery Charges shall be available only to common use facilities and not to any facility used exclusively by a private entity, even if they meet any of these benchmarks.
- 3.5.2.2. As mentioned earlier, the cost recovery posts that were sanctioned or diverted from the regular cadre strength to the various Customs facilities before 18.12.2013 (date of issuance of Cadre Restructuring Notification) were subsumed in the regular cadre strength of CBIC at that time⁸. Accordingly, the Chief Commissioners were authorized to grant exemption from payment of Cost Recovery Charges for the eligible facilities⁹.
- 3.5.2.3. In respect of all the cases for which exemption from cost recovery charges have not yet been granted though applications for the same are received, and all other cases for which applications would be received hereinafter, the exemption from the payment of Cost Recovery Charges shall be subject to the following conditions:
- a. the facility should have achieved the benchmark performance as

prescribed in para 8.2;

- b. the application for the exemption from Cost Recovery Charges is complete in all respects (in case any deficiency is noticed, the Commissionerate shall issue a deficiency memo for the applicant to complete the application);
- c. the exemption will be effective from the beginning of the fourth month from the date of issuance of this Circular or the date of receipt of the complete application, whichever is later;
- d. the facility shall not have any other dues to be paid under the Customs Act, 1962;
- e. no investigation under the Customs Act, 1962, shall be pending against the facility;
- f. the payment of Cost Recovery Charges would be up-to-date;
- g. the exemption shall be prospective from the fourth month onwards; and
- h. conditions specified at para 9.1. below.

3.5.2.4. DGHRD shall complete the regularization process and obtain the approval of the competent authority within a period of three months in order to enable the exemption to be available from the beginning of the fourth month, as per para 8.5 above.

3.6 Withdrawal of exemption granted

3.6.1. Facilities shall continue to meet the Criterion-I or the Criterion-II or both, as the case may be, in the years subsequent to grant of exemption. If any facility fails to do so, a grace period of one year will be given within which it should meet the same. The exemption will be withdrawn if a facility does not meet the criteria even after the lapse of one-year grace period. The jurisdictional Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall therefore, monitor the performance of the facilities under their charge and take immediate measures in cases warranting withdrawal of exemption from Cost Recovery Charges.

3.7 Procedure for claiming/grant of exemption

3.7.1 The eligible facility may apply for exemption from Cost Recovery Charges to the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs.

3.7.2 The jurisdictional Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall forward the proposal for regularization of posts to DGHRD through the respective Principal Chief Commissioner or Chief Commissioner of Customs within 15 days. The proposal shall be sent in the format prescribed under Appendix-II.

3.7.3 DGHRD will process such proposal in a time-bound manner so that the regularization of the post is in place within three months of application for exemption from payment of cost recovery charges.

3.8 De-notification and Cost Recovery Charges

- 3.8.1. If the facility is required to be de-notified for any reason, the Cost Recovery Charges should be payable until the date of such de-notification. DGHRD may take necessary steps during this period to surrender the sanctioned/regularized posts.
- 3.8.2. If a facility is de-notified in the middle of a quarter for which the Cost Recovery Charges are deposited in advance, the actual Cost Recovery Charges until the de-notification date shall be calculated on pro-rata basis, and excess deposit if any, shall be refunded to the entity. It may be noted that such refund shall not be treated as the refund of duty under Section 27 of the Customs Act, 1962. Instead, General Financial Rules (GFRs) shall be applied in such cases.

[Refer Circular No. 02/2021-Customs dated 19.01.2021]

Refer Board's Circular 02/2021-Customs dated 19.01.2021 for Appendix -I Proposal for creation/continuation of posts on Cost Recovery basis
Refer Boards Circular 02/2021-Customs dated 19.01.2021 for Appendix -II Proposal for grant of exemption from Cost Recovery Charges.

4. Eligibility norms for exemption from cost recovery charges at AFS:

The norms for staffing of the Customs staff at AFS and the performance benchmarks that would make an AFS eligible for the grant of exemption from the payment of cost recovery charges for the Customs staff posted therein are as follows :

4.1 Staffing norms for an AFS:

Table 29.4 Staffing norms

Category of goods handled by AFS	Deputy/ Asst. Commissioner/	Appraiser/ Superintendent	Inspector/ Examiner	STA/ TA	Hawaldar	Total
Both imported and export goods	1	4	2	2	2	11
Only Export goods	1	2	1	2	2	8

4.2 Benchmark performance criteria for grant of waiver from Cost Recovery Charges for an AFS:

Table 29.5 The eligibility performance norms for the grant of exemption from cost recovery charges in respect of Customs staff posted at Sea Ports, Air Cargo Complexes, Courier Terminals and Diamond Plaza

Category of handled by AFS goods	Criterion-I: Minimum Annual Volume of Import & Export Cargo per year	Criterion-II: Minimum number of documents -Bills of Entry/Shipping Bills per year
Both imported export goods and	4000 MTs	14,000
Only Export goods	2000 MTs	7,000

An AFS will become eligible for waiver of cost recovery charges if it achieves both the above-mentioned criteria in the preceding two financial years or any one of the criteria in the preceding four financial years. The other aspects prescribed for Customs facilities in Board’s Circular 02/2021-Customs dated 19.01.2021 such as creation of cost recovery posts payment of cost recovery charges, procedure for granting waiver, withdrawal of waiver granted, de-notification & cost recovery charges etc. will be made applicable to AFS also.

[Refer Circular No. 21/2023-Customs (N.T.) dated 14.09.2023]

An aerial photograph of a busy port area, showing a large number of cargo ships and container vessels of various sizes and colors (red, blue, yellow, green) scattered across the blue water. The ships are moving in different directions, creating white wakes. The scene is captured from a high angle, providing a comprehensive view of the maritime activity.

30 Customs Brokers

Chapter 30: Customs Brokers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 146 of the Customs Act, 1962 states that no person shall carry on business as a customs broker relating to entry or departure of a conveyance or the import or export of goods at any Customs station unless such person holds a valid licence granted in this behalf in accordance with regulations made in this regard by the Board. Thus, any person desirous to carry on business as a Customs Broker relating to entry or departure of a conveyance or import or export of goods at any Customs station is required to obtain a licence, which is referred to as the Customs Broker licence and the person concerned as the Customs Broker.
- 1.2 Section 146 of the Customs Act, 1962 read with the Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations (CBLR), 2018 governs the legal and procedural aspects of the grant of Customs Broker licence as well as the obligations and responsibilities of a Customs Broker.

2. Application for Customs Broker licence and eligibility:

- 2.1 Regulation 4 of CBLR 2018 provides for invitation of applications by National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes & Narcotics (NACIN) in the month of August every year for conducting examination and subsequent grant of license to act as Customs Broker in prescribed Form A of CBLR by publication in two leading national daily newspaper in Hindi and English each. The application in Form A along with a fee of five hundred rupees shall be made to the Principal Commissioner of Customs or the Commissioner of Customs, having jurisdiction over the area where the applicant wants to transact business.
- 2.2 The eligibility condition as per Regulation 5 of CBLR 2018 is that the applicant should be a citizen of India, a person of sound mind, is not adjudicated as insolvent holds an Aadhaar number, holds a valid PAN card and confirms financial viability by a certificate issued by a scheduled bank or such other proof acceptable to the Principal Commissioner of Customs or the Commissioner of Customs evidencing possession of assets of value of not less than Rs.5 lakhs. Further an individual applicant or in case the applicant is a firm, its partner or in the case of a company, its director or an authorized employee who may handle the Customs work, shall be a graduate from a recognized university and possess a professional degree such as Masters or equivalent degree in Accounting, Finance or Management, CA/CS/MBA/LLM/ACMA/FCMA or Diploma in Customs Clearance work from any Institutes or University recognised by the Government or is having at least two years' experience in transacting Customs Broker work as G-Card holder. The applicant may also be a retired Group A officer from the Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise) having a minimum of 5 years' experience in Group A service. Other conditions that need to be fulfilled by the applicant are:
 - (i) The applicant has neither been convicted by a competent Court for an offence nor any criminal proceeding is pending against him in any Court of law;

- (ii) The applicant has not been penalised for any offence under the Act, the Central Excise Act, 1944 (1 of 1944), the Finance Act, 1994(32 of 1994), the Central Goods and Services Act, 2017 (13 of 2017).

3. Qualifying examinations:

- 3.1 Any applicant who satisfies the criteria of Regulations 5 of CBLR 2018 and has applied for grant of licence under Regulation 4 shall be required to appear for the written as well as the oral examination conducted by the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes & Narcotics (NACIN).
- 3.2 The online examination shall be conducted on specified dates in the first quarter of every calender year for which intimation shall be sent individually to applicants in advance before the date of examination. The result of the said examination shall be declared preferably within one month of the date of examination. The successful applicant shall be called for an oral examination on specified dates in the second quarter of the same calender year, the result of which shall be declared in the month of July of the same calender year.
- 3.3 The applicant shall be required to clear both the written examination as well as corresponding oral examination. An attempt at the written exam shall be deemed to be an attempt and notwithstanding the disqualification/ cancellation of application, the fact of appearance of the applicant at the examination will count as an attempt. Further, an applicant shall be allowed a maximum of six attempts to clear the examination.
- 3.4 The examination may include questions on the following:
- (a) preparation of various kinds of bills of entry, bills of export, shipping bills, and other clearance documents;
 - (b) arrival entry and clearance of vessels;
 - (c) tariff classification and rates of duty;
 - (d) determination of value of imported and export goods;
 - (e) conversion of currency;
 - (f) nature and description of documents to be filed with various kinds of bills of entry, shipping bills and other clearance documents;
 - (g) procedure for assessment and payment of duty including refund of duty paid;
 - (h) examination of goods at Customs Stations;
 - (i) prohibitions on import and export;
 - (j) bonding procedure and clearance from bond;
 - (k) re-importation and conditions for free re-entry;
 - (l) drawback and export promotion schemes including the Special Economic Zone scheme;
 - (m) offences under the Act;
 - (n) provisions of the allied Acts including the Central Goods and Services Act, 2017 (12 of 2017) and section 5 of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (13 of 2017), the Indian Explosives Act, 1884 (4 of 1884), the Destructive Insects and Pests Act 1914 (2 of 1914), the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930 (2 of 1930), the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 (23 of 1940), the Central Excise Act, 1944 (1 of 1944), the Copy Right Act, 1957 (14 of 1957),

the Trade and Merchandise Marks Act 1958 (43 of 1958), the Arms Act 1959 (54 of 1959), the Patents Act, 1970 (39 of 1970), the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985(61 of 1985), the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulations) Act, 1992 (22 of 1992), the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (42 of 1999), the Design Act, 2000 (16 of 2000) and the Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006 (No. 34 of 2006) and other laws for the time being in force applicable to EXIM trade and the rules and regulations made under these Acts in so far as they are relevant to clearance of goods through Customs;

- (o) provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (49 of 1998);
- (p) procedure for appeal and revision applications under the Act; and
- (q) online filing of electronic bills of entry and shipping bills vide the Indian Customs and Central Excise Electronic Commerce or Electronic data interchange gateway (ICEGATE) and Indian Customs Electronic data Interchange System (ICES).
- (r) knowledge of regulations, rules, notifications, etc. under the Customs Act and other Allied Acts.

4. Bond for grant of licence:

- 4.1 The Commissioner of Customs shall, on receiving payment of Rs.5,000/- made by the applicant within two months of the declaration of the results of the oral examination, grant license to an applicant within one month of the payment of the said fee. Such licensed Customs Broker may work in all Customs stations subject to intimation in Form C to the Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs station where he intends to transact business.
- 4.2 Before granting the licence under the Regulation 7 of CBLR 2018, the Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall require the applicant to enter into a bond prescribed in this regard for due observance of these regulations and shall also require to furnish a bank guarantee, or a postal security or National Saving Certificate or a fixed deposit receipt issued by a nationalized bank, in the name of the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, as the case may be, for an amount of Rs.5 lakhs for carrying out the business as a Customs Broker.

5. Validity of licence:

A license granted under the Customs House Agents Licensing Regulations, 1984, the Customs House Agents Licensing Regulations, 2004, the Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations CBLR, 2013 or the Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations CBLR, 2018 shall be valid unless and until revoked in terms of provisions under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 8A or regulation 14. The license shall be deemed invalid, if the licensee is found to be inactive for a period of one year.

[Refer Notification No. 62/2021-Customs (N.T.), dated 23.07.2021]

6. Obligations of Customs Brokers:

- 6.1 Regulation 10 of the CBLR 2018 casts certain obligations on a Customs Broker. Some of the important obligations enjoin the Customs Broker are to:

- (a) obtain an authorisation from each of the companies, firms or individuals by whom he is for the time being employed as Customs Broker and produce such authorisation whenever required by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs;
- (b) transact business in the Customs Station either personally or through an employee duly approved by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs;
- (c) not represent a client in any manner to which the Customs Broker, as a former employee of the Central Board of Indirect taxes and Customs gave personal consideration, or as to the facts of which he gained knowledge, while in Government service;
- (d) advise his client to comply with the provisions of the Act and in case of non-compliance, shall bring the matter to the notice of the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs;
- (e) exercise due diligence to ascertain the correctness of any information which he imparts to a client with reference to any work related to clearance of cargo or baggage;
- (f) not withhold information contained in any order, instruction or public notice relating to clearance of cargo or baggage issued by the Commissioner of Customs, from a client who is entitled to such information;
- (g) promptly pay over to the Government, when due, sums received for payment of any duty, tax or other debt or obligations owing to the Government and promptly account to his client for funds received for him from the Government or received from him in excess of Governmental or other charges payable in respect of the clearance of cargo or baggage on behalf of the client;
- (h) not procure or attempt to procure directly or indirectly, information from the Government records or other Government sources of any kind to which access is not granted by the proper officer;
- (i) not attempt to influence the conduct of any official of the Customs Station in any matter pending before such official or his subordinates by the use of threat, false accusation, duress or the offer of any special inducement or promise of advantage or by the bestowing of any gift or favour or other thing of value;
- (j) not refuse access to, conceal, remove or destroy the whole or any part of any book, paper or other record, relating to his transactions as a Customs Broker which is sought or may be sought by Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs;
- (k) maintain up to date record such as bill of entry , shipping bill , transshipment application and all correspondences and other papers relating to his business as Customs Broker and also accounts including financial transactions in an orderly and itemized manner as specified by Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs;
- (l) immediately report the loss of license to the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs;
- (m) discharge duty as a Customs Broker with utmost speed and efficiency and without any delay;
- (n) verify correctness of Importer Exporter Code (IEC) number, Goods and Services Tax Identification Number (GSTIN), identity of his client and functioning of his client at the declared address by using reliable, independent, authentic documents, data or information;
- (o) Inform any change of postal address, telephone number, e- mail etc. to the

Deputy Commissioner / Assistant Commissioner of Customs within 1 month of such change.

- (p) maintain all records and accounts that are required to be maintained under CBLR, 2018 and preserve for at least five years and all such records and accounts shall be made available at any time for the inspection of officers authorised for this purpose; and
- (q) co-operate with the Customs authorities and shall join investigations promptly in the event of an inquiry against them or their employees.

7. Suspension, revocation of licence or imposition of penalty:

7.1 The Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs may revoke the licence of a Customs Broker and order for forfeiture of part or whole of security, or impose penalty not exceeding Rs.50,000 on him on any of the following grounds:

- (a) failure of to comply with any of the conditions of the bond executed by him;
- (b) failure to comply with any of the provisions of the regulations;
- (c) committing any misconduct, which in the opinion of the Commissioner renders him unfit to transact any business in the Customs Station;
- (d) adjudicated as an insolvent;
- (e) becomes of unsound mind; and
- (f) has been convicted by a competent court for an offence involving moral turpitude or otherwise.

7.2 The Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs may, in appropriate cases where immediate action is necessary, suspend the licence of a Customs Broker where an enquiry against such agent is pending or contemplated. In such case, the Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall, within 15 days from the date of such suspension, give an opportunity of hearing to the Customs Broker concerned and then pass an order either revoking the suspension or continuing it, within 15 days from the date of hearing.

[Refer Instruction No. 24/2023-Customs, dated 18.07.2023]

7.3 The Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall issue a written notice to the Customs Broker within 90 days from the date of receipt of an offence report, stating the grounds on which it is proposed to revoke the licence or impose penalty and require the said Customs Broker to submit within 30 days to a nominated Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs a written statement of defence and also to specify in the said statement whether the Customs Broker desires a personal hearing by the said Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs. Thereafter, the Commissioner of Customs may direct the Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs to inquire into the grounds which are not admitted by the Customs Broker. At the conclusion of the inquiry, the Deputy / Assistant Commissioner of Customs shall submit the enquiry report within 90 days from the date of issue of the notice.

7.4 The Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs shall furnish to the Customs Broker a copy of the enquiry report requires him to submit any representation within 30 days. After considering the enquiry report and the representation, if any, the Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs

shall pass orders either revoking the suspension of the license or revoking the licence of the Customs Broker or imposing penalty within 90 days from the date of submission of the enquiry report. Order for revoking the license shall not be passed unless an opportunity is given to the Customs Broker to be heard in person by the Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs. An appeal against the order would lie to the Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal.

- 7.5 Imposition of penalty or any action taken under the CBLR 2018 is without prejudice to the action that may be taken against the Customs Broker or his employee under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 or any other law for the time being in force.

[Refer Notification No. 41/2018- Cus(N.T.), dated 14.05.2018]

- 7.6 CBIC advises against routinely implicating Customs Brokers in disputes under the Customs Act unless their active role is proven. Actions must follow the due process under the Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations, 2018, ensuring fairness and clarity.

[Refer Instruction No. 20/2024 dated 03.09.2024]

8. Surrender of License:

- 8.1 A licensee may surrender the license granted under Customs House Agents Licensing Regulations, 1984, the Customs House Agents Licensing Regulations, 2004, the Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations, 2013 or the Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations, 2018 through a written request to the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs who has issued the license, as the case may be.
- 8.2 On receipt of the request under sub-regulation (1), the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may revoke the license if, (a) the licensee has paid all dues payable to the Central Government under the provisions of the Act, rules or regulations made thereunder; and (b) no proceedings are pending against the licensee under the Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder.

The background of the slide is a yellow corrugated metal surface, possibly a window blind or a wall panel, set against a clear blue sky with a few wispy white clouds at the bottom. A red rounded rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the page number and title.

31

Offences and Penal Provisions

Chapter 31: Offences and Penal Provisions

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Persons involved in import or export activity in violation of prohibitions or restrictions in vogue or with the intent to evade duties or fraudulently claim export incentives are liable for strict penal action under the Customs Act, 1962. The offending goods can be confiscated and heavy fines and penalties imposed on the persons concerned. In fact, sensitive goods like narcotics, FICN, arms and ammunitions, etc. are absolutely confiscated. There are also provisions for arrests and prosecution to deter smuggling or commercial fraud, which seriously affects the economic security.
- 1.2 In the context of penal provisions under the Customs Act, 1962 the term “smuggling” has vast connotations and means “any act or omission which will render such goods liable for confiscation under Sections 111 or 113 of the said Act”.
- 1.3 In general terms, the word “penalty” means punishment under the law, i.e., such punishment as is provided in penal laws. It also means the sum payable as a punishment for a default. The Customs Act, 1962 contains specific provisions for imposition of penalty in case of contraventions of the legal stipulations.

2. Seizure of offending goods:

- 2.1 In terms of Section 110 of the Customs Act, 1962 an officer of Customs can seize any goods, if he has reason to believe that the goods are liable to confiscation under the said Act. If it is not practicable to seize any such goods, the proper officer may serve on the owner of the goods an order that he shall not remove, part with, or otherwise deal with the goods except with the previous permission of such officer. The proper officer may also seize any documents or things which, in his opinion, will be useful for, or relevant to, any proceeding under the said Act. The person from whose custody any documents are seized shall be entitled to make copies thereof or take extracts there from in the presence of an officer of customs.
- 2.2 The person from whom the goods are seized is issued Show Cause Notice, usually within 6 months, otherwise the goods shall be returned to the person from whose possession they were seized. However, Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the time period to further period, for issue of Show Cause Notice, for a period not exceeding 6 months and inform the person from whom such goods were seized before the expiry of the period so specified. Further, where any order for provisional release of the seized goods has been passed under section 110A, the specified period of six months shall not apply.
- 2.3 Section 110(1A) provides that in case the seized goods are perishable or hazardous in nature or prone to depreciate in value over time or for reasons of constraints in space, or for any other relevant consideration, the Central Government can specify the goods or class of goods by notification of such goods which shall as soon as be after seizure be disposed by the proper officer before

the conclusion of the proceedings in such manner as determined by the Central Government after following the procedure specified.

- 2.4 During any proceedings under the Customs Act, 1962, the proper officer, with the approval of the Principal Commissioner / Commissioner of Customs, by order in writing, provisionally attach any bank account for a period of upto 6 months under the provisions of section 110(5). However, such an attachment can only be done when the proper officer develops an opinion that such an attachment is necessary for the purposes of protecting the interest of revenue or to prevent smuggling. The duration of such an attachment can be extended by the Principal Commissioner / Commissioner of Customs by a further period of upto 6 months after recording reasons for the order of provisional attachment must reflect the opinion of the proper officer as to why the provisional attachment is necessary to protect the revenue interests or prevent smuggling; and further that the written order directing the provisional attachment must be served not only on the bank but also on the bank account holder. To form an opinion, the proper officer should exercise due diligence by thoroughly considering and examining the facts of the case. This includes examining nature of offence, amount of revenue involved or value of smuggled goods, availability on record of material having value as evidence. Moreover, it must contain the reasons to believe that the bank account holder may utilize the funds from the bank account if it is not provisionally attached. The basis on which the proper officer forms an opinion to seek approval of provisional attachment of a person's bank account must be duly recorded on file. The formation of opinion should bear a proximate and live nexus to the purpose of protecting the interests of revenue and/or preventing smuggling. This must be followed by written approval of (Pr.) Commissioner. The power of provisional attachment must not be exercised in a routine/mechanical manner. It is important for the approving authority to make careful examination of facts of the case to determine whether a case is fit for exercising power under section 110(5). Before going ahead with any provisional attachment, the collective evidence, based on the proceedings/ inquiry already conducted in the case, must indicate that, prima facie, a case is made out against the bank account holder.
- (i). After the approval, the order in writing, which is issued directing the provisional attachment, must reflect/contain the basis of framing opinion by the proper officer to attach the bank account. It must clearly specify the duration for which the bank account is being attached. The initial period of provisional attachment cannot exceed six months.
 - (ii). The order, or its extension, must be specifically addressed to both the bank account holder and the concerned bank. Further, even on expiry of initial provisional attachment period, or expiry of the period when extended period expires, communication to the concerned bank with a copy to bank account holder must be made informing the release or restoration of the bank account to the bank account holder.
 - (iii). Insofar as extending the period of provisional attachment is concerned, the (Pr.) Commissioner may extend, for an additional period not exceeding six months, the period of provisional attachment only after providing the bank account holder with an opportunity to be heard in person and thereafter

recording in writing the reasons for such an extension. This should lead to issuing of an order extending the period of provisional attachment. Accordingly, the exercise required for issuing the extension order should begin well in time such that if an extension is required it can be issued before the expiry of the initial provisional attachment period.

- (iv). At any time before the expiry of any attachment period, if the proper officer forms the opinion that the bank account is no longer liable for being provisionally attached, he shall, with the approval of (Pr.) Commissioner, issue communication to the concerned bank, with intimation to the bank account holder, to release or restore the bank account to the bank account holder. The communications referred herein above must bear the Document Identification Number (DIN) in terms of Board's Circular Nos. 37/2019-Customs dated 05.11.2019 and 43/2019-Customs dated 23.12.2019.
- (v). As the provisional attachment of bank account is resorted to protect the interests of the revenue and may also affect the business and functioning of the person whose bank account is provisionally attached, it may be endeavored that in all such cases, the investigation and adjudication are completed at the earliest, well within the period of attachment, so that the due liability of duty/tax as well as interest, penalty etc. arising upon adjudication can be recovered from the said person and the purpose of attachment is achieved.

[Refer Instruction No. 19/2024-Customs dated 22.07.2024]

3. Confiscation of seized goods:

- 3.1 The word "confiscation" implies appropriation consequential to seizure. The essence and the concept of confiscation is that after confiscation, the property of the confiscated goods vests with the Central government.
- 3.2 The adjudicating authority makes the decision regarding confiscation of goods. The specific/different categories of violations under which the import or export goods are liable to confiscation, are enumerated in Section 111 and 113 of the Customs Act. In general, any goods imported which are unloaded or attempted to be unloaded at any place other than appointed under clause (a) of section 7 for the unloading of such goods; or any goods imported through any routes other than notified under clause (c) of Section 7 of the Customs Act, 1962; also the goods which are imported or attempted to be imported or brought into Indian customs waters, contrary to any prohibition imposed by or under Customs Act, 1962 or any other law for the time being in force; also any dutiable or prohibited goods attempted to be cleared by way of concealment, undeclared in arrival manifest or import manifest, mis-declaration in quantity, description or value etc., are liable to be confiscated. The imported or export goods are also liable to confiscation if there is an intention to evade Customs duty or to fraudulently avail the exemption / benefits available subject to any condition or under various export promotion schemes, such as Drawback, EOU etc. Also liable to confiscation are goods entered for exportation which does not correspond in respect of value or in any material particular with the entry made or in the case of baggage with the

declarations made under Section 77 of the Customs Act, 1962.

- 3.3 Smuggled goods may be confiscated even if its form has been changed. In case the smuggled goods are mixed with other goods in such manner that the smuggled goods cannot be separated from such other goods, then the whole of goods are liable to be confiscated as per Section 120 of the Customs Act, 1962.

4. Confiscation of conveyances/packages etc.:

- 4.1 In addition to confiscation of goods, the conveyances, i.e., any vessel or any aircraft which is or has been within Indian customs waters / in India or any vehicle, which is or has been in a customs area, while constructed, adapted, altered or fitted in any manner for the purpose of concealing goods shall be liable to confiscation; also any conveyance or animal used, as a means of transport/ or in the carriage, in the smuggling of any goods shall be liable to confiscation; also any conveyance from which any warehouse goods cleared for exportation, or any other goods cleared for exportation under a claim for drawback, are unloaded, without the permission of the proper officer are liable to confiscation as per Section 115 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- 4.2 As per Section 118 of the Customs Act, 1962, in case where any goods imported in a package are liable to confiscation, the package and any other goods imported in that package shall also be liable to confiscation. Also in case where any goods are brought in a package within the limits of customs area for the purpose of exportation and are liable to confiscation, the package and any other goods contained therein shall also be liable to confiscation.
- 4.3 The goods used for concealing smuggled goods are liable to confiscation as per Section 119 of the Customs Act, 1962. [in this section "goods" do not include a conveyance used as a means of transport.]
- 4.4 Where any smuggled goods are sold by a person having knowledge or reason to believe that the goods are smuggled goods, the sale proceeds thereof shall be liable to confiscation as per Section 121 of the Customs Act, 1962.

5. Penalties in respect of improper importation of goods:

- 5.1 In terms of Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962 any person, who, in relation to any goods, does or omits to do any act which act or omission would renders such goods liable to confiscation under Section 111 or abets the doing or omission of such an act, or, acquires possession of or is in any way concerned in carrying, removing, depositing, harbouring, keeping, concealing, selling or purchasing, or in any other manner dealing with any goods which he knows or has reason to believe are liable to confiscation under Section 111, shall be liable to penalties as follows:-
- (i) In the case of goods in respect of which any prohibition is in force under the Customs Act, 1962 or any other law for the time being in force, to a penalty not exceeding the value of the goods or Rs.5,000/-, whichever is the greater;

- (ii) In the case of dutiable goods, other than prohibited goods, subject to the provisions of section 114A, to a penalty not exceeding ten percent (10%) of the duty sought to be evaded or Rs.5,000/-, whichever is higher; provided that where such duty as determined under sub-section (8) of section 28 and the interest payable thereon under section 28AA is paid within 30 days from the date of communication of the order, the amount of penalty liable to be paid by such person under this section shall be 25% of the penalty so determined.
- (iii) In the case of goods in respect of which the value declared is higher than the value thereof, to a penalty not exceeding the difference between the declared value and the value thereof or Rs.5, 000/-, whichever is the greater;
- (iv) In the case of goods falling both under (i) and (iii) above, i.e. goods in respect of which any prohibition is in force and the value stated / declared is higher than the value thereof, to a penalty not exceeding the value of the goods or the difference between the declared value and the value thereof or Rs.5,000/-, whichever is the highest; and
- (v) In the case of goods falling both under clauses (ii) and (iii) above, to a penalty not exceeding the duty sought to be evaded on such goods or the difference between the declared value and the value thereof or Rs.5,000/-, whichever is the highest.

6. Penalties in respect of improper exportation of goods:

- 6.1 In terms of Section 114 of the Customs act, 1962 any person, who, in relation to any goods, does or omits to do any act which act or omission would render such goods liable to confiscation under Section 113, or abets the doing or omission of such an act, shall be liable to penalties as follows:
- (i) In the case of goods in respect of which any prohibition is in force under Customs Act, 1962 or any other law for the time being in force, to a penalty not exceeding three times the value of the goods as declared by the exporter or the value as determined under the Customs Act, 1962, whichever is the greater;
 - (ii) In the case of dutiable goods, subject to the provisions of section 114A, to a penalty not exceeding ten percent (10%) of the duty sought to be evaded on such goods or Rs.5,000/-, whichever is higher; PROVIDED that where such duty as determined under sub-section (8) of section 28 and the interest payable thereon under section 28AA is paid within 30 days from the date of communication of the order, the amount of penalty liable to be paid by such person under this section shall be 25% of the penalty so determined.
 - (iii) In the case of any other goods, to a penalty not exceeding the value of the goods, as declared by the exporter or the value as determined under the Customs Act, 1962, whichever is the greater.

7. Mandatory penalty in certain cases:

- 7.1 Section 114A of the Customs Act, 1962 deals with imposition of mandatory penalty in certain cases. Thus, in cases where the duty has not been levied or has been short levied or the interest has not been charged or paid or has been part paid or the duty or interest has been erroneously refunded by reason of collusion or any willful misstatement or suppression of facts, the person who is liable to pay the duty or interest, as the case may be, as determined under Section 28(8) of the Customs Act, 1962 shall also be liable to pay a penalty equal to the duty or interest so determined. If such duty or interest, as the case may be, as determined under sub-section (8) of section 28 and the interest payable thereon under section 28AA is paid within 30 days from the date of communication of the order, the amount of penalty liable to be paid by such person under this section shall be 25% of the duty or interest, as the case may be, so determined. Further if the benefit of reduced penalty under the first proviso shall be available subject to the condition that the amount of penalty so determined has also been paid within the period of thirty days referred to in that proviso.
- 7.2 If the duty or interest determined to be payable is reduced or increased by the Commissioner (Appeals), the Appellate tribunal or, as the case may be, the Court, then for the purpose of this section, the duty or interest as reduced or increased, as the case may be, shall be taken into account. The duty or interest determined to be payable is increased by the Commissioner (Appeals), the Appellate tribunal or, as the case may be, the Court, then, the benefit of reduced penalty shall be available under the first proviso shall be available if the amount of the duty or the interest so increased, along with the interest payable thereon under section 28AA, and 25% of the consequential increase in penalty have also been paid within 30 days of the communication of the order by which such increase in the duty or interest takes effect. If penalty has been levied under section 114A, no penalty shall be levied under Sections 112 or 114 of the said Act. Any amount paid to the credit of the Central Government prior to the date of communication of the order referred to in the first proviso or the fourth proviso shall be adjusted against the total amount due from such person.
- 7.3 Suspension of a Customs Broker's license under Regulation 16 of CBLR, 2018 should only be exercised in "appropriate cases" where immediate action is necessary. Commissioners of Customs are advised to carefully consider and record their reasons for suspending a license, avoiding routine or mechanical application of this power.

[Refer Instruction No. 24/2023 – Customs dated 30.09.2023]

8. Other penalties:

- 8.1 If a person knowingly or intentionally makes, signs or uses, or causes to be made, signed or used, any declaration, statement or document which is false or incorrect in any material particular, in the transaction of any business for the purposes of the Customs Act, 1962, then in terms of Section 114AA of the said act, such person shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five times the value of goods.

- 8.2 In terms of Section 116 of the Customs Act, 1962 if any goods loaded in a conveyance for importation into India, or any goods transhipped under the provisions of the said Act or coastal goods carried in a conveyance, are not unloaded at their place of destination in India, or if the quantity unloaded is short of the quantity to be unloaded at that destination, and, if the failure to unload or the deficiency is not accounted for to the satisfaction of the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner of Customs, the person in charge of the conveyance shall be liable:
- (i) In the case of goods loaded in a conveyance for importation into India or goods transhipped under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 to a penalty not exceeding twice the amount of duty that would have been chargeable on the goods not unloaded or the deficient goods, as the case may be, had such goods been imported;
 - (ii) In the case of coastal goods, to a penalty not exceeding twice the amount of export duty that would have been chargeable on the goods not unloaded or the deficient goods, as the case may be, had such goods been exported.
- 8.3 Any person who contravenes any provision of the Customs Act, 1962 or abets any such contravention or who fails to comply with any provision of this Act, with which it was his duty to comply, where no express penalty is elsewhere provided for such contravention or failure, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Rs. 4 lakh.

9. Adjudication of confiscations and penalties:

- 9.1 The Customs Act, 1962 enjoins quasi-judicial proceedings to be followed before any penalties are imposed and any confiscation action etc., initiated against any offending goods. Apart from issuing Show Cause Notice under Section 124 of the said Act, the persons concerned are required to be given opportunity of representation in writing and personal hearing in the matter. The notice and the representation may be at the request of the person concerned be made oral. Besides issue of notice under section 124, the proper officer may issue a supplementary notice under circumstances or manner prescribed by the Board. The adjudication authority is then required to pass final order taking due note of all evidence brought on record.
- 9.2 As per Section 122 of the Customs Act 1962, in every case, in which anything is liable to confiscation or any person is liable to a penalty, such confiscation or penalty may be adjudged:-
- (a) Without limit, by a Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs or a Joint Commissioner of Customs;
 - (b) up to such limit by such officers, as the Board may, by notification, specify.

Board Notification 50/2018- Customs (N.T.) dated 8th June, 2018 specified the limits as below Table 31.1.

Table 31.1: Limits for confiscation of goods for respective Customs Officers

Sl. No.	Customs Officer	Value of goods liable for confiscation
(1)	Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs	Above rupees one lakh but not exceeding rupees ten lakhs
(2)	A Gazetted Officer of Customs lower in rank than an Assistant Commissioner of Customs or Deputy Commissioner of Customs	Not exceeding rupees one lakh

- 9.3 Generally, 'mens rea' is not required to be proof for the imposition of penalty under the provisions of the Customs Act. The amount of penalty depends on the gravity of the offence and is to act as a deterrent for the future.
- 9.4 Section 125 of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for option to pay fine in lieu of confiscation. The proviso to section 125 states that redemption fine shall not exceed the market price of the goods confiscated and in case the goods confiscated are imported goods, then such fine shall not exceed the amount which is arrived at after deducting the duty chargeable on such goods from their market value. This is the maximum fine which can be levied. As per section 126 of the Customs Act, 1962 when any goods are confiscated, such goods shall thereupon vest in the Central Government. The officer adjudging confiscation shall take and hold possession of the confiscated goods. Whenever the confiscation of goods is authorized as per the sub-section (1) of section 125, of the Customs Act, 1962, the adjudicating authority MAY in the case of any goods where the importation or exportation is prohibited under this Act or under any other law for the time being in force, and SHALL, in the case any other goods, give to the owner of the goods (or from whose possession or custody such goods have been seized), an option to pay in lieu of confiscation such fine as the said officer / authority thinks fit. If the proceedings are deemed to be concluded under the proviso to sub-section (2) of section 28 or under clause (i) of sub-section (6) of section 28 in respect of the goods which are not prohibited or restricted, the provisions of this section (redemption fine) shall not apply. Without prejudice to the provisions of the proviso to sub-section (2) of section 115, such fine shall not exceed the market price of the goods confiscated, less in the case of imported goods the duty chargeable thereon.
- 9.5 Where any fine in lieu of confiscation of goods is imposed under sub-section (1), the owner of such goods or the person referred to in sub-section (1) shall, in addition, be liable to any duty and charges payable in respect of such goods.
- 9.6 As per sub-section (3) of section 125 of the Customs Act, 1962, where the fine

imposed under sub- section (1) is not paid within a period of 120 days from the date of option given thereunder, such option shall become void, unless an appeal against such order is pending.

10. Arrest:

- 10.1 To effectively tackle the menace of smuggling and other serious economic offences including commercial frauds, apart from penal action in Departmental adjudication, the Customs Act, 1962 provides for criminal prosecution in a Court of law. Prosecution action can also be taken for providing false documents/declaration to the Customs and for obstructing Customs officers in their work.
- 10.2 As provided under section 104(1), If an officer of customs empowered in this behalf by general or special order of the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs has reason to believe that any person has committed an offence punishable under section 132 or section 133 or section 135 or section 135A or section 136, he may arrest such person and shall, as soon as may be, inform him of the grounds for such arrest. Also, every arrested person arrested under sub-section (1) shall, has to be taken without unnecessary delay to the nearest Magistrate. Further, the arrested person is to be dealt with by the Magistrate, as per the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The power to remand an arrested person to judicial custody vests in the Magistrate by virtue of Section 167 of the Cr.PC.
- 10.3 Though under Section 104 of the Customs Act, 1962 Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs are empowered to delegate to an officer of Customs by general or special order, powers of arrest of persons guilty of offence punishable under Section 135 of the said Act, extreme circumspection and care is to be exercised at senior level in exercising these powers and ordering arrests. Arrest should be resorted to only in cases of sufficient grave nature.
- 10.4 Persons involved in Customs related offence cases who may be liable to prosecution should not be arrested in routine unless exigencies of certain situations demand their immediate arrest. At times, prior to prosecution, arrests (s) may be necessary to ensure proper investigations and penal action against the persons (s), as otherwise the person involved in the offence may hamper investigations or disappear from the scene/area – such as in cases involving outright smuggling by Sea/Air/Land route.
- 10.5 In all commercial fraud cases in relation to regular imports or exports, before arresting any person(s) the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs concerned should be approached by the Investigating Officer and the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs should be personally satisfied that there are sufficient grounds warranting arrest of the person(s). These grounds/reasons should also be recorded by the concerned Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs in writing on file before the arrest is ordered and affected by the proper officer.
- 10.6 As far as possible, in other than commercial fraud cases warranting prosecution

under Section 135 of the said Act, where arrest is considered necessary prior clearance and approval for arrest may be taken from Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs. However, there could be situations, for example in outright smuggling cases in remote areas (and sometimes even in town seizure or international passenger clearance offence cases) where it may not be administratively possible to get prior permission of concerned Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs before effecting arrest. In such cases, the decision to arrest a person in accordance with the guidelines - taking due note of the offence against the person which has come to light in investigations carried out, should be taken at the minimum level of the concerned Assistant Commissioner/Assistant Director recording the reasons in writing. Further, in such cases, the concerned Assistant Commissioner/ Assistant Director or other higher officer (lower than Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs) who has ordered arrest, should immediately after arrest furnish a report incorporating reasons for arrest, to the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs and his satisfaction for the arrest made should also be kept on record in writing.

10.7 The guidelines for arrest are summed up as follows:

- i. Offences under the Customs Act, 1962 are either (i) bailable; or (ii) non-bailable. Since arrest takes away the liberty of an individual, the power must be exercised with utmost care and caution in cases where a Commissioner of Customs or Additional Director General has reason to believe on basis of information or suspicion that such person has committed an offence under the Act punishable under the Sections 132 or 133 or 135 or 135A or 135AA or 136 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- ii. Arrest of persons in terms of Section 104(1) of Customs Act, 1962 should be resorted to only where the facts and situations of a particular case demand such action. Persons involved should not be arrested unless the exigencies of certain situations demand their immediate arrest. These situations may include circumstances like ensuring proper investigation, to prevent such person from absconding, cases involving organised smuggling of goods or evasion of Customs duty by way of concealment, masterminds or key operators effecting proxy/ benami imports/exports in the name of dummy or non-existent persons/IECs, etc. The decision to arrest should be taken in cases which fulfil the requirement of the provisions of Section 104(1) of Customs Act, 1962 and after considering the nature of offence, the role of the person involved and evidence available.
- iii. While the Act does not specify any value limits for exercising the powers of arrest, it is clarified that arrest in respect of an offence, should be effected only in exceptional situations which may include:
 - a. Cases involving unauthorised importation in baggage/ cases under Transfer of Residence Rules, where the market value of the goods involved is Rs. 50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakh) or more;
 - b. Cases of outright smuggling of high value goods such as precious metal,

- restricted items or prohibited items or goods notified under section 123 of the Customs Act, 1962 or offence involving foreign currency where the value of offending goods is Rs. 50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakh) or more;
- c. Cases related to importation of trade goods (i.e. appraising cases) involving wilful mis- declaration in description of goods/concealment of goods/goods covered under section 123 of Customs Act, 1962 with a view to import restricted or prohibited items and where the market value of the offending goods is Rs. 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore) or more;
 - d. Cases involving fraudulent evasion or attempt at evasion of duty involving Rs 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore) or more;
 - e. cases involving fraudulent availment of drawback or attempt to avail of drawback or any exemption from duty provided under the Customs Act, 1962, in connection with export of goods, if the amount of drawback or exemption from duty is Rs. 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore) or more. In cases related to exportation of trade goods (i.e. appraising cases) involving (i) wilful mis-declaration in value / description ; (ii) concealment of restricted goods or goods notified under section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962, where market value of the offending goods is Rs. 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore) or more.
 - f. Cases involving obtaining an instrument from any authority by fraud, collusion, wilful misstatement or suppression of facts and utilisation of such instrument where the duty relatable to such utilisation of the instrument is Rs 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore) or more.
 - g. The above criteria of value mentioned in (a) (f) would not apply in cases involving offences relating to items i.e. FICN, arms, ammunitions and explosives, antiques, art treasures, wild life items and endangered species of flora and fauna. In such cases, arrest, if required, on the basis of facts and circumstances of the case, may be considered irrespective of value of offending goods involved.”

[Refer Circular No. 13/2022-Customs dated 16.08.2022]

- iv. There is no prescribed format for arrest memo but an arrest memo must be in compliance with the directions in “*D.K Basu vs. State of W.B.*” [1997(1) SCC 416 (see para 35)].
- v. Certain modalities that should be complied with at the time of arrest and pursuant to an arrest include:
 - (a) female offender should be arrested by or in the presence of woman Customs officers,
 - (b) medical examination of an arrestee should be conducted by a medical officer in the service of Central or State Government and in case such medical officer is not available, by a registered medical practitioner soon after the arrest is made. If an arrested person is a female then such an examination shall be made only by, or under supervision of a female medical officer, and in case such female medical officer is not available, by a female registered medical practitioner,
 - (c) it shall be the duty of the person having the custody of an arrestee to take reasonable care of the health and safety of the arrestee.
- vi. A person arrested for a non-bailable offence should be produced before

Magistrate without unnecessary delay, as per Section 104(2) of the Customs Act, 1962.

- vii. Under Section 104(3) of the Customs Act, 1962, for the purpose of releasing such person (arrestee) on the bail or otherwise, an officer of Customs (arresting officer) has the same powers as an officer in charge of a Police Station under the Cr.PC. Thus, a Customs officer (arresting officer) is bound to release a person on bail for offences categorized as bailable under the Customs Act, 1962 and release on bail must be offered to a person arrested in respect of bailable offence and bail bond accepted. If the conditions of the bail are fulfilled, the arrestee shall be released on bail forthwith. The arresting officer may, and shall if such a person is indigent and unable to furnish surety, instead of taking bail from such person, discharge him or her executing a bond without sureties for his appearance as provided under Section 436 of Cr.PC. in cases where the conditions for granting bail are not fulfilled, the arrestee shall be produced before the appropriate Magistrate without unnecessary delay and within 24 hours of arrest.

[Refer Instruction F.No.394/71/97-Cus (AS), dated 22.6.1999 and Circulars No. 38/2013- Cus., dated 17.9.2013, No. 28/2015- Customs dated 23.10.2015]

- 10.8 Arrest Report- Whenever an Arrest is made under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, an “Intimation of Arrest” is required to be sent through email by the jurisdictional (Pr.) Chief Commissioner / Director General within 24 hours of such arrest to Member (Compliance Management) and Member in-charge of the concerned zone along with a copy marked each to the Commissioner (Investigation-Customs), Principal Director General, DRI and Director General, DGARM. The proforma of such an intimation is prescribed in Annexure-I of the Board’s Instruction No. 02/2024-Customs dated 15.02.2024.

[Refer Instruction No. 02/2024-Customs dated 15.02.2024]

- 10.9 Incident Report (where Arrest not made)- An incident related to outright smuggling or commercial fraud, where Arrest has not been made is also required to be reported by the jurisdictional (Pr.) Commissioner / (Pr.) Additional Director General to Member (Compliance Management) and Member in-charge of the concerned zone along with a copy marked each to the jurisdictional (Pr.) Chief Commissioner, Commissioner (Investigation-Customs), Principal Director General, DRI and Director General, DGARM. The proforma of such an intimation is prescribed in Annexure-II of the Board’s Instruction No. dated 15.02.2024. The incident reports seek to capture description/ details that are routinely collected and reported to senior officers within a Commissionerate in nearreal-time basis. Whenever such incidents arise the Commissioner/ADG shall immediately report through email to the addressees stated above.

[Refer Instruction No. 02/2024-Customs dated 15.02.2024]

11. Punishment for Customs offences:

11.1 Section 135(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for imprisonment for a maximum term of 7 years and with fine to any person who is, in the context of any goods which he knows or has reason to believe are liable to confiscation under Sections 111 or 113 of the said Act: Involved, in relation to the goods, or Anyway knowingly concerned in mis-declaration of value, or In any fraudulent evasion or attempt at evasion of any duty chargeable thereon or of any prohibition for the time being imposed under the said Act or any other law for the time being in force with respect to such goods, or Acquires possession of or is in any way concerned in carrying, removing, depositing, harbouring, keeping, concealing, selling or purchasing or in any other manner dealing with any goods which he knows or has reason to believe are liable to confiscation under Section 111 or Section 113, or Attempts to export any goods which he knows or has reason to believe are liable to confiscation under Section 113, or Fraudulently avails of or attempts to avail of drawback or any exemption from duty provided under the said Act in connection with export of goods.

11.2 Section 135 provides the following punishments to the person held liable for offences mentioned therein:

- I. Imprisonment for a term not exceeding 7 in the absence of special and adequate reasons to the contrary to be recoded in the judgment of the court such imprisonment shall not be for less than one year in the case of an offence relating to:
 - a) Any goods the market price of which exceeds Rs.1 crore; or
 - b) The evasion or attempted evasion of duty exceeding Rs.50 lakhs; or
 - c) Such categories of prohibited goods as the Central Government may, by notification, specify; or
 - d) Fraudulently availing of or attempting to avail of drawback or any exemption from duty referred to above, if the amount of drawback or exemption from duty exceeds Rs.50 lakhs.
- II. In any other case, with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or with fine, or with both.

11.3 Section 135(2) of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that, if any person convicted of an offence under Section 135(1) or under Section 136(1) (which applies to Custom Officers) is again convicted of an offence under this section, then, he shall be punishable for the second and for every subsequent offence with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 7 years and with fine.

11.4 The offences punishable with imprisonment for a term of less than 3 years or only fine are as follows:

- a) Section 132 of the Customs Act 1962: If a person makes, signs or uses, or

causes to be made, signed or used, any declaration, statement or document in the transaction of any business relating to the customs, knowing or having reason to believe that such declaration, statement or document is false in any material particular, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with fine, or with both.

- b) Section 133 of the Customs Act 1962: If any person intentionally obstructs any officer of Customs in the exercise of any powers conferred under this Act, such person shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term, which extend to 2 years, or with fine, or with both.
- c) Section 134 of the Customs Act 1962: If any person resists or refuses to allow a radiologist to screen or to take X-Ray picture of his body in accordance with an order made by a Magistrate under Section 103 of the said Act, or resists or refuses to allow suitable action being taken on the advice and under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner for bringing out goods liable to confiscation secreted inside his body, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months, or with fine, or with both.
- d) Section 135A of the Customs Act 1962: If a person makes preparation to export any goods in contravention of the provisions of this Act, and from the circumstances of the case, it may be reasonable inferred that if not prevented by circumstances independent of his will, he is determined to carry out his intention to commit the offence, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.
- e) Section 135AA of the Customs Act, 1962: if a person publishes any information, that is furnished to customs by an exporter or importer under this Act, relating to the value or classification or quantity of goods entered for export from India, or import into India, alongwith the identity of the persons involved or in a manner that leads to disclosure of such identity, unless required so to do under any law or for the time being in force or by specific authorisation of such exporter or importer, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to fifty thousand rupees or both. Nothing contained in this section shall apply to (a) any publication made by or on behalf of the Central Government (b) data sourced from any publication made by or on behalf of the Central Government for analysis of trends in India's international trade and dissemination thereof.

12. Offences by Customs officers:

12.1 The officers of Customs also cannot escape serious action including prosecution action, if they abuse their powers or collude or connive with tax evaders. In the following cases, prosecution proceeding against a Custom officer may be initiated under Section 136 of the Customs Act, 1962:

- (1) If any officer of customs enters into or acquiesces in any agreement to do, abstains from doing, permits, conceals or connives at any act or thing,

whereby any fraudulent export is effected or any duty of customs leviable on any goods, or any prohibition for the time being in force under this Act or any other law for the time being in force with respect to any goods is or may be evaded, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to [three years], or with fine, or with both.

- (2) In cases of vexatious search,
- (a) if any officer of customs, requires any person to be searched for goods liable to confiscation or any document relating thereto, without having reason to believe that he has such goods or documents secreted about his person, the said Customs Officer may be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months, or with fine which may extend to Rs.1, 000/-, or with both; or
 - (b) if any officer of customs, arrests any person without having reason to believe that he has been guilty of an offence punishable under Section 135 of the said Act, he may be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months, or with fine which may extend to Rs.1,000/-, or with both; or
 - (c) if any officer of customs, searches or authorizes any other officer of customs to search any place without having reason to believe that any goods, documents, or things of the nature referred to in Section 105 of the said Act are secreted in that place, he may be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months, or with fine which may extend to Rs.1,000/-, or with both.
- (3) If any Customs Officer, except in the discharge in good faith of his duty as such officer or in compliance with any requisition made under any law for the time being in force, discloses any particulars learnt by him in his official capacity in respect of any goods, he may be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 6 months, or with fine which may extend to Rs.1,000/- or with both.

13. Presumption of culpable mental state:

13.1 As per Section 138A of the Customs Act, 1962 in prosecution proceedings there under, the culpability (guilty conscience or mensrea) on the part of the accused person shall be presumed and it will be for the accused to prove that he had no deliberation with respect of alleged offence. The presumption of culpable mental state is drawn under this provision that presumption includes intention, motive, knowledge, belief as well as reason to believe. The presumption could be deemed as rebutted only if the proof is beyond reasonable doubt not merely when its existence is established by a preponderance of probability.

14. Cognizability and Bailability:

14.1 Cognizable Offences as per Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) are those offences which are punishable with imprisonment for a term of more than

three years. Further, as per Cr.PC, the offences punishable with imprisonment for a term of less than 3 years or with fine are covered in the category of non-cognizable offences. However, sub-section (4) of section 104 of the Customs Act, 1962 states that, notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), any offence relating to

- (a) prohibited goods; or
- (b) evasion or attempted evasion of duty exceeding fifty lakh rupees, or
- (c) fraudulently availing of or attempting to avail drawback or any exemption from duty provided under this Act, where the amount of drawback or exemption from duty exceeds fifty lakh rupees; or
- (d) fraudulently obtaining an instrument for the purposes of this Act or the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, and such instrument is utilized under this Act, where duty relatable to such utilization of instrument exceeds fifty lakh rupees, shall be cognizable.

Further, sub-section (5) of section 104 of the Customs Act, 1962 states that, save as otherwise provided in sub-section (4), all other offences under the Act shall be non cognizable.

Section 104 (6) of the Customs Act, 1962 provides for the categories of offences punishable under Section 135 that are non-bailable and all other offences under the Act shall be bailable as per Section 104(7) of the Customs Act. The following categories of offences shall be non-bailable:

- i) evasion or attempted evasion of duty exceeding Rs.50 Lakhs; or
- ii) prohibited goods notified under Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962 which are also notified under Section 135(1)(i)(C) of the Customs Act, 1962; or
- iii) import or export of any goods which are not declared as per the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 and the market price of which exceeds Rs.1 Crore; or
- iv) fraudulently availing of or attempt to avail of drawback or any exemption from duty, if the amount of drawback or exemption from duty exceeds Rs.50 Lakhs. ; or,
- v) fraudulently obtaining an instrument for the purposes of Customs Act, 1962 or the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, and such instrument is utilized under Customs Act, 1962, where duty relatable to such utilization of instrument exceeds Rs. 50 Lakhs.

15. Prosecution:

15.1 No prosecution proceedings can be launched in a Court of Law against any person under the Customs Act, 1962 and no cognizance of any offence under Sections 132, 133, 134, 135 and 135A of the said Act can be taken by any Court,

except with the previous sanction of concerned Commissioner of Customs. Thus, based upon the results of investigations and evidence brought on record, Commissioners of Customs shall sanction prosecution only after being satisfied that there are sufficient reasons justifying the same. Criminal complaint must thereafter be filed in appropriate Court of law and followed up with a view to get expeditious conviction.

15.2 Guidelines for Prosecution

15.2.1 Person liable to be prosecuted : As per the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, prosecution may be launched against any person including legal person in respect of the offences covered under any of the sections namely 132, 133, 134, 135, 135A or 136 of the Customs Act, 1962.

A. The decision for launching prosecution should be taken in cases which fulfil the requirement of the provisions of any of the sections 132, 133, 134, 135, 135A or 136 of the Customs Act, 1962 after a careful consideration of the nature of offence, the role of the person concerned and evidence available to substantiate the guilty knowledge/mensrea.

15.2.2 Threshold limit for launching prosecution and exceptions has been prescribed in Circular No. 12/2022- Customs dated 16.08.2022:

A. Exceptions:

The threshold limits would not apply in case of persons indulging habitually in such violations or where criminal intent is evident in ingenious way of concealment, where prosecutions can be considered irrespective of the value of goods/currency involved in such professional or habitual offenders, etc. provided the cumulative value of 3 or more such offences in past five years from the date of the decision exceeds the threshold limit (s).

B. Special Cases relating to FICN, arms, ammunitions, wild life etc.:

The threshold limits would also not apply in cases involving offences relating to items i.e. FICN, arms, ammunitions and explosives, antiques, art treasures, wild life items and endangered species of flora and fauna. In such cases, launching of prosecution should be considered invariably, irrespective of value of offending goods involved.

15.2.3 Further, in respect of cases involving non-declaration of foreign currency by foreign nationals and NRIs (normally visiting India for travel/business trips etc.) detected at the time of departure from India, exceeding the threshold limits of Rs 50 lakh as prescribed above, if it is claimed that the currency has been legally acquired and brought into India but not declared inadvertently, prosecution need not be considered as a routine. The status and business standing of the foreign nationals/NRIs, the manner and place of recovery, corroborative evidence, if any to substantiate the claim of bona fide and

proper acquisition but inadvertent non-declaration, and other attendant factors may be considered immediately and a decision taken whether the case involves criminal intent warranting launching of prosecution or not. Where the prosecution is not considered called for, the case can be adjudicated by the proper officer and suitable order for confiscation/fine/penalty etc. passed.

[Refer Circular No. 12/2022-Customs dated 16.08.2022]

- 15.2.4 It is mentioned that the quantum of punishment under section 135 of the Customs Act, 1962 is linked with the amount of imports duty/market price of offending goods/drawback amounts. However, the quantum of punishment in respect of the offences covered under remaining sections namely 132, 133, 134, 135A or 136 of the Customs Act, 1962 is not linked with the amount of imports duty/market price of offending goods/ineligible drawback amount. In these circumstances, the threshold limit for deciding on launching of prosecution under these sections may be taken as the value which is applicable for section 135 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- 15.2.5 It is clarified that prosecution in respect of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances may be launched as per the provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985.
- 15.2.6 Except in respect of cases covered by sub para 3.2 of Circular No. 12/2022-Customs dated 16.08.2022 and sub para 4.2.2 of Circular No. 27/2015-Customs dated 23.10.2015, in all other cases, prosecution may be launched after due sanction by the Commissioner/Principal Commissioner (Pr. Commr.) or Additional Director General (ADGRI)/Principal Additional Director General of Revenue Intelligence (Pr. ADGRI), as the case may be. Prior approval of the Chief Commissioner/Principal Chief Commissioner (Principal CC) or Director General/Principal Director General of Revenue Intelligence (Pr. DGRI), as the case may be, will be essential for launching of prosecution in respect of cases covered by sub paras referred above.
- 15.3 The following aspects may also be kept in view while considering launching of prosecution for offences under the Customs Act, 1962 : -
- 15.3.1 Prosecutions should not be launched as a matter of routine and/or in cases of technical nature, where the additional claim for duty is based solely on a difference of interpretation of the law. Before launching any prosecution, it is essential that the department should have sufficient evidence to prove that the person, individual or company, against whom prosecution is being considered, had guilty knowledge of the offence or had fraudulent intention of committing the offence, or in any manner possessed mens rea which would indicate his guilt. It follows, therefore, that in the case of Public Limited Companies, prosecution should not be launched indiscriminately against all the Directors of the Company, but should be restricted to only such persons who have taken active part in committing, or have connived at, the offence relating to either of smuggling or of customs duty evasion or of mis-declaration of value, quantity etc. For this purpose, the Commissioner/Pr. Commr. or ADGRI/Pr. ADGRI should go through the relevant case file thoroughly and ascertain for themselves that the definite involvement of

different partners/directors/executives/ officials, against whom reasonable evidence about their involvement in the offence exists and should be proceeded against, while launching the prosecution.

15.4 Stage for launching of prosecution: Normally, prosecution may be launched immediately on completion of adjudication proceedings. However, in respect of cases involving offences relating to items, viz. Gold, Foreign Currency, Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN), arms, ammunitions and explosives, antiques, art treasures, wild life items and endangered species of flora and fauna, prosecution may preferably be launched immediately after issuance of Show Cause Notice under the Customs Act, 1962. Further, in cases involving Foreign National(s), prosecution may be launched at the earliest, even before issuance of the Show Cause Notice.”. [amended on Circular No. 12/2019-Customs dated 24.05.2019].

15.4.1 Further, in following cases investigation may be completed in time bound manner preferably within six months and adjudication may be expedited to facilitate launching of prosecution. These cases are :

- (a) In case where arrest has been made during investigation (for commercial fraud cases as well as outright smuggling cases) or in the case of a habitual offender.
- (b) In case where arrest has not been made but it relates to outright smuggling of high value goods such as precious metal, restricted items or prohibited items notified under section 11 or goods notified under section 123 of the Customs Act, 1962 or foreign currency where the value of goods is Rs. 20, 00,000 (Rupees twenty lakh) or more.

15.4.2 In a judgment passed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the case of Radhe Shyam Kejriwal [2011 (266) E.L.T. 294 (S.C.)], the Apex Court had, inter alia, observed that

- (i) adjudication proceedings and criminal proceedings can be launched simultaneously;
- (ii) decision in adjudication proceedings is not necessary before initiating criminal prosecution;
- (iii) adjudication proceedings and criminal proceedings are independent of each other in nature and (iv) the findings against the person facing prosecution in the adjudication proceedings is not binding on the proceeding for criminal prosecution. In view of aforesaid observations of Hon'ble Supreme Court, it is reiterated that if the party deliberately delays completion of adjudication proceedings, prosecution may be launched even during the pendency of the adjudication proceedings, where offence is grave and qualitative evidences are available.

15.4.3 Prosecution need not be kept in abeyance on the ground that the party has gone in appeal/revision. However, in order to ensure that the proceeding in appeal/revision are not unduly delayed because the case record are required for purpose of prosecution, a parallel file containing copies of the essential documents relating to adjudication should be maintained.

15.4.4 The Superintendent in charge of adjudication section should endorse copy

of all adjudication orders to the prosecution section. The Superintendent in charge of prosecution section should monitor receipt of all serially numbered adjudication orders and obtain copies of adjudication orders of missing serial numbers from the adjudication section every month.

15.5 Procedure for launching prosecution :

- 15.5.1 Prosecution should not be filed merely because a demand has been confirmed in the adjudication proceedings particularly in cases of technical nature or where interpretation of law is involved. One of the important considerations for deciding whether prosecution should be launched is the availability of adequate evidence. The standard of proof required in a criminal prosecution is higher as the case has to be established beyond reasonable doubt whereas the standard of proof in adjudication proceedings is decided on the basis of preponderance of probability. Therefore, even cases where demand is confirmed in adjudication proceedings, evidence collected should be weighed so as to likely meet the test of being reasonable doubt for recommending & sanctioning prosecution. Decision should be taken on case- to- case basis considering various factors, such as, gravity of offence, quantum of duty evaded and the nature as well as quality of evidence collected.
- 15.5.2 It is reiterated that in order to avoid delays, the adjudicating authority should indicate, at the time of passing the adjudication order itself (on file and not in the adjudication order) as to whether he considers the case fit for prosecution, so that it could be further processed for launching prosecution. Where at the time of adjudication proceedings, no view has been taken on prosecution by the adjudicating authority, the adjudication section shall resubmit the file within 15 days from the day of issue of adjudication order to the adjudicating authority/Commissioner to take a view regarding prosecution. Where the prosecution is proposed before the adjudication of the case, Commissioner /Pr. Commr. Or ADGRI / Pr. ADGRI shall record the reason for the same and the adjudicating authority shall be informed of the decision so that there is no need for him to examine the case subsequently from the perspective of prosecution.
- 15.5.3 In respect of cases investigated by DGRI, the adjudicating authority would intimate the decision taken regarding fitness of the case for prosecution to the Principal Additional Director General/ Additional Director General of the Zonal Unit or Headquarters concerned, where the case was investigated and /or show cause notice issued. The respective officer of DGRI concerned shall prepare an investigation report for the purpose of launching prosecution, within one month of the date of receipt of the decision of the adjudicating authority and would send the same to the Director General, DGRI for taking decision on sanction of prosecution. The format of investigation report is annexed as Annexure-I to the Circular No. 07/2017 - Customs dated 06.03.2017. The DGRI / Pr. DGRI should ensure that a decision about launching of prosecution or otherwise, is taken after careful analysis of evidence available on record and communicated to the ADGRI / Pr. ADGRI concerned within a month of the receipt of the proposal.

- 15.5.4 In respect of cases not investigated by DGRI, where the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner who has adjudicated the case is satisfied that prosecution should be launched, an investigation report for the purpose of launching prosecution should be carefully prepared within one month of the date of issuance of the adjudication order. Investigation report should be signed by an Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, endorsed by the jurisdictional Principal Commissioner/Commissioner and sent to the Principal Chief/ Chief Commissioner for taking a decision on sanction for launching prosecution. The format of investigation report is annexed as Annexure-I to this circular. The Chief Commissioner/Principal CC should ensure that a decision about launching of prosecution or otherwise, is taken after careful analysis of evidence available on record and communicated to the Commissioner / Principal CC within a month of the receipt of the proposal.
- 15.5.5 Once the sanction for prosecution has been obtained, criminal complaint in the court of law should be filed as early as possible by an officer not below the rank of Superintendent of the jurisdictional Commissionerate authorized by the Commissioner.
- 15.5.6 It is observed that delays in the Court proceedings occur due to the non-availability of records required to be produced before the Magistrate. As a matter of practice, whenever a case is taken up for seeking the approval for launching prosecution, an officer should be nominated/designated, who shall immediately take charge of all documents, statements and other exhibits, that would be required to be produced before a Court. The list of exhibits etc. should be finalised in consultation with the Public Prosecutor at the time of drafting of the complaint. Such exhibits should be kept in safe custody. Where a complaint has not been filed even after a lapse of three months from the receipt of sanction for prosecution, the reason for delay shall be brought to the notice of Chief Commissioner/Principal CC or DGRI / Pr. DGRI by the Commissioner /Pr. Commr. or ADGRI / Pr. ADGRI, as the Commissioner /Pr. Commr. or ADGRI / Pr. ADGRI, as the case may be, who are responsible in the case for ensuring the timely filing of the complaint.

15.6 Publication of names of persons convicted under Customs Act, 1962

Section 135B of the Customs Act, 1962, grants the power to publish name/place of business etc. of persons convicted under the Act by a Court of law. It is observed that this power is being exercised very sparingly. In all cases in respect of all persons, who are convicted under the Customs Act, 1962 the department should make a prayer to the Court to invoke this section.

15.7 Monitoring of Prosecution

- 15.7.1 It is emphasized that prosecution, once launched, should be vigorously followed. The Commissioner/Pr. Commr. or ADGRI/Pr. ADGRI should monitor cases of prosecution at monthly intervals and take the corrective action wherever necessary to ensure that the progress of prosecution is satisfactory.

15.7.2 For monitoring of prosecution cases, a Prosecution Cell should be created in each Commissionerate under the supervision of Additional/Joint Commissioner. In case of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, an Additional/Joint Director in headquarter/each zonal unit should supervise the prosecution work relating to headquarters or respective zonal unit, as the case may be.

15.7.3 For keeping track of prosecution cases launched by the Commissionerate, a prosecution register in the format enclosed as Annexure-II to this Circular should be maintained in the Prosecution Cell of each Commissionerate. The register should be updated regularly and inspected by the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner at least once in every quarter of the Financial Year. For keeping track of prosecution cases launched by DRI, prosecution register in the similar format as Annexure II should be maintained in the Zonal Unit/Hqrs of DRI pertaining to those prosecution cases and similar regular monitoring to be carried out by ADGRI/Pr. ADGRI concerned.

15.8 Appeal against Court order in case of inadequate punishment/acquittal :

15.8.1 Commissioner/Pr. Commr. responsible for the conduct of prosecution or ADGRI/Pr. ADGRI (in respect of cases booked by DGRI), should study the judgement of the Court and, where it is found that the accused person have been let off with light punishment than what is envisaged in the Customs Act, 1962 or has been acquitted despite the evidence being strong, the question of filing appeals under law should be considered within the time period.

15.8.2 The case of acquittal by the Court can be appealed against in terms of section 378(4) of Cr. P.C. by the complainant. In these cases approval of the Chief Commissioner/Principal CC or DGRI/Pr. DGRI, as the case may be, should be obtained before filling appeal.

15.9 Procedure for withdrawal of prosecution

15.9.1 Procedure for withdrawal of sanction order of prosecution

In cases where prosecution has been sanctioned but not filed and new facts or evidence have come to the notice of the Commissionerate or the DGRI which warrant review of the sanction for prosecution, it should be immediately brought to the notice of the sanctioning authority. After considering the new facts and evidences the sanctioning authority may recommend withdrawal of sanction order to the next higher authority. In case Commissioner/Pr. Commr. or ADGRI/Pr. ADGRI is the sanctioning authority, the recommendation will be submitted to Chief Commissioner/Principal CC or DGRI/Pr. DGRI. The recommendation will be submitted to the Board (Member of Policy Wing concerned) in such cases where sanctioning authority is Chief Commissioner/Principal CC or DGRI/Pr. DGRI. All past cases where filing of prosecution is pending beyond three months of the sanction for prosecution shall be reviewed in the light of these instructions and necessary action taken to either file complaint expeditiously or to propose withdrawal of sanction.

15.9.2 Prosecution for withdrawal of Complaint already filed for prosecution

- A. In cases where the complaint has already been filed in the Court, it will be up to the Court to decide whether or not to pursue prosecution in terms of section 257 and 321 of Cr. P.C, 1973. If the order for withdrawal has been given by a Court, the prosecution can be withdrawn by the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner or Assistant/Deputy Director after getting a formal order from the Chief Commissioner/Principal CC or DGRI/Pr. DGRI as the case may be.
- B. As per decision of Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Radhe Shyam Kejriwal [2011 (266) E.L.T. 294 (S.C.)] :
 - (a) the findings in the adjudication proceeding in favour of the person facing trial for identical violation will depend upon the nature of finding. If the exoneration in adjudication proceedings is on technical ground and not on merit, prosecution may continue, and
 - (b) in case of exoneration, however, on merit where allegation is found to be not sustainable at all and person held innocent, criminal prosecution on the same set of circumstances cannot be allowed to continue, underlying principle being the higher standard of proof in criminal cases.
- C. In respect of cases covered under clause (b) above, the Chief Commissioner/Principal CC or DGRI/Pr. DGRI would ensure moving an application through Public Prosecutor in the court for withdrawal of prosecution in accordance with law. The withdrawal can only be effected with the approval of the court.

15.10 **Compounding:** Section 137 of Customs Act, 1962 provides for compounding of offences by the Chief Commissioner. The provisions regarding compounding of offence should be brought to the notice of person being prosecuted and such person be given an offer of compounding by the Commissioner/Principal Commissioner or ADGRI/Principal ADG DRI as per Circular No. 54/2005- Cus., dated 30.12.2005.

15.11 Prosecution Register and dissemination of information

15.11.1 A Prosecution Register in the form as Annexed to this circular should be maintained in the prosecution cell of the Commissionerate headquarters/Custom House/DRI formations. Wherever the prosecution is compounded under section 137 of CA' 62 by the Chief Commissioner, suitable endorsement may be kept in the prosecution register.

15.11.2 It may be mentioned that offences under section 132 and 135 of the Customs Act, 1962 are scheduled offences under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002(PMLA). In Customs' prosecution cases warranting action under PMLA, instructions have been issued vide F. No. 394/51/2009-Cus (AS), dated 14-9-2009 as amended upto Instruction No. 05/2019-Customs dated 11.12.2019 for monthly reporting of such cases to the Directorate of Enforcement in the prescribed format. Once cognizance of

complaint in respect of offence under section 132 and 135 of CA' 62 filed by the Department is taken by the court, and reference has been made to the Directorate of Enforcement for taking action under PMLA, suitable remarks should be made in the prosecution register. In case, the prosecution under PMLA is separately proposed to be launched by the Directorate of Enforcement, and intimation is received to that effect in the prosecution unit of the Commissionerate/DRI, suitable entry should be kept in the register for appropriate liaison with the Directorate of Enforcement and further action as per the direction of Special Court.

15.11.3 Further instructions have been issued vide F. No. 394/124/2011-Cus (AS), dated 17-7- 2012 clarifying that all offences under Customs Act, 1962 shall be within the ambit of 'Plea Bargaining' and any application for the same shall be dealt with as per the provisions in Chapter XXIA of Code of Criminal Procedure. Wherever 'Plea Bargaining' as per the provisions of chapter XXIA of Cr Pc is permitted by the competent court, necessary endorsement may be made in the prosecution register for proper record and monitoring. Similar record may be kept in respect of appeal against court order and/or withdrawal of prosecution as detailed in paras 10 to 12 of Circular No.27/2015-Customs dated 23.10.2015.

15.11.4 The field formations should upload/update the information regarding prosecution initiated in the Management Information System (**MIS**) under **prescribed Proforma**.

15.12 Inspection of prosecution work :

Director General (Inspection) and Chief Commissioners/Principal CCs, while carrying out inspection of the Commissionerates/Customs Houses, should specially check all the above mentioned points, and make a mention about implementation of the guidelines in their Inspection Reports.

15.13 Transitional Provisions :

All cases, where sanction for prosecution is accorded after the issue of this circular, shall be dealt in accordance with the provisions of this circular irrespective of the date of the offence. Cases where prosecution has been sanctioned but no complaint has been filed before the magistrate shall also be reviewed by the prosecution sanctioning authority in light of the provisions of this circular, as stipulated in Circular No. 27/2015-Customs dated 23.10.2015.

15.14 Where a case is considered suitable for launching prosecution and where adequate evidence is forthcoming, securing conviction largely depends on the quality of investigation. It is, therefore, necessary for senior officers to take personal interest in investigations of important cases of smuggling/duty evasion and also in respect of cases having money laundering angle and to provide guidance and support to the investigating officers.

15.15 It has also been noticed that the officers posted for prosecution work do not have proper training. The Director General, National Academy of Customs Excise and

Narcotics (NACEN), Faridabad, should therefore, organize separate training courses on prosecution/arrests etc. from time to time and also should incorporate a series of lectures on this issue in the courses organized for anti- smuggling. The Commissioner/Pr. Commr. or ADGRI/Pr. ADGRI should judiciously sponsor officers for such courses.

[Refer Circular No. 27/2015-Customs dated 23.10.2015]

16. Issue of Summons:

16.1 Power to summon persons to give evidence and produce documents in Customs Act flows through section 108 of the Customs Act, 1962 which prescribes as follows: Any Gazetted Officer of customs shall have power to summon any person whose attendance he considers necessary either to give evidence or to produce a document or any other thing in any inquiry which such officer is making under this Act. (2) A summons to produce documents or other things may be for the production of certain specified documents or things or for the production of all documents or things of a certain description in the possession or under the control of the person summoned. (3) All persons so summoned shall be bound to attend either in person or by an authorised agent, as such officer may direct; and all persons so summoned shall be bound to state the truth upon any subject respecting which they are examined or make statements and produce such documents and other things as may be required: (4) Every such inquiry as aforesaid shall be deemed to be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of section 193 and section 228 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (45 of 1860).

16.2 On issue of summons in Customs matters, the following guidelines have been issued by Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs:

- (i) Power to issue summons is generally exercised by Gazetted Officers (Appraiser / Superintendent), though higher officers also issue summons. Summons by Appraiser/ Superintendent should also be issued after obtaining prior written permission from an Officer not below the rank of the Assistant Commissioner with the reasons for issue of summons to be reduced in writing.
- (ii) Where for operational reasons, it is not possible to obtain such prior written permission oral/telephonic permission from such officer must be obtained and the same should be reduced to writing and intimated to the officers according such permission at the earliest opportunity.
- (iii) In all such cases, where summons are issued, the officer issuing summons submit a report or should record a brief of the proceedings in the case file and submit the same to the officer who has authorized to issue the summons.
- (iv) Further senior management officials such as CEO, CFO General Manager of large Company or PSU should not generally be issued summons at the first instance They should be summoned only when there are indications in the investigation of their involvement in the decision making process which led to revenue of loss.

- (v) An officer who has issued summons for recording of statement in such case where summons is issued to senior functionaries should be available in the office and record the statement as per schedule given in summons. However, if for some operational reason the officer is not available to attend the proceedings as per schedule, this may be informed to the person summoned in advance.

[Refer F.No. 394/05/2015-Cus (AS) dated 04.02.2015]

17. Compounding of Offences:

17.1 The Central Government has brought into force the Customs (Compounding of Offences) Rules, 2005 and Central Excise (Compounding of Offences) Rules, 2005 with effect from 30th December, 2005, the date of publication of these rules in the Official Gazette. Notification No. 114/2005- Customs (N.T.) and No. 37/2005 Central Excise (N.T.) both dated 30-12-2005 have been issued in this regard. Compounding Rules under Customs has been amended by Customs (Compounding of Offences) Amendment Rules, 2008 dated 12.11.2008 (with its Corrigendum dated 18.11.2008) and by Customs (Compounding of Offences) Amendment Rules, 2022 published vide the Gazette Notification No. 69/2022- Customs (N.T.) dated 22.08.2022.

17.2 The purpose of compounding of offences against payment of compounding amount is to prevent litigation and encourage early settlement of disputes. Considering the wide range of offences listed in the relevant Chapter of the Customs Act/Central Excise Act, Board has decided to classify these offences as (i) technical offences; and (ii) substantive or non-technical offences for the purpose of compounding. 'Technical offences' are those offences that can be compounded more than once and would be accorded a more liberal treatment. However, 'Substantive or non-technical offence' are offences, where it has been decided not to allow compounding for the second time. For the purpose of compounding, 'Substantive or non-technical offence' would mean offences covered under Section 135 and 135A of the Customs Act. Similarly under Central Excise Act this would refer to offences covered under sub-section (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(bb), (1)(bbb), (1)(bbbb) and (1)(c) of Section 9. On the other hand 'Technical offence' would mean offences covered under Section 132, 133 and 134 of the Customs Act and Section 9(1)(d) of the Central Excise Act. Accordingly compounding for substantive offence shall be allowed only once.

17.3 It has also been decided by the Board, that considering the serious implications of certain offences mentioned below, these shall not be considered for compounding and any applications received from one or more categories of the following persons should be rejected.

- (i) Any person who along with offence under Customs Act, has also committed or has also been accused of committing an offence under any of the following Acts :-
- (a) Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985;
 - (b) Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000;

- (c) Arms Act, 1959;
 - (d) Indian Penal Code;
 - (e) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- (ii) Any person who is involved in cases of smuggling of goods falling under any of the following categories, -
- (a) Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipments & Technologies (SCOMET), as specified in Appendix-3 to Schedule 2 of ITC (HS);
 - (b) Prohibited items for import or export as specified in the ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import items, 2004-09 issued under Section 3 of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992;
 - (c) Any other goods or a document, which is likely to affect friendly relations with any foreign state or is derogatory to national prestige.
- (iii) Any person who has already exercised the option of compounding of an offence in respect of goods of value exceeding rupees one crore in the past.
- (iv) Any person who has been convicted under the Act by an order issued subsequent to the date of publication of the Customs/Excise (Compounding of Offences) Rules in the Official Gazette.
- (v) Any person who has applied for compounding of offence in a case, where there are apparent contradictions or inconsistencies or incompleteness. [amended on Circular: 20/2008-Cus. dated 2.12.2008]

17.4 While the Compounding of Offence Rules have been made as simple and unambiguous as possible, it would be worthwhile to clarify a few provisions as follows :

- (i) Offence committed by officers of Customs/Central Excise does not merit compounding as it is a matter between the State and its employee. Accordingly, the definition of the applicant excludes the departmental officers.
- (ii) As the Chief Commissioner has to decide about the eligibility of the applicant and allow compounding in respect of an application filed before him on the basis of certain facts given by the applicant, it is provided for verification of such facts and call for any other facts or information available on record from the reporting officer.

17.5 The Chief Commissioners have been empowered to compound offences before or after filing of the complaint subject to the above general guidelines. While there would be no difficulty in cases where complaint has not been filed by the department, as regards existing cases pending in the Court, the following procedure may be followed. No such application for compounding shall be processed unless the applicant within 30 days of filing such application, files an affidavit before the Court before whom such prosecution is pending undertaking to comply with the provisions of these rules and submit a copy of such affidavit to the compounding authority. On receipt of such affidavit, the compounding

authority shall examine the application in accordance with the above guidelines and pass an appropriate order under sub-rule (3) to Rule 4. A copy of such order shall also be forwarded to the Court. After payment of compounding amount as per the above order, the reporting authority shall move an application before the said Court informing about the compounding of offence and requesting the Court to dispose of the case accordingly. If the Court accepts the order of compounding of offence and disposes of the case, then the order of compounding authority becomes final. However, in cases where the Court rejects the request of the department for grant of immunity from prosecution by compounding of offences, then the compounding amount paid by the applicant as per order of the compounding authority shall be refunded to the applicant.

- 17.6 In order to make best of use of compounding of offence, assesses at the time of intimation/initiating action for launching of prosecution should be given an offer of compounding. It may however be clarified that the application for compounding shall be decided on merits and in the absolute discretion of the Chief Commissioner. The cases where the Chief Commissioner is not inclined to accede to applicant's request for compounding as detailed in para 3 above, may be rejected informing the grounds accordingly.
- 17.7 Adequate publicity may be given to the Compounding of Offence Rules and these guidelines so that large numbers of cases are compounded resulting in reduction in number of cases pending in the Courts. All the applications for compounding of offences must be disposed of within 6 months. The performance of the zone in realisation of compounding amount also may be indicated suitably in the monthly report to the Directorate of Data Management. These Compounding of Offences Rules and guidelines may be brought to the notice of all concerned. In case of any doubt regarding any provision of the guidelines, rules reference may be made to the Board. The receipt of these guidelines may be acknowledged. The guidelines shall be implemented with immediate effect.

[Refer Circular No. 54/2005- Customs dated 31.12.2005 as amended by Circular No. 29/2007 dated 21.08.2007, Circular No. 20/2008 dated 2.12.2008, Circular No. 29/2009-Customs dated 15.10.2009, and Circular No. 15/2022-Customs dated 23.08.2022]

18. Ease of Doing Business measures during investigation into Commercial Fraud cases.

- 18.1 The import and export of goods through the filing of documentary declarations (like Bill of Entry, Shipping Bill and supporting documents) is also connected with doing business, hence the approach in investigation of Commercial Fraud cases must keep the balance with ease of doing business. Customs field formations / Custom Houses should follow these guidelines during investigation in Commercial Fraud Cases subject to legal provisions or instructions otherwise issued in this behalf.
- 18.2 Within the jurisdiction of the Commissionerate, the Principal Commissioner/ Commissioner is responsible for developing and approving any intelligence, investigation and its completion. Each investigation must be initiated only after the

approval of the Commissioner. A Commercial Fraud case investigation must reach the earliest conclusion which is normally not more than one year.

- 18.3 Before initiating investigation, the intelligence inputs and relevant aspects related to Commercial Fraud matters need to be appropriately analyzed. This includes cross check with reference to available data, technical literature, prevalent industry practice, judicial pronouncements, extant legal framework, precedence etc. It is desirable to undertake as complete an analysis as feasible, before the actual investigation is initiated. This would also enable seeking holistic information/record/documents related to an issue in the first instance, which is an important factor in minimizing interface with the importer/exporter.
- 18.4 The analysis referred above should extend to checking open-source information and the entries in DIGIT and DIN in terms of the existing investigations related to the same entity and also if an investigation on the same issue exists.
- 18.5 The Commissioner may also decide whether the commercial intelligence, being actionable, is such that it is also to be brought to the notice of DRI. For example, it may have cross jurisdictional relevance. In such situations, the Commissioner shall have the jurisdictional Chief Commissioner bring it to the notice of Pr. DG of DRI.
- 18.6 Even after the initial decision for conduct of investigation has been made by the Commissioner, the general principles of ease of doing business, including those driven by common prudence, must be kept in view while undertaking investigation. These include:
- (i). As far as possible, documents may be sought preferably by writing letter.
 - (ii). In case summons have to be issued, the extant Instructions of CBIC (including F. No. 394/05/2015 - Cus (AS) dated 04.02.2015) including on the matter of issuing summons to senior management officials must be kept in view.
 - (iii). The time frame specified for appearance, or producing information, should be reasonable and keeping in view the mode of communication of the letter/summon.
 - (iv). Before seeking any information or documents, the relevancy and propriety of what is being sought shall be recorded (on e-file), ensuring that it is holistic and result of preparation, and also so as not to have repeated issuance of letter/summons or seeking of piecemeal information.
 - (v). In issuing letter/summons for information or documents the norm shall be of prior reasoned approval (of officer not below Dy./Asst. Commissioner level of each content of the summons to be printed by the summoning officer.
 - (vi). If the statement is recorded under summons, the scanned copy of such statement shall be uploaded in the same e-office file in which approval was obtained to issue summons. Outcome of search/inspection conducted, including panchnama or mahazar (where recorded), be also so uploaded. The

e-file should be submitted for information to Addl./Jt. Commissioner at the earliest and in any case within 4 working days from date of statement, completion of search/inspection.

- (vii). The practice of taking into account appropriate difficulties or circumstances presented by the entity should be developed by the Commissioner. For example, there could be a need to take into account aspects such as location of entity's personnel, etc.
- (viii). In seeking information/documents in Commercial Fraud matters, the letter/summons should disclose the specific nature of the inquiry being initiated/undertaken. The vague (or general) expressions must be avoided.
- (ix). Wherever permissible, the officer indicates to the person summoned, the option to attend by an authorized agent.
- (x). The documents which are specified in the summons to be produced, should be only those required for investigation. The summons should not require any document or thing to be produced in connection with the inquiry which is outside the scope of summons related to that inquiry. The scope of summons in Customs is in the wording of Section 108 of the Customs Act, 1962. Issuing letter/summons with context or content akin to a fishing inquiry is not acceptable.
- (xi). Information otherwise available, for example, e-sanchit documents, information on various departments' online portals, etc. need not be routinely sought. Further, a letter/summons should not be used as a means to seek information filled in formats or proforma (specified by investigation).
- (xii). It is not necessary to keep investigation pending till limitation in law approaches. Moreover, the closure report consequent to the appropriate payment of government dues by the person concerned should also not be delayed and should have a brief self- explanatory narration of the issue and the period involved. Timely actions, i.e. without delay, at these stages are all part of preventive vigilance ensuring that no room remains for malpractices and this holds also for the aspect at (xiii) below.
- (xiii). Conclusion of investigation also takes the form of recording that investigation is not being pursued further as nothing objectionable was found in terms of matter investigated.

18.7 During the course of search or investigation proceedings there may not be tax due to 'recover'. During such proceedings in Commercial Fraud cases the investigating officer should appropriately inform the entity regarding the legal provisions related to voluntary payment.

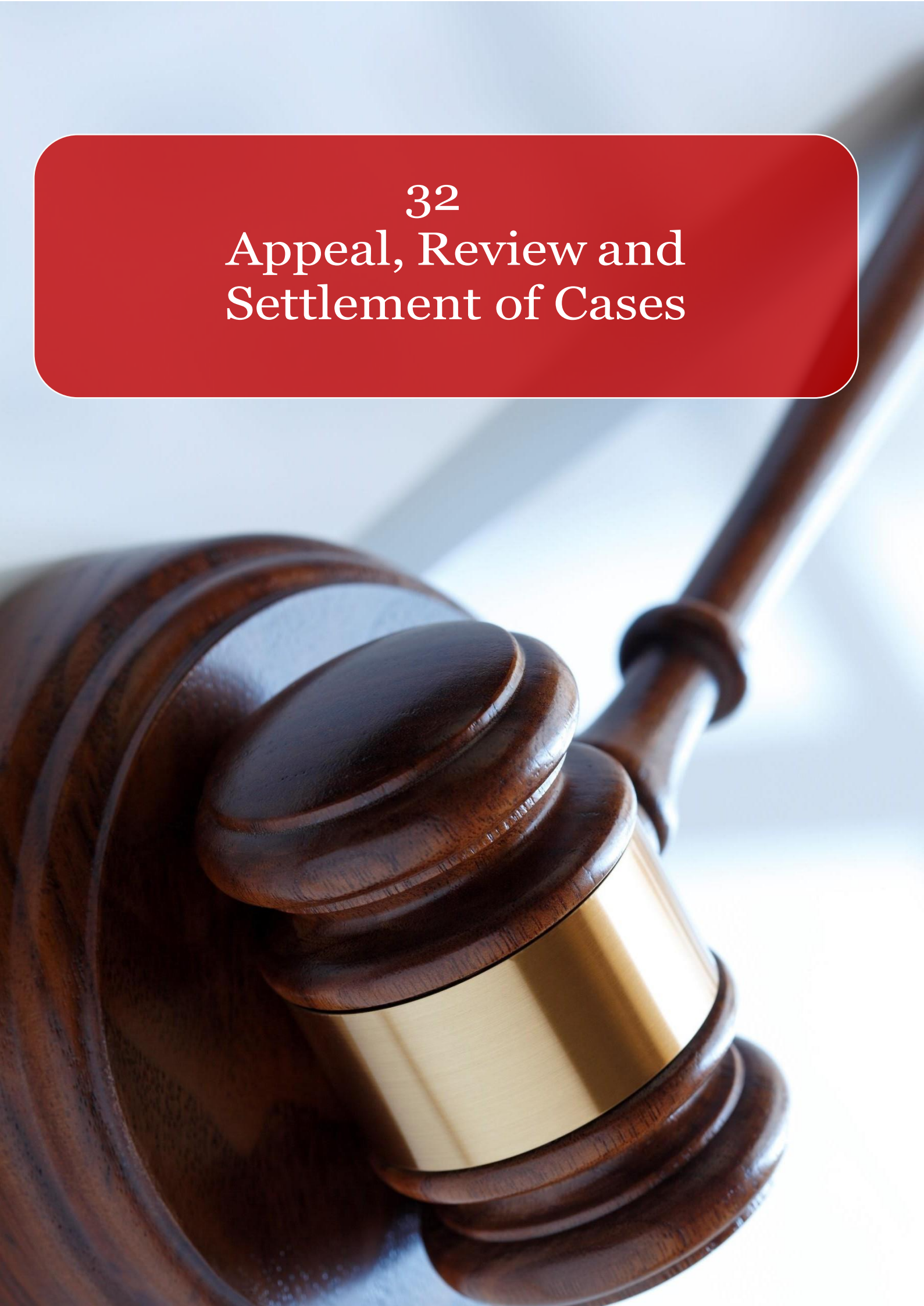
18.8 The Commissioner inclusively overseeing investigations/related work with respect to Commercial Fraud matters is beneficial to avoiding grievances in an ongoing inquiry. Wherever a reasonable grievance persists, the Commissioner may

consider meeting, by appointment, the importer/exporter or his representative.

[Refer CBIC Instruction No. 27/2024-Customs dated 01.11.2024]

32

Appeal, Review and Settlement of Cases



Chapter 32: Appeal, Review and Settlement of Cases

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Like any other taxation statute, the Customs Act contains detailed provisions for judicial review, for resolution of disputes, by way of appeals and review. The various appellate authorities are Commissioner (Appeal), Revision Authority, Customs Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT), High Court and the Supreme Court. Any appeal by the department, before any appellate authority, is filed only after following a procedure of review of orders as prescribed in the Customs Act. Beside the route of appeals, an alternative dispute resolution mechanism has also been provided by way of the settlement of cases by the Settlement Commission. These provisions are contained in Chapter XV and XIVA respectively of the Customs Act, 1962.

2. Appeal to Commissioner (Appeals):

- 2.1 The power of adjudication of cases is bestowed on all officers of the rank of Superintendent/ Appraiser and above as per specified monetary limits and other criterion. Thus, the first stage of appeal against any decision or order passed under Customs Act, 1962, by any officer below the rank of Principal Commissioner or Commissioner of Customs lies with the Commissioner (Appeals), within 60 days from the date of the communication to him of such decision or order, in terms of Section 128 (appeal by any person aggrieved by such order) or Section 129 (D)(4) [Departments appeal on review of order], as the case may be, of the Customs Act, 1962.
- 2.2 The procedure of filing of appeal by Department against the order/decision of officers below the rank of Commissioner is that every such adjudication order is reviewed, for legality and propriety of such order, by the Commissioner of Customs, under Section 129D(2) of the said Act. If on review, the adjudication order/decision is not found to be legal and proper, the Commissioner may direct any officer subordinate, by an order, to file an appeal to Commissioner (Appeals). The said order shall be passed by the Commissioner within 3 months from the date of communication of adjudication order and in pursuance of such order; an appeal would be filed to Commissioner (Appeals) within a period of 1 month from the date of issue of said order by the Commissioner.
- 2.3 The limitation period for filing of appeal to Commissioner (Appeal) is 60 days from the date of communication of order being appealed against. However, Commissioner (Appeals) may allow a further period of thirty days for filing of appeal provided he is satisfied that appellant was prevented by sufficient cause from presenting the appeal within the period of 60 days.
- 2.4 The procedure for filing of appeal before Commissioner (Appeals) is that the appeal is required to be filed in a Form No. CA-1 [under Section 128 of the said Act] and Form CA-2 [under Section 129D(4) of the said Act], as prescribed under rule 3 and rule 4, respectively, of the Customs (Appeals) Rules, 1982. Once (Appeal) is filed, The Commissioner (Appeals) shall give opportunity to the

appellant to be heard. Commissioner (Appeals), on being shown sufficient cause, can give adjournment from hearing upto 3 times. The Commissioner (Appeals), may allow any grounds of appeal not specified in the appeal filed, provided he is satisfied that omission thereof was not willful or unreasonable.

- 2.5 The Commissioner (Appeals), wherever possible, would hear and decide every appeal within a period of 6 months from the date of filing of appeal, shall pass an order as he thinks just and proper,-
- (a) confirming, modifying or annulling the decision or order appealed against; or
 - (b) referring the matter back to the adjudicating authority with directions for fresh adjudication or decision, as the case may be, in the following cases, namely:
 - (i) where an order or decision has been passed without following the principles of natural justice; or
 - (ii) where no order or decision has been passed after re-assessment under section 17; or
 - (iii) where an order of refund under section 27 has been issued by crediting the amount to Fund without recording any finding on the evidence produced by the applicant.]

[Substituted by the Finance Act, 2018 (Act 13 of 2018), dated 29.03.2018]

PROVIDED that an order enhancing any penalty or fine in lieu of confiscation or confiscating goods of greater value or reducing the amount of refund shall not be passed unless the appellant has been given a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the proposed order.

PROVIDED FURTHER that where the Commissioner (Appeals) is of opinion that any duty has not been levied or has been short-levied or erroneously refunded, no order requiring the appellant to pay any duty not levied, short-levied or erroneously refunded shall be passed unless the appellant is given notice within the time-limit specified in section 28 to show cause against the proposed order.

- 2.6 The order of the Commissioner (Appeals) disposing of the appeal shall be in writing and shall state the points for determination, the decision thereon and the reasons for the decision. On the disposal of the appeal, the Commissioner (Appeals) shall communicate the order passed by him to the appellant, the adjudicating authority Principal Chief Commissioner of Customs or Chief Commissioner of Customs and the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs.

[The relevant provisions contained in Sections 128 and 128A of the Customs Act and the Customs (Appeals) Rules, 1982.]

3. Appeal to CESTAT:

- 3.1 The Customs Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) has been

constituted by the Central Government under Section 129(1) of the said Act.

- 3.2 In terms of Sections 129A(1) (appeal by any person aggrieved by such decision or order) or Section 129D(4) [departments appeal on review of order of Commissioner of Customs, by the Committee of Chief Commissioner] of the said Act any person may file appeal to CESTAT, if aggrieved by:
- (a) a decision or order passed by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs as an adjudicating authority; or
 - (b) an order passed by the Commissioner (Appeals) under section 128A.
- 3.3 Appeal cannot be filed before CESTAT and the Appellate Tribunal shall not have jurisdiction to decide any appeal in respect of any order referred to in clause (b), if the matter relates to:
- (i) import or export of goods as baggage;
 - (ii) import goods loaded in a conveyance for importation into India, but which are not unloaded, not landed or short landed at place of destination;
 - (iii) payment of drawback as provided in chapter X, and the rules made thereunder.
- 3.4 The CESTAT may refuse to admit an appeal in respect of an order where
- (i) the value of goods that have been confiscated without option having been given to the owner of the goods to pay a fine in lieu of confiscation under section 125; or
 - (ii) in any disputed case, other than a case where the determination of any question having a relation to the rate of duty, value of goods for the purpose of assessment, difference in duty involved or the duty involved, is in issue or is one of the points in issue; or
 - (iii) the amount of fine or penalty determined by such order, does not exceed two lakh rupees.
- 3.5 In terms of Sections 129A(2), the Committee of Commissioners of Customs may, if it is of opinion that an order passed by the Commissioner (Appeals) under section 128A, is not legal or proper, direct the proper officer to appeal on its behalf to the Appellate Tribunal against such order. PROVIDED that where the Committee of Principal Commissioners of Customs or Commissioners of Customs differs in its opinion regarding the appeal against the order of the Commissioner (Appeals), it shall state the point or points on which it differs and make a reference to the jurisdictional Principal Chief Commissioner of Customs or Chief Commissioner of Customs who shall, after considering the facts of the order, if is of the opinion that the order passed by the Commissioner (Appeals) is not legal or proper, direct the proper officer to appeal to the Appellate Tribunal against such order.
- 3.6 The limitation period for filing of appeal to CESTAT is 3 months from the date of communication of order being appealed against. The Tribunal may admit appeal

after the expiry of this period if it is satisfied that there was sufficient cause for not presenting it within the limitation period.

- 3.7 In accordance with Sections 129A, 129B and 129C of the Customs Act, 1962 read with the Customs (Appeals) Rules, 1982 and the CESTAT (Procedure) Rules, 1982, the procedure for filing of appeal before CESTAT and disposal thereof is as follows:
- (a) The appeal is required to be filed in a Form No. CA 3 [Section 129A(1) of the said Act] and Form CA-5 [Section 129 D(4) of the said Act], prescribed under rule 6(1) and rule 7, respectively, of the Customs (Appeals) Rules, 1982.
 - (b) On receipt of notice of appeal the respondent may file a memorandum of cross objection within 45 days of receipt of notice [Section 129A(4) of the said Act]. The memorandum of cross examination is required to be filed in Form CA 4, prescribed under rule 6 (2) of the Customs (Appeals) Rules, 1982. In the memorandum of cross objections, the respondent can agitate against any part of the order appealed against and such cross objections are disposed of by the Tribunal as if it were an appeal. Rules 15 and 15A of the CESTAT (Procedure) Rules, 1982 allow filing of reply to such appeal within a month by the respondent, and rejoinder to the reply within a month by the appellant.
 - (c) The CESTAT shall give opportunity to the appellant to be heard, and on being shown sufficient cause, can give adjournment from hearing. In terms of proviso to Section 129B(1A) of the said Act, no such adjournment shall be granted more than three times to a party during hearing of the appeal. After hearing the case, CESTAT, pass such orders thereon as it thinks fit, confirming, annulling or modifying the decision or order appealed against or may refer / remand the case back to the authority which passed such decision or order with such directions as the Appellate Tribunal may think fit, for a fresh adjudication or decision.
 - (d) The CESTAT may, at any time within six months from the date of the order, amend its order to rectify any mistake apparent from the record that is brought to its notice by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs or the other party to the appeal. PROVIDED that an amendment which has the effect of enhancing the assessment or reducing a refund or otherwise increasing the liability of the other party shall not be made unless the Appellant Tribunal has given notice to him of its intention to do so and has allowed him a reasonable opportunity of being heard.
 - (e) A prescribed fee is required to be paid for filing of appeal or rectification of mistake (ROM) or for restoration of appeal. The fee prescribed at present is (i) Rs 1000, where amount of duty, interest and penalty is upto Rs 5 lakh; (ii) Rs 5000, where amount of duty, interest and penalty is between Rs 5 lakh to Rs 50 lakh; (iii) Rs 10000, where amount of duty, interest and penalty is more than Rs 50 lakh; (iv) Rs 500 for any other purposes, including ROM or restoration of appeal. However, no fee is payable in case of appeal or ROM or restoration of appeal application by department.
 - (f) The Appellate Tribunal, wherever possible, would hear and decide every appeal within a period of three years from the date of filing of appeal,

- 4. Review of orders passed by Commissioner of Customs and Commissioner (Appeals) and filing of appeal by Department:**
- 4.1 The process of review of the order of Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs and Commissioner of Customs (Appeals), by the Department is prescribed in Section 129 D(1) and Section 129A(2) of the Customs Act, respectively.
- 4.2 As prescribed in section 129D(1) of the Customs Act, 1962, the Committee of Principal Chief Commissioner of Customs or Chief Commissioner of Customs may call for and examine the records of any proceedings in which Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs has passed any decision or order as an adjudicating authority, for satisfying itself as to the legality or propriety of any such decision or order. The Committee of Principal Chief Commissioners of Customs or Chief Commissioner of Customs, that consists of two, one of them being Jurisdictional Chief Commissioners, wherein, may direct, by an order, the Commissioner to file an appeal to the Appellate Tribunal. In case the Committee differs in its opinion as to the legality or propriety of the decision or order it shall make a reference to the Board, and the Board will examine such order, and if it is of the view that order is not legal and proper, may, by order, direct the concerned Commissioner to appeal to the Tribunal.
- 4.3 As prescribed in section 129D(2) of the Customs Act, 1962, the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs may call for and examine the record of any proceedings in which an adjudicating authority subordinate to him has passed any decision or order under Customs Act for the purpose of satisfying himself as to the legality or propriety of any such decision or order and may, by order, direct such authority or any officer of customs subordinate to him to apply to the Commissioner (Appeals) for the determination of such points arising out of the decision or order as may be specified by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs in his order.
- 4.4 Every order under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) has to be passed within three months from date of communication of the decision or order of the adjudicating authority; PROVIDED that the Board may, on sufficient cause being shown, extend the said period by another thirty days. An appeal would be filed by the adjudicating authority or any officer of customs authorized in this behalf makes an application to the Appellate Tribunal or the Commissioner (Appeals) within a period of one month from the date of communication of the order under the said sub-sections.
- 4.5 The Committee of Chief Commissioners is notified by the Board under Section 129A(1B) of the said Act vide Notification No. 39/2005-Cus.(NT), dated 13-5-2005.
- 4.6 In terms of Sections 129A(2), the Committee of Commissioners of Customs may, if it is of opinion that an order passed by the Commissioner (Appeals) under section 128A, is not legal or proper, direct the proper officer to appeal on its behalf to the Appellate Tribunal against such order. PROVIDED that where the Committee of Principal Commissioners of Customs or Commissioners of Customs differs in its opinion regarding the appeal against the order of the Commissioner (Appeals), it shall state the point or points on which it differs and make a reference to the

jurisdictional Principal Chief Commissioner of Customs or Chief Commissioner of Customs who shall, after considering the facts of the order, if is of the opinion that the order passed by the Commissioner (Appeals) is not legal or proper, direct the proper officer to appeal to the Appellate Tribunal against such order.

- 4.7 The Committee of Commissioners is notified by the Board under Section 129A(2) of the said Act vide Notification No. 40/2005-Cus.(NT), dated 13.5.2005.

5. Revision Application:

- 5.1 The Central Government may, on the application of any person aggrieved by the order of Commissioner or Commissioner (Appeals), in cases of baggage, Drawback and short-landing/ not landing of goods, annul or modify such orders as prescribed under Section 129DD of the Customs Act, 1962. However, the Central Government may refuse to admit an application in respect of an order where the differential duty or fine or penalty involved determined by such order does not exceed Rs.5,000/-.

- 5.2 The filing of an application for Revision by Central Government need to be made within three months from the date of communication to the applicant of order against which the application is being made. The Central Government may allow a further period of three months, if it is satisfied that there was sufficient cause for not presenting it within the limitation period.

- 5.3 In terms of Sections 129A and 129DD of the Customs Act, 1962 and the Customs (Appeals) Rules, 1982 the Revision Application is required to be filed in a Form No. CA 8, prescribed under Rules 8A and 8B of the said Rules. The fee prescribed is

- (a) Rs.200/-, where the amount of duty and interest demanded, fine or penalty levied is upto Rs.1 lakh;
- (b) Rs.1,000/-, where the amount of duty and interest demanded, fine or penalty levied is more than Rs.1 lakh. However, no fee is to be paid in case Revision Application is filed by the Department.

6. Deposit of certain percentage of duty demanded and Penalty imposed before filing Appeal:

- 6.1 Under section 129 E, the Tribunal or Commissioner (Appeals) as the case may be shall not entertain any appeal:

- (i) under sub-section (1) of Section 128, unless the appellant has deposited seven and a half percent of the duty demanded or penalty imposed or both, in dispute, in pursuance of a decision or an order passed by an officer of Customs lower in rank than Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs;
- (ii) against the decision or order referred to in clause (a) of sub section(1) of Section 129 A, unless the appellant has deposited seven and a half percent of

the duty demanded or penalty imposed or both, in dispute, in pursuance of the decision or order appealed against;

- (iii) against the decision or order referred to in clause (b) of sub section (1) of Section 129A, unless the appellant has deposited ten percent of the duty demanded or penalty imposed or both, in dispute, in pursuance to the decision or order appealed against.

PROVIDED that the amount required to be deposited does not exceed Rs.10 crores.

PROVIDED further that the provisions of this section shall not apply to stay applications and appeals pending before any appellate authority prior to the commencement of Finance (No.2) Act , 2014.

- 6.2 Section 129EE prescribes that if the pre-deposit made by the party under Section 129E is required to be refunded consequent upon the order of the Appellate Authority, the interest shall be paid to the appellant at such rate, not below five percent and not exceeding thirty six percent per annum as is for the time being fixed by the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, on such amount from the date of payment of amount till, the date of refund of such amount.

7. Appeal to High Court:

- 7.1 Against any order passed in appeal by the Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT), on or after 1-7-2003, which is not relating to determination of rate of duty or value of goods for the purposes of assessment, appeal lies to the High Court if the High Court is satisfied that the case involves a substantial question of law. However, where the issue involved relates to determination of rate of duty or value for the purpose of assessment, [and order passed by the Appellate Tribunal before the establishment of the National Tax Tribunal] appeal lies to Supreme Court.
- 7.2 The limitation period for filing of appeal to High Court is one hundred and eighty days from the date when the order being appealed against was received by the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs or the other party. The High Court may admit appeal after the expiry of this period if it is satisfied that there was sufficient cause for not presenting it within the limitation period.
- 7.3 If appeal is filed by the other party, it needs to be accompanied by a fee of Rs. 200.
- 7.4 Where High Court is satisfied that question of law is involved, it shall formulated the question of law. The High Court may hear any other substantial question of law not formulated by it, if it is satisfied that the case involves such question. The High Court may determine any issue that has not been determined by the Appellate Tribunal or has been wrongly determined by the Appellate Tribunal.
- 7.5 Sub-section (7) of section 130 and section 130C (1) and (2) provides that, when an appeal has been filed before the High Court, it shall be heard by a bench of not less than two Judges of the High Court, and shall be decided in accordance with the opinion of such Judges or of the majority, if any, of such Judges. Further,

subsection (8) of the section provides, where there is no such majority, the Judges shall state the point of law upon which they differ and the case shall, then, be heard upon that point only by one or more of the other Judges of the High Court and such point shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority of the Judges who have heard the case including those who first heard it.

- 7.6 The Code of Civil procedure, 1908 applies to the Appeal so filed to the High Court except as otherwise provided in the said Act.
- 7.7 In respect of order passed by CESTAT prior to 1-7-2003, Section 130A of the Customs Act, 1962 provides that within 180 days of receipt of order of Tribunal passed under Section 129B of the said Act, a person could have filed an application if the order of the Tribunal does not relate to determination of any question having relation to the rate of duty of Customs or the valuation of goods for purposes of assessment.

[Refer Circular No. 935/25/2010-CX, dated 21.09.2010]

8. Appeal to Supreme Court:

- 8.1 Under Section 130E of the Customs Act, 1962 an appeal lies to the Supreme Court from:
- (a) Any judgment of the High Court delivered _
 - (i) in an appeal made under Section 130; or
 - (ii) a reference made under section 130 by the Appellate Tribunal before 1-7-2003;
 - (iii) on a reference made under section 130A, provided the High Court certifies, on its own motion or on an oral application made by the party aggrieved, to be a fit case for appeal to Supreme Court; or
 - (b) any order passed [before the establishment of the National Tax Tribunal] by the Appellate Authority relating, among other things, to the determination of any question having a relation to the rate of duty of Customs or to the value of goods for purposes of assessment.
- 8.2 The time limit for filing civil appeal before the Supreme Court is 60 days from the date of receipt of order.
- 8.3 Normally no application is made by the aggrieved party before the High Court, to certify that case is fit for filing of appeal before the Supreme Court. Therefore in such cases, the aggrieved party can agitate the order / judgment of the High Court before the Supreme Court by way of filing a Special Leave Petition under Article 136 of the Constitution of India. The limitation for filing of SLP is 90 days from the date of the High Court's order. The time taken by the Court from the date of filing of application for certified copy of the order till the copy is ready for delivery is excluded from the computation of the period of limitation.

- 8.4 The proposal for filing of SLP and Civil Appeal are examined and processed in the Board, on receipt of proposals from field formations duly approved by the Chief Commissioner.

[Refer Circular No. 935/25/2010-CX, dated 21.09.2010]

9. Disputes between Central Government Department and PSU/ other Government Departments:

- 9.1 In cases where disputes arise between two Central Government Departments or a Government Department and Public Sector Undertaking, there is no requirement of obtaining approval of the Committee on Disputes for pursuing litigations. Field formations may pursue their appeals in the respective Tribunals / Courts.

[Refer Instruction F.No.390/R/262/09-JC, dated 24.03.2011]

10. Monetary limits for filing appeals to CESTAT, High Courts and Supreme Court:

- 10.1 In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 131BA of the Customs Act, 1962 and in partial modification of earlier instruction issued from F.No. 390/misc/163/2010-JC dated 17.08.2011, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs fixes the following monetary limits below which appeal shall not be filed in the CESTAT, High Court and the Supreme Court:

Tabel 32.1: Monetary limits for filing appeals to CESTAT, High Courts and Supreme Court

S. No.	Appellate Form	Monetary Limit
1	CESTAT	Rs. 50,00,000/-
2	High Court	Rs. 1,00,00,000/-
3	Supreme Court	Rs. 2,00,00,000/-

Adverse judgements relating to the following should be contested irrespective of the amount involved:

- a) *Where the Constitutional validity of the provisions of an Act or Rule is under challenge*
- b) *Where Notification/Instruction/Order or Circular has been illegal or ultra-vires;*
- c) *Classification and refund issues which are of legal and/or recurring nature*

[Refer Instruction F. No. 390/Misc/30/2023- JC dated 02.11.2023]

- 10.2 In such cases wherever it is decided not to file appeal, such cases shall not have any precedent value. In such cases, it should specifically be record that “even though the decision is not acceptable, appeal is not being filed as the amount

involved is less than the monetary limit prescribed by the Board.” Further, in such cases, there will be no presumption that the Department has acquiesced in the decision on the disputed issues in the case of same assessee or in case of any other assessees, if the amount involved exceeds the monetary limits.

[Refer Instruction F No. 390/170/92-JC, dated 13.01.1993 and F.No. 390/Misc./163/2010-JC, dated 20.10.2010]

11. Settlement of Cases/ Settlement Commission:

11.1 Chapter XIV-A of Customs Act, 1962 provides an alternative channel for resolution of dispute for assessees without prolonged litigation in adjudication/appeals/revisions etc. by constituting “Settlement Commission” under section 32 of the Central Excise Act 1944 (1 of 1944). Presently, four Benches of the Settlement Commission function at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. Provisions relating to Settlement Commission are contained in Sections 127A to 127N of the Customs Act, 1962 In terms of Section 127B of the Customs Act, 1962, any importer, exporter or any other person, may file an application before the Settlement Commission to have the case settled, before adjudication of case. The application needs to be in such manner as may be specified by rules, and containing a full and true disclosure of his duty liability which has not been disclosed before the proper officer, the manner in which such liability has been incurred, the additional amount of customs duty accepted to be payable by him or such other particulars like admission of short levy on account of misclassification, undervaluation or inapplicability of exemption notification. It is also specified that no application can be made unless the appellant has filed a Bill of Entry, or a Shipping Bill, or a bill of export, or made a baggage declaration, or a label or declaration imported or exported through post or courier and in relation to such document or documents, a Show Cause Notice has been issued to him by the Proper Officer. Provided the additional amount of duty accepted by the applicant in his application exceeds Rs.3 lakhs. Provided further the applicant has paid the additional amount of customs duty accepted by him along with interest due under section 28AA. Provided further that no application shall be entertained by the Settlement Commission in cases which are pending in the Appellate Tribunal or in any Court. Similarly, the matters relating to interpretation of classification of the goods under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975, cannot be applied before the Commission. Also no application shall be made in relation to goods to which Section 123 of the Act applies or to goods in relation to which any offence under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 has been committed.

11.2 The application made under sub-section (1) for settlement of cases shall be accompanied by fees specified by rules and an application once made under sub-section (1) shall not be allowed to be withdrawn by the applicant.

11.3 Sub-section (5) of section 127B prescribes that any person other than an applicant referred to in sub-section (1), may also make an application to the Settlement Commission in respect of a show cause notice issued to him in a case relating to the applicant which has been settled or is pending before the Settlement Commission and such notice is pending before an adjudicating authority.

[Inserted by Finance Act, 2017 (7 of 2017), dated 31.03.2017]

11.4 In the Customs Act, in Section 127C, after sub-section (8), the following sub-section 8A has been inserted by Finance Act, 2023 (8 of 2023), dated 31.03.2023 w.e.f. 01.04.2023 vide Notification No. 21/2023-Customs (NT), dated 31.03.2023, wherein, it is specified that the order under sub-section (5) shall be passed within a period of nine months from the last day of the month in which the application under section 127B is made, and if, no order is passed within the said period, the settlement proceedings shall abate, and the adjudicating authority before whom the proceeding at the time of making the application was pending shall dispose of the application in accordance with the provisions of this Act as if no application under the said section had been made.

[Inserted by Finance Act, 2017 (7 of 2017), dated 31.03.2017]

11.5 The amount of settlement ordered by the Settlement Commission, shall not be less than the duty liability admitted by the applicant under section 127B while filing for settlement application. Where any duty, interest, fine and penalty payable in pursuance of an order under, is not paid by the applicant within thirty days of receipt of the order of Settlement Commission, such unpaid amount along with interest shall be recoverable in accordance with the provision of Section 142 of the Customs Act, 1962.

11.6 Section 127D of the Customs Act, 1962 prescribes that, where, during the pendency of any proceedings before it, the Settlement Commission is of the opinion that for the purpose of protecting the interests of the revenue it is necessary so to do, it may, by order, attach provisionally any property belonging to the applicant in such manner as prescribed by the rules.

11.7 The Settlement Commission have all the powers which are vested in an officer of the Customs under the Act or the rules made thereunder. Also, where, an application made has been allowed to be proceeded with under section 127C, the Settlement Commission shall, until an order is passed have, exclusive jurisdiction to exercise the powers and perform the functions of any officer of Customs or Central Excise Officer under the said Acts.

11.8 Any proceedings before the Settlement Commission shall be deemed to be a judicial proceeding and every order passed by the Settlement Commission under Section 127J of the Customs Act, 1962 is conclusive in respect of the matters stated therein and no matter covered by such order, save as otherwise provided in chapter XIV-A, be reopened in any proceeding under the Customs Act, 1962 or under any other law for the time being in force. The Settlement Commission can consider immunity from prosecution proceedings if the applicant cooperates with the Commission in the proceedings before it and makes full and true disclosure of his duty liability. Even grant of immunity, whole or part, from imposition of penalty, fine and interest may also be considered.

[Refer Circulars No. 935/25/2010-CX, dated 21.9.2010, No. 27/27/94-CX, dated 2.3.1994, No.156/67/95-CX, dated 17.11.1995, No.515/11/2000-CX, dated 18.02.2000 and No.578/15/2001-CX, dated 20.06.2001 and Instructions F.No. 390/Misc./163/2010-JC, dated 20.10.2010 and F.No.390/170/92-JC, dated 13.01.1993]

12. Customs Authority for advance Rulings:

12.1 A scheme of advance rulings was incorporated in Chapter V-B of the Customs Act 1962 by the Finance Act of 1999 for issue of binding rulings in advance, on customs matters. Vide section 28E, the scheme is intended to provide certainty to intending investors. Statutory changes have been brought out to expand the ambit of authority over a period of time.

12.2 Section 28E states that, "advance ruling" means a written decision on any of the questions referred to in section 28H raised by the applicant in his application in respect of any goods prior to its importation or exportation;

12.3 Customs Authority for Advance Ruling means the Customs Authority for Advance Rulings appointed by the Board under section 28EA who shall be of the rank of Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs.

12.4 Section 28F prescribes that there shall be Authority for advance rulings. - constituted under section 245-O of the Income-tax Act, 1961 and that shall be the Appellate Authority for deciding appeal under this Chapter and the said Appellate Authority shall exercise the jurisdiction, powers and authority conferred on it by or under this Act. Provided that the Member from the Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise), who is qualified to be a Member of the Board, shall be the revenue Member of the Appellate Authority for the purposes of this Act.

12.5 Under the scheme section 28H states the procedure for application:

- (1) An applicant desirous of obtaining an advance ruling under this Chapter may make an application in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed, stating the question on which the advance ruling is sought.
- (2) The question on which the advance ruling is sought shall be in respect of, -
 - (a) classification of goods under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 (51 of 1975);
 - (b) applicability of a notification issued under sub-section (1) of section 25, having a bearing on the rate of duty;
 - (c) the principles to be adopted for the purposes of determination of value of the goods under the provisions of this Act.
 - (d) applicability of notifications issued in respect of tax or duties under this Act or the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 or any tax or duty chargeable under any other law for the time being in force in the same manner as duty of customs leviable under this Act or the Customs Tariff Act;
 - (e) determination of origin of the goods in terms of the rules notified under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 (51 of 1975) and matters relating thereto.
 - (f) any other matter as the Central Government may, by notification, specify.

- (3) The application shall be made in quadruplicate and be accompanied by a fee of ten thousand rupees.
- (4) An applicant may withdraw his application within thirty days from the date of the application.
- (5) The applicant may be represented by any person resident in India who is authorised in this behalf.

12.6 As prescribed in section 28I, on receipt of an application, the Authority shall call for relevant records, examine the application and the records called for, and by order, either allow or reject the application. PROVIDED that the Authority shall not allow the application where the question raised in the application is already pending in the applicant's case before any officer of customs, the Appellate Tribunal or any Court or the same as in a matter already decided by the Appellate Tribunal or any Court. Provided further that no application shall be rejected under this sub-section unless an opportunity has been given to the applicant of being heard and that where the application is rejected, reasons for such rejection shall be given in the order.

12.7 Where an application is allowed under sub-section (2), the Authority shall, after examining such further material as may be placed before it by the applicant or obtained by the Authority, pronounce its advance ruling on the question specified in the application. On a request received from the applicant, the Authority shall, before pronouncing its advance ruling, provide an opportunity to the applicant of being heard, either in person or through a duly authorised representative.

12.8 The Authority shall pronounce its advance ruling in writing within three months of the receipt of application

12.9 Section 28J states the Applicability of advance ruling.

- (1) The advance ruling pronounced by the Authority under section 28-I shall be binding only
 - (a) on the applicant who had sought it;
 - (b) in respect of any matter referred to in sub-section (2) of section 28H;
 - (c) on the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs, and the customs authorities subordinate to him, in respect of the applicant.
- (2) The advance ruling referred to in sub-section (1) shall be binding as aforesaid unless there is a change in law or facts on the basis of which the advance ruling has been pronounced.

12.10 Section 28K states that Advance ruling to be void in certain circumstances

- (1) Where the Authority finds, on a representation made to it by the Principal

Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs or otherwise, that an advance ruling pronounced by it under sub-section (6) of section 28-I has been obtained by the applicant by fraud or misrepresentation of facts, it may, by order, declare such ruling to be void ab initio and thereupon all the provisions of this Act shall apply to the applicant as if such advance ruling had never been made.

- (2) A copy of the order made under sub-section (1) shall be sent to the applicant and the Principal Commissioner of Customs or Commissioner of Customs.

12.11 Section 28KA provides for Appeal in cases of Advance Rulings, which states that

- (1) Any officer authorised by the Board, by notification, or the applicant may file an appeal to the Appellate Authority against any ruling or order passed by the Authority, within sixty days from the date of the communication of such ruling or order, in such form and manner as may be prescribed:

Provided that where the Appellate Authority is satisfied that the appellant was prevented by sufficient cause from presenting the appeal within the period so specified, it may allow a further period of thirty days for filing such appeal.

- (2) The provisions of sections 28-I and 28J shall, mutatis mutandis, apply to the appeal under this section.

12.12 Section 28L of the Customs Act, 1962 defines the Powers of Authority or Appellate Authority –

- (1) The Authority or Appellate Authority shall, for the purpose of exercising its powers regarding discovery and inspection, enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath, issuing commissions and compelling production of books of account and other records, have all the powers of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908).
- (2) The Authority or Appellate Authority shall be deemed to be a civil court for the purposes of section 195, but not for the purposes of Chapter XXVI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), and every proceeding before the Authority or Appellate Authority shall be deemed to be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of sections 193 and 228, and for the purpose of section 196, of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860).

[Substituted/ inserted by Finance Act, 2017 (Act 7 of 2017) dated 31.3.2017; Finance Act, 2018 (Act 13 of 2018) dated 29.03.2018]



33

Grievance Redressal

Chapter 33: Grievance Redressal

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The Citizen's Charter of the Department envisions that the Customs & Central Excise officers shall carry out their assigned tasks with integrity and judiciousness; courtesy and understanding; objectivity and transparency; promptness and efficiency. The officers are committed to providing every possible assistance to the public and trade in implementation of the Customs policies and procedures. The Department has also taken numerous other measures to ensure that complaint(s)/grievance(s) are minimized and where received, these are attended to promptly. These measures include a grievance redressal mechanism for both cargo clearance and passenger clearance in the field formations of Customs.

2. Grievance redressal related to cargo clearance:

- 2.1 The clearance of cargo at ports, air cargo complexes, ICDs and CFSs involves interaction of the trade with the Customs officials, which often results in complaints of harassment, corruption, and delays. Thus, to redress these grievances the focus has been to simplify procedures, enhance transparency, sensitize the Departmental officers to their responsibilities, and expand use of EDI in Customs clearance procedures. Some specific measures for facilitation and handling complaints/grievances of trade and industry are as follows:
- (a) ICEGATE Advanced Helpdesk: Advanced Helpdesk is an online service provided to ICEGATE users to resolve their technical problems and queries so that there should not be any difficulty in using ICEGATE services. End users' calls are handled with special care by the intervention of Helpdesk analysts, Service Area Analysts, Assignees, shift managers, senior Custom officers so that the end users get quick solutions of their problems and no down time occurs and high service standards are maintained.
 - (b) Management Information System (MIS): A major area of concern for the importers, exporters, Customs Brokers is to get information regarding clearance of their consignments, which has been significantly resolved with the introduction of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) at all major Custom Houses. In all major Custom Houses, a "Tele Enquiry System" allows exporters, importers etc. to dial the assigned numbers and ascertain the status of the Bills of Entry/Shipping Bills or Drawback claim. This system can also be used on fax mode. Further, supervisory officers of Customs can monitor the delays in clearance at any stage. The system also generates a daily report of all pending Bills of Entry, Shipping Bills, Drawback claims along with the date of receipt and the level at which the document is pending. For this purpose the System Manager looks after all EDI related problems and holds regular meetings with the Remote EDI (RES) users, Customs Brokers representatives, NIC, CMC and other agencies that support the EDI system.
 - (c) Accessibility of Senior Officers: The Chief Commissioner/Commissioners of Customs earmark time on all working days during which any person having

any grievances is free to meet the officer without prior appointment. These meetings ensure timely and prompt remedial measures.

- (d) Public Grievance Officer (PGO): Each Commissionerate has a designated PGO and Public Notices have been issued giving the names and telephone numbers of these officers. These PGO may be approached by the trade and public if their grievance is not being redressed by the dealing officer or his supervisor.
- (e) Public Grievance Committee (PGC): A PGC is constituted in each Customs Commissionerate, consisting of representatives of trade and industry, Custom House Agents, representatives of Custodians, such as AAI, CONCOR, Banks, Export Promotion Agencies, such as the Garments Exporters Association, Handicraft Export Association, and Chambers of Commerce etc. The PGC meets once in a month to address grievances relating to Customs functioning. In case grievances relate to other agencies such as the Wildlife, NIC or CMC, their representatives are also invited for these meetings.
- (f) Watch Dog Committee: A Watchdog Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Commissioner of Customs, which meets once in two months. Leading association of trade and industry and other agencies that interact with Customs are included in this Committee along with the senior officers of Customs to ensure meaningful dialogue. This Committee takes note of various procedural delays or problems in general being faced in Customs clearance of export/import cargo or grant of various incentives. Feedback from trade and industry is used for necessary review of procedures and taking measures to remove the difficulties of importers/exporters.
- (g) Permanent Trade Facilitation Committee (PTFC): PTFCs having membership of all stakeholders function in each Customs station to resolve local issues. As a trade facilitation measure and with a view to encourage stakeholder participation and provide for expeditious resolution of local issues (without these being escalated to the Department/Board), the Board has instructed the Chief Commissioners to ensure that:
 - (i) PTFC are held regularly with minimum of one meeting per month on a pre-decided date.
 - (ii) Apex trade bodies are allowed to attend the PTFC meetings along with their local constituents, who are members of the PTFC.
 - (iii) Efforts are made to regularly review the membership of the PTFC with the aim of including all stakeholders in the Customs functioning.
 - (iv) Chief Commissioners/Commissioners are receptive to meeting local and apex trade bodies even outside the framework of the PTFC.

[Refer Circular No.42/2013-Cus., dated 25.10.2013]

- (v) Ensure Representation of women in the Permanent Trade Facilitation

Committee (PTFC) and Customs Clearance Facility Committee (CCFC) meetings, preferably through women associations and encourage more women participation in International Trade.

[Refer Circular No. 02/2024-Customs dated 08.03.2024]

3. Grievance redressal and facilitation measures for passengers:

- 3.1 At international airports more than 90% of the passengers that have nothing to declare walk through the Green Channel without interaction with Customs. Even otherwise, the Air Customs Officers have been sensitized to show due courtesy and exemplary conduct towards all passengers. However, in case any passenger still has a grievance there are a number of illuminated boards installed by Customs in the arrival/departure halls and in the immigration area advising them to approach the PRO (Customs) for help. Senior officers of the rank of Assistant/Deputy Commissioners of Customs are also available round the clock and can be directly approached by passengers for redressal of their grievances.
- 3.2 The Notices displayed prominently at the airports also invite the public to lodge any complaint with the Commissioner of Customs or the CVC.
- 3.3 An Airport Facilitation Committee has been constituted to look into the complaints of the passengers at the international airports. This Committee includes representatives of various agencies working at the airport like IAAI, Customs, Immigration, and Police etc. and meets once a month.

4. Setting up of 'Customs Clearance Facilitation Committee' (CCFC):

- 4.1 The Government has in recent times taken a number of measures to create an environment for ease of doing business and trade facilitation. The measures include the simplification of Customs procedures, reduction of documents, message exchange between Government agencies engaged in Customs clearance, and use of digital signature for electronic submission of Customs process documents. Continuing in this direction, it has been decided with the approval of the Cabinet Secretary to establish a high-level administrative body at each seaport and airport with the responsibility of ensuring expeditious Customs clearance of imported and export goods.
- 4.2 In this regard it is seen that in terms of the Customs Act, 1962 read with the relevant rules and regulations, imported and export goods are subjected to certain legal and procedural formalities before being permitted clearance by Customs. These requirements include the submission of prescribed documents and adherence to laid down procedures before an appropriate legal order is given by the Customs officer permitting the importer/exporter to clear the goods for the intended purpose. If provisions of other Allied Acts are attracted in respect of the imported/export goods, permission to clear the goods is given by the Customs only after getting the suitable clearance/response/NOC from the Government Department/agency concerned. Some of the major Departments/agencies that are involved in Customs clearance process are as follows:

- (i) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)/Port Health Officer (PHO)
- (ii) Plant Quarantine Authorities
- (iii) Animal Quarantine Authorities
- (iv) Drug Controller of India (CDSO)
- (v) Textile Commissioner
- (vi) Wildlife Authorities

4.3 In addition, the Port Trusts/Airport Authority/Custodians and Railways play a critical role in the Customs clearance process by providing the required infrastructure and facilities. Other local agencies concerned with logistics, manpower etc. which operate in the seaports and airports also facilitate the Customs clearance process.

4.4 Since the aforementioned regulatory agencies are critical contributors to the Customs clearance process of imported and export goods, a delay in receipt of a clearance from one regulatory agency holds up the Customs clearance of the said goods. Lack of adequate infrastructure in the seaport or airport or testing laboratories etc. also contribute to delay in the clearance of imported and export goods. Any other deficiency on account of other stakeholders also enhances the dwell time of cargo as well as the overall turnaround time of carriers. Another important reason for the delay is the improper coordination or absence of efficient coordination amongst Government agencies and other stakeholders involved in the Customs clearance process. Therefore, a view has emerged that these deficiencies can be best removed by institutionalizing at each seaport and airport an administrative mechanism with responsibility of expeditious Customs clearance of imported and export goods and for resolving related trade grievances in a time bound manner.

4.5 Accordingly, the Board vide Circular No. 13/ 2015-Customs dated 13.4.2015 has decided to set up a Customs Clearance Facilitation Committee (CCFC) at every major Customs seaport and airport with immediate effect. The CCFC would be headed by the Chief Commissioner of Customs/Commissioner of Customs in charge of the seaport and airport concerned. Its membership would include the senior-most functionary of the following departments/agencies/stakeholder at the particular seaport/airport:

- (i) Food Safety Standards Authority of India/Port Health Officer (PHO)
- (ii) Plant Quarantine Authorities
- (iii) Animal Quarantine Authorities
- (iv) Drug Controller of India (CDSO)
- (v) Textile Committee
- (vi) Port Trust / Airport Authority of India / Custodians
- (vii) Wild Life Authorities
- (viii) Railways/CONCOR

- (ix) Pollution Control Board
- (x) Any other Department / Agency / stakeholder to be co-opted on need basis.

4.6 Terms of Reference for the CCFC are as follows:

- (i) Ensuring and monitoring expeditious clearance of imported and export goods in accordance with the timeline specified by the parent ministry/Department concerned;
- (ii) Identifying and resolving bottlenecks, if any, in the clearance procedure of imported and export goods;
- (iii) Initiating Time Release Studies for improvement in the clearance time of imported and export goods;
- (iv) Having internal consultations to speed up the clearance process of imported and export goods and recommending best practices thereto for consideration of CBEC / Departments / Agencies concerned; and
- (v) Resolving grievances of members of the trade and industry in regard to clearance process of imported and export goods.

The CCFC shall meet once a week or more frequently, if considered necessary by the chair. The CCFC shall be headed by the Chief Commissioners of Customs/Customs and Central Excise at the place of headquarters of these officers. At other places it would be headed by the Commissioners of Customs/Customs and Central Excise in charge of the seaport/airport. Chief Commissioners of Customs/Customs and Central Excise are also required to periodically review the working of the CCFC and its impact on reducing delays in the Customs clearance time of imported and export goods and in resolving related trade grievances.

[Refer Circular No. 13/ 2015-Customs dated 13.4.2015]

5. Setting up of Turant Suvidha Kendra

- 5.1 Circular No.28/2020-Customs,dated 05.06.2020provided for setting up Turant Suvidha Kendras(TSK) for the purpose of implementation of 1st Phase of Faceless Assessment at Bengaluru and Chennai and Instruction No.09/2020-Customs,dated 05.06.2020, details the roles and functions of TSKs. Function mentioned in Para 5 of Circular No. 28/2020-Customs are as follows –
- a) Accept Bond or Bank Guarantee;
 - b) Carry out any other verifications that may be referred by Faceless Assessment Groups;
 - c) Defacing of documents/ permits licences, wherever required;
 - d) Debit of documents/ permits/ licences, wherever required; and V. Other functions determined by Commissioner to facilitate trade.

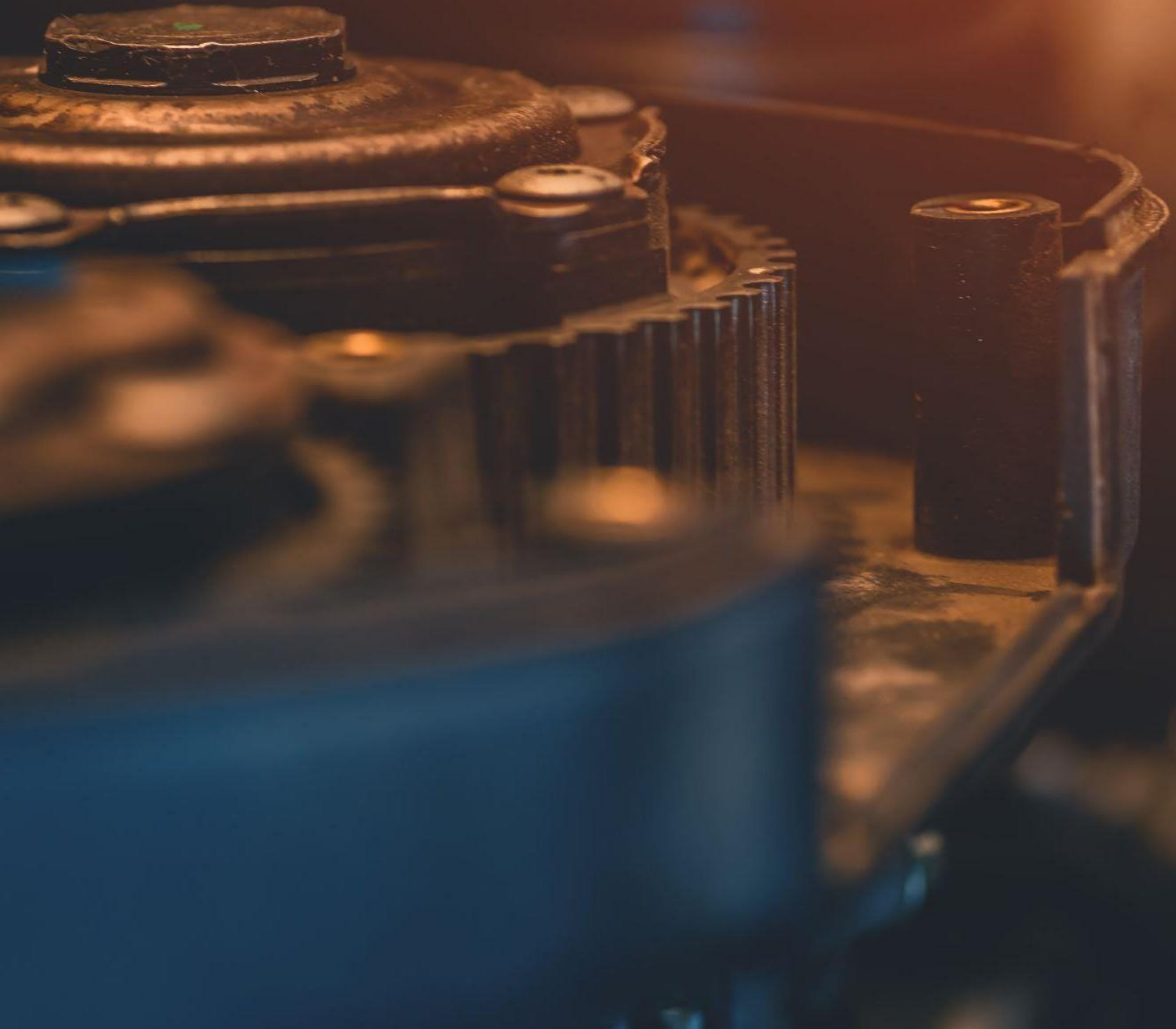
[Refer Circular No. 32/2020-Customs dated 06.07.2020]

6. Generation and quoting of Document Identification Number (DIN) on any communication issued by the officers of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) to tax payers and other concerned persons

- 6.1 The Board in exercise of its power under section 151A of the Customs Act, 1962 directs that no search authorization, summons, arrest memo, inspection notices and letters issued in the course of any enquiry shall be issued by any officer under the Board to a taxpayer or any other person, on or after the 8th day of November, 2019 without a computer-generated Document Identification Number (DIN) being duly quoted prominently in the body of such communication. The digital platform for generation of DIN is hosted on the Directorate of Data Management (DDM)'s online portal "cbicddm.gov.in"

[Refer Circular No. 37/2019 dated 05.11.2019]

34 Audit



Chapter 34: Audit

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (k) of section 157, read with section 99A and clause (ii) of subsection (2) of section 158, of the Customs Act, 1962 (52 of 1962) and in supersession of the On-site Post Clearance Audit at the Premises of Importers and Exporters Regulation, 2011 has notified the Customs Audit Regulations, 2018.

[Notification No. 45/2018-Customs (N.T.) dated 24.05.2018]

- 1.2 A new Chapter XII A with heading 'AUDIT' was introduced in Customs Act, 1962 after Section 99. A new Section 99A (under Chapter XII A) has been introduced to provide a statutory framework for the procedure for conducting post clearance audit.

Section 99A: the proper officer may carry out the audit of assessment of imported goods or export goods or of an auditee under this Act either in his office or in the premises of the auditee in such manner as may be prescribed. Explanation of said Section 99A defines "auditee" as under:

Explanation – For the purposes of this section, "auditee" means a person who is subject to an audit under this section and includes an importer or exporter or custodian approved under section 45 or licensee of a warehouse and any other person concerned directly or indirectly in clearing, forwarding, stocking, carrying, selling or purchasing of imported goods or export goods or dutiable goods.

It means, scope of auditee has been enlarged significantly by aforesaid definition.

[Inserted by the Finance Act, 2018 (Act No. 13 of 2018), dated 29.3.2018]

- 1.3 A new clause (k) has been inserted in section 157 of the Customs Act [vide Finance Act, 2018 (Act No. 13 of 2018)] to enable the Board to frame regulations in accordance with the new section 99A of the said Act.

Clause (k) of section 157 reads as:

(k) the manner of conducting audit;

[Inserted by the Finance Act, 2018 (Act No. 13 of 2018), dated 29.3.2018]

- 1.4 Customs Audit Regulations, 2018 has been issued in terms of power conferred by Clause (k) of section 157 and the same is in accordance with global best practices, which is aimed at creating an environment of increased compliance while allowing the Department the flexibility to increase the facilitation for importers and exporters. Customs Audit Regulations, 2018 mark a fundamental shift in the functioning of the Indian Customs since the legal compliance and correct assessment of Customs duties will be verified by the Customs at the premises of importers and exporters. The earlier On-site Post Clearance Audit at the Premises of Importers and Exporters Regulations 2011' (OSPCA regulation) was applicable in relation to imported / export goods that were cleared after the enactment of the Finance Bill,

2011 i.e. 08.04.2011. The said OSPCA regulation, empowered the proper officer for verification of correctness of assessment of duty on imported or export goods at the premise of importer or exporter and also prescribed the manner of conducting audit.

- 1.5 As per Customs Audit Regulations, 2018, "audit" includes examination or verification of declaration, record, entry, document, import or export licence, authorisation, scrip, certificate, permission etc., books of account, test or analysis reports, and any other document relating to imported goods or export goods or dutiable goods, and may include inspection of sample and goods, if such sample or goods are available and where necessary, drawl of samples. Further, for the purpose of the section 99A, "auditee" means a person who is subject to an audit under the section and includes an importer or exporter or custodian approved under section 45 or licensee of a warehouse and any other person concerned directly or indirectly in clearing, forwarding, stocking, carrying, selling or purchasing of imported goods or export goods or dutiable goods. Further, "premises" includes the registered office, branch office, warehouse, factory, or any other premises at which, imported goods or export goods or dutiable goods or books of account or records of transaction or other related documents, in relation to the said goods are ordinarily kept, for any purpose by an auditee.

2. Customs Audit Regulations, 2018:

- 2.1 Customs Audit Regulations, 2018 prescribes the methodology of Selection for Audit which states that the selection of auditee or the selection of import declarations or export declarations, as the case may be, for the purposes of audit shall primarily be based on risk evaluation through appropriate selectivity criteria. Thus, "risk based selection" is at the core of Customs Audit.
- 2.2 Customs Audit Regulations, 2018 also prescribe the manner of conducting audit at the premises of importer or exporter. It also stipulates the responsibilities and compliance on the part of auditee.

3. Auditee to preserve and make available relevant documents

- 3.1 The auditee shall preserve and on request by the proper officer make available in a timely manner, for the purposes of audit, true and correct information, records including electronic records, documents or accounts maintained in compliance of the provisions of the Act, rule or regulations, made there under or any other law for the time being in force, maintained for a minimum period of five years in relation to imported goods or export goods or dutiable goods.
- 3.2 The auditee shall render assistance to the proper officer and his team of officers in the discharge of their official duty and shall in no case refuse or obstruct the proper officer or his team of officers in discharge of their official duty.

4. Manner of conducting audit

- 4.1 Following guidelines are prescribed under the Customs Audit Regulations, 2018:

- (1) The proper officer may conduct audit either in his office or in certain cases at

- the premises of an auditee.
- (2) The proper officer may, where considered necessary, request the auditee to furnish documents, information or record including electronic record, as may be relevant to audit.
 - (3) The proper officer shall give not less than fifteen days advance notice to the auditee to conduct audit at the premises of the auditee.
 - (4) The proper officer may, where considered necessary, inspect the imported goods or export goods or dutiable goods at the premises of the auditee or request the auditee to produce sample, if available, with him.
 - (5) The proper officer shall inform the auditee of the objections, if any, before preparing the audit report to provide him an opportunity to offer clarifications with supporting documents.
 - (6) Where the auditee is in agreement with the audit findings, he may make voluntary payments of duty, interest or other sums, due, if any, in part or in full and the proper officer shall record the same in the audit report.
 - (7) Where the proper office has asked the auditee to furnish information, document, record or sample for the purposes of audit, it shall be mandatory for the proper officer to inform outcome of such audit to the auditee.
 - (8) The proper officer shall complete audit in cases where it is conducted at the premises of the auditee within thirty days from the date of starting of the audit. The jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs may extend the period of completion of audit from thirty days to sixty days, by an order in writing.

4.2 Post Clearance Audit (PCA) and Customs Audit Regulations, 2018

1. Types of Post Clearance Audit:
 - a. Transaction Based Audit (TBA): Examination of BE/SB for verifying compliance to all the legal provisions and to check for any short levy or non levy. TBA normally does not require the auditor to visit the premise but if required it may involve a field audit also.
 - b. Premise Based Audit (PBA): Here the legal compliance and correct assessment of Customs duties will be verified at the premise of the importers and exporters. Identification of auditees for the PBA will be done based on the risk parameters.
 - c. Theme Based Audit (ThBA): This provides for the review of data relating to the entire business activity for a particular commodity or industry or issue. It provides for systematic approach to data collection and analysis of data to determine the likelihood of compliance.
2. Directorate General of Analysis and Risk Management has been entrusted the responsibility of identifying the potential focus areas and entities for various types of audit. Audit Commissionerates have started functioning in right earnest with encouraging results.

[Refer Circular No. 02/2019-Customs dated 08.01.2019]

5. Assistance of professionals:

- 5.1 If the proper officer, having regard to the nature and complexity of the audit, is of the opinion that the audit has to be done with the assistance of a professional like

Chartered Accountant, Cost Accountant, an expert in the field of computer sciences or information technology etc., may do so, with the previous approval of the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner of Customs.

6. Penalty:

- 6.1 Any auditee, who contravenes any provision of these regulations or abets such contravention or fails to comply with any provision of these regulations with which it was his duty to comply, shall be liable to a penalty which may extend to fifty thousand Indian rupees."

7. Officers of Customs Audit:

- 7.1 The Board vide Notification No. 22/2022-Customs (N.T.) dated 31.03.2022 has appointed officers of Customs of specified ranks as officers of Customs Audit for the purpose of carrying out audit under section 99A of the Customs Act, 1962. As per the provisions of Section 110AA of the Customs Act, 1962 the officers Audit Commissionerates are required to forward the Audit finding/report to the proper officer having jurisdiction, as assigned under section 5 in respect of assessment of such duty, or to the officer who allowed such refund or drawback to issue necessary show cause notices based on the findings of audit.

[Refer Notification No 22/2022-Cus(N.T.),, dated 31.03.2022 & Notification No 26/2022-Cus(N.T.) dated 31.03.2022

- 7.2 The Board vide Notification No: 85/2017-Customs(NT) dated 07.09.2017 & Notification No. 100/2018-Customs(N.T.) dated 27.12.2018 has notified Audit Commissionerates in Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai Zones Nhava Sheva with all India jurisdiction.
- 7.3 The Board vide Instruction No: 18/2020-Customs dated 06.10.2020 has appointed Directorate General of Audit as the nodal directorate for Customs PCA.
8. The Customs Audit Manual 2023 explains in detail the principles, methodology and procedure for conducting three types of customs audits i.e. Transaction based audit (TBA), Theme based audit (ThBA) and Premises based Audit (PBA), which should be referred to for more details about Customs Audit.

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a vast parking lot. The lot is filled with hundreds of cars, mostly white and silver, arranged in neat, parallel rows. The perspective is from directly above, looking down at the vehicles. The rows are separated by narrow asphalt paths. The overall scene is one of organized, large-scale storage or distribution of vehicles.

35 Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programme

Chapter 35: Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programme

1. Background:

- 1.1 Prior to adoption of the SAFE Framework by WCO in 2005, Customs administration all over the world including India, were already implementing various forms of Customs compliance programmes which focused on traditional areas of Customs requirements, and which can also be considered as trade facilitation programmes, based on the Revised Kyoto Convention's "Authorised Persons" provisions. In India this programme was known as Accredited Client Programme (ACP). (Notification no. 42/2005-Cus Dated 24.11.2005) which provided facilitation to clients subject to their fulfillment of the prescribed eligibility criteria. As of March 2015, 168 out of 180 WCO members have signed letters of intent committing to implement the SAFE Framework. In India the AEO programme was launched in 2011 on Pilot basis vide circular no. 37/2011-Cus dated 23.08.2011 and rolled out in full-fledged manner vide Circular No. 28/2012-Cus dated 16.11.2012. In the light of these international developments, as well as in view of the focus of the Government of India on "Ease Of Doing Business", Central Board Of Indirect Taxes and Customs has developed a comprehensive unified trade facilitation programme by incorporating the existing ACP scheme and ongoing AEO Programme into a revised AEO Programme vide circular no. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.07.2016 providing additional facilities to the legitimate trade who have demonstrated strong internal control system and willingness to comply with the laws administered by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs.
- 1.2 The objective of the revised AEO programme shall continue to remain same as earlier, that is, to provide businesses with an internationally recognized quality mark which will indicate their secure role in the international supply chain and that their customs procedures are efficient and compliant. An entity with an AEO status can, therefore, be considered a 'secure' trader and a reliable trading partner.
- 1.3 In 2005 the World Customs Organisation (WCO) adopted the SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade, which later included the concept of an Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) whereby a party engaged in the international movement of goods is approved by Customs as compliant with the supply chain security standards, and given benefits, such as simplified Customs procedures and reduced Customs intervention. The AEO concept is being increasingly adopted by various Customs administrations with the objective of securing the supply chain with resultant benefits for the trading community. Consistent with the "SAFE Framework" developed by the WCO, the Indian Customs administration has developed an AEO Programme that encompasses various players in the international supply chain such as importers, exporters, warehouse owners, Custom House Agents, freight forwarders and custodians / terminal operators.
- 1.4 As aforesaid, the AEO Programme seeks to secure the global supply chain in partnership with business entities that are fully legally compliant and provide with the Customs the confidence to validate their security features. Therefore, it is imperative that participating entities ensure they fulfill this fundamental

requirement.

- 1.5 Customs organizations all over the world are tasked with the twin challenges of securing the borders from unlawful trade and at the same time facilitating the legitimate trade. Thus in light of the said objectives the AEO program was given strength vide Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.7.2016 (herein after referred to as "said Circular"), Circular No. 03/2018- Customs dated 17.01.2018, 26/2018-Customs dated 10.08.2018, 51/2018-Customs dated 07.12.2018, and 54/2020-Customs dated 15.12.2020. This unique international instrument has ushered in modern supply chain security standards with the help of a closer partnership between Customs and business in the form of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme, which constitutes one of the three pillars on which SAFE Framework sets. The AEO programme seeks to provide tangible benefits in the form of faster Customs clearances and simplified Customs procedures to those business entities who offer a high degree of security guarantees in respect of their role in the supply chain. The SAFE Framework sets forth the criteria by which businesses in the supply chain can obtain authorized status as a secure partner. Such criteria address issues such as threat assessment, a security plan adapted to the assessed threats, procedural measures to prevent illegitimate goods entering the supply chain, physical security of buildings and premises used as loading or warehousing sites, and security of cargo, means of transport, personnel and information system.

2 Three tier AEO programme for importers and exporters (AEO-T1, AEO-T2, and AEO-T3):

- 2.1 On the strength of Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.7.2016, the earlier existing ACP and AEO programmes were merged into the new AEO programme. For the economic operators other than importers and the exporters, the new programme offers only one tier of certification (i.e. AEO- LO) whereas for the importers and the exporters, there are three tiers of certification (i.e. AEO-T1, AEO-T2 and AEO-T3). Accordingly, henceforth the AEO Programme Manager may, following an application by an economic operator, issue the following Authorized Economic Operator Certificates (hereinafter referred to as AEO certificates) to which the applicant may be eligible as per the eligibility conditions and criteria laid down under paragraph 3 of the said circular:
- 2.2 AEO-T1 Certificate This certificate may be granted only to an importer or to an exporter. For the purpose of this certificate,
- (i) The Importer/Exporter should fulfill the criteria mentioned in Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.07.2016 as amended, and Circular No. 26/2018Cus., dated 10.08.2018.
 - (ii) All other requirements as stipulated in the said circular shall be considered to have been met if the information and documents submitted by the applicant prove the claims of the applicant to the satisfaction of the Zonal AEO Programme Manager.

Further, keeping in line with India's Prime Minister's vision of implementing 'Digital India' and ensuring 'Ease of Doing Business,' the first step towards digitization of the Indian AEO Programme was taken with the launching of an AEO Web

Application <aeoindia.gov.in> on 30.11.2018. With the launch of the online portal and subsequent issuance of Circular 51/2018-Customs dated 07.12.2018, the entire process of AEO-T1 certification was digitized to allow the application filing, processing & digital signed delivery of AEO certification over an online platform. This digitization has provided wholesome support to the applicants by circumventing physical documentation requirements and submitting their application with the click of a button to ensure the highest degree of ease in doing business for the applicant. The processing of AEO T1 via the digital mode is faster as it's completely online. At the same time, it also offers the benefit of tracking the status of application for the applicant and ease of supervision for the customs officials.

2.3 AEO-T2 Certificate This certificate may be granted only to an importer or to an exporter. For the purpose of this certificate,

- (i) The economic operator should fulfill the criteria mentioned at para 3.1 of the said circular as amended; and
- (ii) all other requirements as stipulated in paragraphs 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of the said circular shall be considered to have been met if the claims made in this regard in information and documents submitted by the applicant have been physically verified by the AEO Programme Team by visiting the concerned places/premises of the applicant, on the dates decided by mutual consent by the team and the applicant, and found to be true to the satisfaction of the AEO Programme Manager.

2.4 AEO-T1 & AEO-T2 Certificate (for MSMEs)- Vide the Circular 54/2020-Customs dated 15.12.2020 customs has ensured procedural simplification for AEO accreditation of the MSMEs, ensuring increased facilitation through rationalized compliance requirements (MSME Annexure 1 & 2) and minimum but effective security requirements (MSME Annexure 3). These annexures have been designed to fulfill the aspirations of a simpler application procedure with reduced documentation requirements for MSMEs' AEO accreditation.

- (i) This endeavour of CBIC is expected to aid MSMEs by way of the reduced burden of compliance to become an accredited AEO entity and avail benefits of reduced financial security/guarantee. This procedural simplification is expected to bring more MSMEs under the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme's fold. Their increased share amongst accredited AEO entities is poised to contribute to the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and ensure supply chain security.

2.5 AEO-T3 Certificate - This certificate may be granted only to an importer or to an exporter. For the purpose of this certificate,

- (i) The economic operator must have continuously enjoyed the status of AEO-T2 for at-least a period of two years preceding the date of application for grant of AEO-T3 status; or
- (ii) The economic operator must be an AEO-T2 certificate holder, and its other business partners namely importers or exporters, Logistics service providers,

Custodians/Terminal operators, Customs Brokers and Warehouse operators are holders of AEO-T2 or AEO-LO certificate or any other equivalent AEO certificate granted by a foreign Customs.

3 Single Tier AEO Programme for Logistics Operators, i.e., Custodians or Terminal Operators, Customs Brokers and Warehouse Operators:

3.1 AEO-LO Certificate This certificate may be granted to categories of economic operators other than importers and exporters, namely Logistics Providers, Custodians or Terminal Operators, Customs Brokers and Warehouse Operators. For the purpose of this certificate,

- (i) The economic operator should fulfill the criteria mentioned at para 3.1 of the said circular as amended; and
- (ii) all other requirements as stipulated in paragraphs 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of the said circular shall be considered to have been met if the claims made in this regard in information and documents submitted by the applicant have been physically verified by the AEO Programme Team by visiting the concerned places/premises of the applicant, on the dates decided by mutual consent by the team and the applicant, and found to be true to the satisfaction of the AEO Programme Manager.

4 Benefits of an AEO Certificate: A business authorized by the Customs as an AEO can enjoy benefits flowing from being a more compliant and secure company as well as favourable consideration in any Customs proceedings coupled with better relations with Customs. AEO status will also ensure a low-risk score is incorporated into Customs, Risk Management System” (RMS) and used to determine the frequency of Customs physical and documentary checks. The benefits may also include simplified Customs procedure, declarations, etc. besides faster Customs clearance of consignments of/for AEO status holders. The scope of the benefits to the AEOs based on their categories would be as mentioned below:

4.1 Benefits for AEO-T1:

- i. They shall be accorded high level of facilitation in imports and export of their consignments, thereby ensuring shorter cargo release time.
- ii. Facility of Direct Port Delivery (DPD) of their import Containers and/ or Direct Port Entry (DPE) of their Export Containers would be available to them (depending on the volume of their Import/ Export trade in terms of number of containers).
- iii. ID cards to be granted to authorized personnel for hassle free entry to Custom Houses, CFSs and ICDs.
- iv. Wherever feasible, they will get separate space earmarked in Custodian’s premises.
- v. In case they are required to furnish a Bank Guarantee, the quantum of the Bank Guarantee would be 50% of that required to be furnished by an importer/ exporter who is not an AEO Certificate Holder. However, this exemption from Bank guarantee would not be applicable in cases where the Competent Authority orders furnishing of Bank Guarantee for provisional

- release of seized goods.
- vi. Investigations, if any, in respect of GST, Customs, erstwhile Central Excise and Service Tax cases would be completed, as far as possible, in six to nine months.
- vii. Dispute resolution at the level of Adjudicating Authorities in respect of GST, Customs, erstwhile Central Excise and Service Tax cases would be done preferably and as far as possible within six months.
- viii. They will not be subjected to regular transactional PCA, instead of that onsite PCA will be conducted once in three years only.
- ix. They will get an e-mail regarding arrival/ departure of the vessel carrying their consignments.
- x. 24/7 clearances on request at all sea ports and airports No Merchant Overtime Fee (MOT) charges need to be paid.
- xi. Where there is no SION/valid Ad-hoc Norms for an export product and where SION has been notified but exporter intends to use additional inputs in the manufacturing process, eligible exporter, who is an AEO, can apply for an Advance Authorization under this scheme on self- declaration and self-ratification basis” (added by Circular No. 3/2018-Customs dated 17.01.2018).
- xii. Will be exempted from the requirements of drawal of samples for the purpose of grant of drawback, except in case of any specific information or intelligence(added by Circular No. 18/2017-Customs dated 29.05.2017).

4.2 Benefits for AEO-T2:

The following benefits would be provided over and above the benefits offered in T1:

- i. They shall be accorded higher level of facilitation (as compared to AEO-T1 in imports and export of their consignments.
- ii. For Importers/Exporters not opting for DPD/DPE, seal verification/scrutiny of documents by Custom officers would be waived. Consignments would be given out of charge or let export order, as the case may be, without any scrutiny by the officers.
- iii. The containers selected for scanning will be scanned on priority, by giving front line of treatment.
- iv. Facility of deferred payment of duty will be provided, from a date to be notified
- v. Faster disbursal of drawback amount within 72 hours of EGM submission, from a date to be notified
- vi. The BEs/SBs selected for Assessment and/or Examination will be processed on priority by the Customs officers.
- vii. Facility of self-sealing of export goods would be allowed without the requirement to seek case to case base permission from the authorities
- viii. Faster completion of Special Branch ('SVB') proceedings in case of related party imports and monitoring of such cases for time bound disposal in terms of new guidelines
- ix. In case they are required to furnish a Bank Guarantee, the quantum of the Bank Guarantee would be 25% of that required to be furnished by an importer/ exporter who is not an AEO Certificate Holder. However, this exemption from Bank guarantee would not be applicable in cases where the Competent Authority orders furnishing of Bank Guarantee for provisional release of seized goods.

- x. They will be given facility to paste MRP stickers in their premises.
- xi. They will not be subjected to regular transactional PCA instead of that onsite PCA will be conducted once in three years only.
- xii. They will be given access to their consolidated import/export data through ICEGATE from a date that would be communicated separately.
- xiii. They will be provided the facility of submitting paperless declarations with no supporting documents in physical form.
- xiv. All Custom Houses will appoint a "Client Relationship Manger" (CRM) at the level of Deputy/ Assistant Commissioner as a single point of interaction with them. The CRM would act as voice of the AEO within Customs in relation to legitimate concerns and issues of AEO and would assist in getting procedural and operational issues resolved by coordinating with different sections within Customs as well as other stakeholders.
- xv. The refund/Rebate of Customs/Central Excise duty and Service Tax would be granted within 45 days of the submission of complete documents. xvi. They will get trade facilitation by a foreign Customs administration with whom India enters into a Mutual Recognition Agreement/Arrangement.

4.3 Additional Benefit for AEO T1 & AEO T2 (for MSME):

- i. The benefit of relaxation in furnishing of Bank Guarantee for AEOs has been further relaxed to 25% from 50% and 10% from 25% of that required to be furnished by an importer/exporter who is not an AEO certificate holder, for MSME AEO T1 and MSME AEO T2 entities respectively.

4.4 Benefits for AEO-T3:

The following benefits would be provided over and above the benefits offered in T2:

- i. They shall be accorded highest level of facilitation, as compared to AEO-T2, in imports and export of their consignments.
- ii. Their containers will not be selected for scanning except on the basis of specific intelligence. Further when any container is selected for scanning, top most priority will be given for scanning.
- iii. The assessing/examining custom officer will rely on the self-certified copies of documents submitted by them without insisting upon original documents.
- iv. They would not be required to furnish any Bank Guarantee. However, this exemption from Bank guarantee would not be applicable in cases where the Competent Authority orders furnishing of Bank Guarantee for provisional release of seized goods.
- iv. An approach based on Risk based interventions, in case of requirements originating from the Acts administered by other Government Agencies/Departments, will be adopted for providing better facilitation in imports and export of their consignments.
- v. On request, they will be provided on-site inspection /examination.
- vi. The refund/Rebate of Customs/Central Excise duty and Service Tax would be granted within 30 days of the submission of complete documents.

The comparable benefits available to AEO-T1, AEO-T2 (including MSMEs) and AEO-T3 are summarized in Table 35.1 below:

Table 35.1: Comparable benefits available to AEO-T1, AEO-T2 (including MSMEs) and AEO- T3

S. No.	Facility to be provided	Benefits for AEO-T1	Benefits for AEO-T2	Benefits for AEO-T3	
1	Accorded facilitation in import and export consignments ensuring shorter cargo release time	High	Higher	Highest	
2	Facility of DPD/ DPE	Available depending on volume	Available	Available	
3	ID cards for hassle free entry to Custom Houses, CFSs and ICDs	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4	Separate space earmarked in Custodians premises	Yes	Yes	Yes	
5	BG required to be furnished	50% (25% for MSME)	25% (10% for MSME)	NIL	
6	Investigations to be completed	In 6-9 months	In 6-9 months	In months	6-9
7	Dispute resolution at AA level	Within 6 months	Within 6 months	Within months	6
9	Email intimating vessel arrival for their consignment	Yes	Yes	Yes	

10	24X7 clearance at all sea ports and airports.	Yes	Yes	Yes	
11	No merchant overtime fees need to be paid	Yes	Yes	Yes	
12	Exemption from the requirements of drawal of samples for the purpose of grant of drawback	Yes	Yes	Yes	
13	Waiver of seal verification / scrutiny of documents	--	For Non DPD / DPE option availed	Yes	
14	OOC/ LEO without scrutiny by customs officer	--	Yes	Yes	
15	Scanning on priority	--	Yes	Container will not be scanned except on specific intelligence	
16	Facility of deferred payment of duty	--	Yes	Yes	
17	Faster disbursement of drawback	--	Within 72 hours of EGM	Within 72 hours of EGM	
18	Priority given to B/E or S/B selected for assessment/ examination	--	Yes	Yes	

19	Facility of self sealing of consignments for export	--	Permitted on case to a case basis	Permitted
20	Faster completion of SVB Proceedings	--	Time bound manner	Time bound manner
21	Facility to paste MRP stickers in premises	--	Allowed	Allowed
22	Access to consolidated import export data on ICEGATE	--	Available	Available
23	Facility of paperless declaration	--	Available	Available
24	Custom House Assistance	--	Through Client Relationship Manager (CRM)	Through Client Relationship Manager (CRM)
25	Trade facilitation by foreign customs administration (MRA)	--	Yes	Yes
26	Assessing / examining officer will rely on self certified documents	--	--	Yes
27	Only Risk based intervention in case of other govt. agencies / departments	--	--	Yes
28	Onsite inspection / examination	--	--	On request available

4.5 Benefits for AEO-LO:

The benefits available to different entities eligible to be qualified as AEO-LO are summarized in Table 35.2 below:

Table 35.2: Benefits available to different entities eligible to be qualified as AEO-LO

Sr. No.	Entity	Facilities to be provided
1	Logistic Service Providers	<p>(a) Waiver of bank Guarantee in case of trans-shipment of goods under Goods imported (Condition of Trans-shipment) Regulations, 1995.</p> <p>(b) Facility of Execution of running bond.</p> <p>(c) Exemption from permission on case to case basis in case of transit of goods.</p> <p>In case of international transshipped cargo (Foreign to Foreign), for the pre-sorted containers wherein Cargo does not require segregation, ramp to ramp or tail to tail transfer of cargo can be effected without Customs escorts.</p>
2	Custodians or Terminal Operators	<p>(a) Waiver of bank Guarantee under Handling of cargo in Customs Area Regulations 2009.</p> <p>(b) Extension of approval for custodians under regulation 10(2) of the 'Handling of cargo in Customs Area Regulation 2009' for period of 10 years.</p>
3	Customs Brokers	<p>(a) Waiver of Bank Guarantee to be furnished under regulation 8 of the CBLR, 2013.</p> <p>(b) Extended validity (till validity of AEO status) of licenses granted under regulation 9 of the CBLR 2018. System Manager to incorporate date of validity of AEO from time to time in the System Directory</p> <p>(c) Waiver from fee for renewal of license under sub regulation (2) of regulation 11 of CBLR, 2013.</p>

4	Warehouses Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Faster approval for new warehouses within 7 days of submission of complete documents (b) Waiver of antecedent verification envisaged for grant of license for warehouse under circular 26/2016 (c) Waiver of solvency certificate requirement under circular 24/2016 (d) Waiver of security for obtaining extension in warehousing period under circular 21/2016 (e) Waiver of security required for warehousing of sensitive goods under circular 21/2016
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4.6 With a view to promote an overall voluntary compliance framework, the selection of AEO'S for on- site post clearance audit (OSPACA) in respect of AEO-T1, AEO-T2 and AEO-T3 shall be based on risk assessment. Better and higher compliance level demonstrated by the AEO shall be taken into account for determining the frequency of audit. It is also clarified that AEOs undergoing OSPACA shall not be subjected to routine transactional PCA. Detailed guidelines on risk based OSPACA will be issued subsequently.

5. Application for an AEO Certificate:

The applicant for grant of AEO-T1, AEO-T2, AEO-T3 and AEO-LO should be made in duly filled annexures as mentioned in Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.7.2016 as amended. However, an applicant is required to fill-in and submit only those annexures which may be applicable to it. The application should be sent directly to jurisdictional Customs Chief Commissioner or to the AEO Programme Manager, Directorate of International Customs, 10th Floor, Tower II, Jeevan Bharti Building, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001. For AEO T1, the application is to be filed online on www.aeoindia.gov.in.

[Refer Circular No. 51/2018- Customs dated 07.12.2018]

6. Eligibility conditions and Criteria for granting the AEO Certificate: The following eligibility criteria is relevant for the grant of AEO status:

6.1 Who can apply for AEO Certificate is prescribed in Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.07.2016 as amended. The important eligibility criteria are briefed herein as follows:

- (i) Anyone involved in the international supply chain that undertakes Customs related activity in India can apply for AEO status. These may include exporters, importers, logistic providers (e.g. carriers, airlines, freight forwarders, etc.), Custodians or Terminal Operators, Customs House Agents and Warehouse Owners. Others who may qualify include port operators, authorized couriers, stevedores.
- (ii) Businesses that are not involved in Customs related work / activities will not be entitled to apply.
- (iii) Application for AEO status will only cover the legal entity of the applicant and will not automatically apply to a group of companies.
- (iv) In order to apply for AEO status the applicant must be established in India.
- (v) The applicant should have business activities for at least three financial years preceding the date of application. However, in exceptional cases, on the basis of physical verification of internal controls of a newly established business entity, the AEO Programme Manager may consider it for certification.

The requirement for the applicant to have "business activities for at least three financial years preceding the date of application" has been relaxed to two financial years for an MSME applicant.

- (vi) Keeping the small and medium scale enterprises in mind it has been decided the AEO programme is made open to all Importers/Exporters whose threshold of import or export declarations is 25 documents i.e. either Bills of Entry or Shipping Bills during the last financial year. The other economic operators should have handled at least 25 documents i.e. Bills of Entry or

Shipping bills during the last financial year. The eligibility requirement of handling customs documents during the last financial year has been relaxed to 10 documents from earlier 25 for MSMEs, subject to handling at least 5 documents in each half-year period of the preceding financial year.

- (vii) The AEO Programme Manager shall take into account such factors as the size of the MSMEs, the legal status (e.g. proprietorship, partnership etc), the structure, the key business partners and also the specific economic activity of the economic operator while applying these eligibility conditions and criteria. The qualifying period for legal and financial compliance has been reduced from 'the last three financial year' to 'the last two financial years' for MSMEs.
- (viii) Appropriate record of compliance of Customs and other relevant laws; There should be no case wherein prosecution has been launched or is being contemplated against the applicant or its senior management.
- (ix) An applicant will also need to demonstrate that he has (i). procedures in place to identify and disclose any irregularities or errors to the Customs, authorities or, where appropriate, other regulatory bodies. (ii). taken appropriate remedial action when irregularities or errors are identified.
- (x) Satisfactory system of managing commercial and, where appropriate, transport records;
- (xi) An applicant must be financially solvent during the three financial years preceding the date of application.
- (xii) An applicant must have in place appropriate internal control and measures to ensure, Premises security, cargo security, conveyance security, personnel security, security and safety standards for applicants' business, and his supply chain and procedural security.

6.2 The various compliance required to be fulfilled by applicant and the manner of application and supportive documents to be submitted by the applicant are summarized under various headings under Section 3 in the Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 227-2016 as amended

For AEO T1 and T2 accreditation for MSMEs, the present annexures i.e., Annexure A, B, C, D, E.1- E.4 have been supplanted with two annexures viz. MSME Annexure 1 and 2 to reduce the compliance burden on MSMEs. For MSME entities applying for AEO-T2 certification, the present annexures i.e., Annexure E.5.1- E.5.7 for physical verification have been rationalized to a single annexure viz. MSME Annexure 3.

7. Procedure for issuing AEO Certificates:

7.1 An applicant for grant of AEO status should submit the following in the manner as prescribed in the Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.7.2016 as amended, 26/2018-Cus., dated 10.08.2018, 51/2018-Customs dated 07.12.2018 & Circular No. 54/2020Customs dated 15.12.2020:

- (i) Application for Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Status
- (ii) Appropriate Safety and Security plan as required and prescribed (wherever applicable).
- (iii) Process map
- (iv) Site plan
- (v) Self-Assessment Form
- (vi) Legal Compliance
- (vii) Management of Appropriate Commercial and Transport Record Compliance
- (viii) Financial Solvency Compliance
- (ix) Security compliance and Business Partner Details (for AEO T2, T3, & LO).

7.2 The application should be sent directly to jurisdictional Customs Chief Commissioner or to the AEO Programme Manager, Directorate of International Customs, 10th Floor, Tower II, Jeevan Bharti Building, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001.

7.3 From April 2019 onwards, the AEO-T1 application has to be compulsorily filed online at the url: <www.aeoindia.gov.in>.

7.4 Section 4 of Circular No. 33/2016-Customs dated 22.07.2016 dealt with the Procedure for issuing AEO certificates.

8. Acknowledgement of application:

Each application will be acknowledged (wherever applicable, shall be done digitally) and recorded in an AEO Programme database.

8.1 Return of application:

8.1.1 If application is incomplete or deficient, the applicant will be suitably informed within 30 days of the receipt.

8.1.2 AEO Programme Manager will not process the following applications until the deficiencies, as indicated, are rectified:

- (a) Which is incomplete - This may be resubmitted with the complete information.
- (b) Where the application has not been made by a legal person - This can only be resubmitted by the concerned legal entity.

- (c) Where no responsible person is nominated - This can only be resubmitted when the applicant nominates a responsible person who will be the point of contact for the AEO Programme.
- (d) Where the applicant is subject to bankruptcy proceedings at the time the application is made: This may be resubmitted when the applicant becomes solvent.
- (e) Where a previously granted AEO status has been revoked -This may not be resubmitted until the period as prescribed in paragraph 5.7.3 of the said Circular 33/2016- Customs has elapsed after the date of revocation. Para 5.7.3 states that, "In case the AEO status is revoked, the AEO-T1 and AEO-T2 status holder will not be entitled to reapply for the AEO certificate for a period of one year from the date of revocation."

9. Rejection of application:

- 9.1 Applications will be rejected in cases where the applicant is not eligible for grant of AEO status, or has been convicted of a serious criminal offence linked to the economic activity of his business in the past, or in cases where the deficiency noticed in the application cannot be remedied. The information regarding the rejection of such application will be given to the applicant within 30 days of the receipt of the application.

10. Processing of application:

- 10.1 On receipt of the complete application and after ensuring that the applicant is eligible to apply, the information and documents submitted by the applicant shall be scrutinized to assess whether or not the eligibility conditions and criteria for granting the AEO certificate as mentioned under the Section 3 of the said circular are met by the applicant.
- 10.2 If necessary, further information and/or documents in support of the claim of the applicant may be called for by the AEO Programme Manager or by an officer on his behalf. Such request shall be sent in writing.
- 10.3 The applicant shall submit such information and/or documents within a reasonable time.
- 10.4 In case of an application for grant of AEO-T1 status, once the eligibility conditions and criteria for granting the AEO certificate as mentioned under the Section 3 of this circular are found to have been met by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Zonal AEO Programme Manager, the applicant shall be issued the AEO-T1 certificate (wherever applicable, shall be done digitally) within 30 days of submission of the information and/or documents.

The time limit for processing of MSME AEO T1 & AEO T2 application has been reduced to fifteen working days and three months respectively, after the submission of complete documents for priority processing by customs zones.

- 10.5 In case of an application for grant of AEO-T2 or AEO-LO, the information and/or documents submitted by the applicant shall be scrutinized, and if they are found eligible to the satisfaction of the AEO Programme Manager, the applicant shall be duly intimated within 30 days of submission of the information and/or documents. Thereafter, the successful application will be assigned to a specific AEO Programme Team within 15 days to carry out physical verification of the information and documents. The date(s) for physical verification would be decided by the team in consultation with the applicant.
- 10.6 The AEO Programme Team will, within 90 days, visit the business premises for verification of the information and documents provided. Such visit shall be made on a convenient date after consulting the applicant.
- 10.7 If within 45 days of the date of intimation issued in terms of paragraph 4.4.5 of the said circular, the applicant has not been contacted by the AEO Programme Team, then the applicant should contact the Zonal AEO Programme Manager/ AEO Programme Manager immediately.
- 10.8 During the course of such verification, the applicant for AEO-T2 or AEO-LO status should be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information on all aspect of the application to the visiting AEO Programme Team.
- 10.9 Examination of the criteria laid down under Section 3 of the said circular shall be carried out for all the premises which are relevant to the customs related activities of the applicant for AEO-T2 or AEO LO status. The examination as well as its results shall be documented by the AEO Programme team.
- 10.10 In case several premises of the applicant are run in a similar way by standard systems of record keeping and security etc. there will be no need for the AEO Programme Team to visit all of them. However, if the business of the applicant covers a range of activities or different premises have different method of operating, then it may be necessary for more visits to be made.
- 10.11 The duration of visit/verification would depend on the size of business, number of premises, how they operate etc. The AEO Programme Team will give the applicant for AEO-T2 or AEO-LO status an estimate of time required, though this may have to be amended once the verification has commenced. The date(s) for physical verification would be decided by the team in consultation with the applicant.
- 10.12 Where appropriate, in addition to the other requirements detailed earlier, the AEO Programme Team may cover the following:
- (i) Information on Customs matters.
 - (ii) Remedial action taken on previous Customs errors, if any.
 - (iii) Accounting and logistic systems.
 - (iv) Internal controls and procedures.

- (v) Flow of cargo.
- (vi) Use of Customs House Agents/Customs Broker
- (vii) Security of Computers/IT and documents.
- (viii) Financial solvency.
- (ix) Safety and security assessment premises, cargo, personnel etc.
- (x) Logistic processes.
- (xi) Storage of goods.

10.13 During the course of physical visit/verification, the person who is nominated in the application form as point of contact must ordinarily be available unless unforeseeable situation arises. In addition, individuals responsible for specific business activities such as transport, recordkeeping and security should also be available.

10.14 On completion of verification, the AEO Programme Team will prepare their report and make a recommendation to the AEO Programme Manager within 60 days of completion of visits/verification. The contents of report and recommendation can be seen by applicant who will get the opportunity to sign the same, but this will not be a mandatory requirement.

10.15 Within 30 days of such recommendation by the AEO Programme Team, the applicant will be suitably informed, including issue of the appropriate AEO certificate for AEOT2 or AEO-LO status, by the AEO Programme Manager.

The time limit for processing of MSME AEO T2 application has been reduced to three months (presently six months) after the submission of complete documents for priority processing by customs zones.

10.16 Where the application for grant of AEO-T2 or AEO-LO status is not accepted by the AEO Programme Manager after the verification by the AEO Programme Team, the applicant will be advised of the criteria that have not been met and give the applicant time to adapt procedures to remedy the deficiency. If applicant is unable to make the required changes within the specified time limits, the AEO Programme Manager will issue a decision to reject applicant's AEO application, explaining the reasons for rejection.

10.17 In exceptional cases, the physical verification may be stopped by consensus between the applicant for grant of AEO-T2 or AEO-LO status and the AEO Programme Manager in order for the applicant to provide additional information or to permit minor problems to be addressed. The period of stoppage will normally not be longer than six months and applicant will be informed in writing of the date when the AEO verification will recommence and the revised date by which

applicant can expect a decision on his application.

- 10.18 In case an application for grant of AEO-T3 status is submitted by a holder of AEO-T2 status, who has been continuously enjoying the AEO-T2 status for a period of two years or more, the applicant shall be issued the AEO-T3 certificate within 30 days of submission of the application. However, in case of any significant changes in the business or the processes since the previous physical verification by an AEO Programme Team, the applicant may be subjected to physical verification as may be deemed necessary by the AEO Programme Manager by following the procedures as mentioned in the paragraph 4.4.5, 4.4.6 and 4.4.7 of the said circular as amended.
- 10.19 In case an application for grant of AEO-T3 status is submitted by a holder of AEO-T2 status, who has not been continuously enjoying the AEO-T2 status for a period of two years or more, but who satisfies the eligibility condition mentioned at paragraph 1.2.3 (ii) of the said circular as amended, the application will be assigned to a specific AEO Programme Team within 15 days to carry out physical verification of the information and documents submitted in Annexure-F only. The date(s) for physical verification would be decided by the team in consultation with the applicant. Thereafter, the procedures as mentioned in the paragraph 4.4.5, 4.4.6 and 4.4.7 of the said circular as amended above shall be followed. However, in case of any significant changes in the business or the processes since the previous physical verification by an AEO Programme Team, the applicant may be subjected to physical verification as may be deemed necessary by the AEO Programme Manager by following the procedures as mentioned in the paragraph 4.4.5, 4.4.6 and 4.4.7.

11. Web based filing, processing and digitized certification of AEO-T1 applications:

- 11.1 For AEO T1 application, the AEO accreditation process has been entirely digitized by way of the web-based application www.aeoindia.gov.in. The applicant can file its AEO application online either with its jurisdictional customs zone or with DIC (by selecting DIC as zone on the web application) This web-application requires registration of the applicant on its home page. Once the registration is completed, a confirmation communication is sent to the applicant. The registration is then verified by a customs' official. Thereafter, the registered user applicant can proceed to file the application through its login credentials and follow the stepwise procedure for filing online AEO T1 application. At every stage of the process such as registration, submission of annexures, approval/rejection by zonal AEO Program Manager and issuance of digital certificate issuance, the applicant will receive SMS/e-mail for ease of information and transparency. The application for AEO T1 is processed online by customs officials and the digitally signed AEO certificate is relayed online to the certified entity.
- 11.2 For departmental officers, the access to this web application is through "Customs Official" tab with role specific login ID and password, which would be disseminated by the nodal AEO officer of the respective customs zone. There are 3 levels for online processing, i.e. Superintendent, AC/DC/JC/ADC and zonal Programme Manager (Commissioner/Pr. Commissioner level officer). Once the

recommendation of the zonal AEO programme Manager is received, the DIC issues digitally signed AEO certificate over mail and subsequently issues a hard copy of the AEO certificate to the applicant.

11.3 Online filing of AEO-LO application

Starting May 1, 2023, AEO-LO applicants must use the new Version 3.0 of the web application for online filing, real-time monitoring, and digital certification. This update aligns with the Digital India initiative, enhancing the efficiency of the AEO application process. Applicants can track their application status in real time and address any deficiencies online

[Refer Circular No. 10/2023- Customs dated 11.04.2023]

12. Certification:

12.1 If AEO status is granted, the AEO Programme Manager shall send the Certificate of AEO Status to the applicant in hard copy along with an electronic copy (for AEO T1 only). The Certificate shall bear the AEO logo' that may be used where it is appropriate to do so for the business, for example, company stationary, signage on vehicles or other publicity materials. The copyright for the logo is owned by the AEO Programme Manager on behalf of the Indian Customs Administration.

12.2 The AEO status will be activated within a week from the date of issue. Following this period, the applicant should enter the AEO certificate number on all Customs documentation to indicate their AEO Status.

12.3 It is highly recommended that the applicant should keep the Certificate of AEO status at a safe place and not release the AEO Certificate number to anyone unless required to do so for business purposes. Although the AEO status can be advertised by the applicant, the AEO Certificate number should not be part of their advertisement.

13. Post-Certification Provisions

13.1 The validity of AEO certificate shall be three years for AEO-T1, three years for AEOT2, five years for AEO-T3 and five years for AEO-LO.

13.2 Renewal of AEO certificate

The AEOs, if they so desire to continue their AEO status and avail the benefits, must submit their application as stipulated under Section 2 of the said circular as amended, before lapse of their validity as per the following Table 35.3:-

Table 35.3: Time limit for submission of application for renewal before lapse of validity of AEO certificate

AEO status	Time limit for submission of application for renewal before lapse of validity
AEO-T1	30 days
AEO-T2	60 days
AEO-T3	90 days
AEO-LO	90 days

13.3 While submitting the application for renewal, the applicant must clearly highlight the changes from the last application.

13.4 AEO Programme Manager will consider the renewal applications by following the procedure adopted while granting the fresh AEO status.

14. Maintenance of AEO Status:

14.1 After obtaining AEO status, the AEO status holder should maintain their eligibility by adhering to the appropriate standards.

14.2 The holder of a Certificate of AEO Status is required to notify any significant change in business and processes which may affect the AEO status to the AEO Programme Team. These changes may include the following:

- (i) Change to the legal entity.
- (ii) Change of business name and/or address.
- (iii) Change in the nature of business i.e. manufacturer / exporter etc.
- (iv) Changes to accounting and computer systems.
- (v) Changes to the senior personnel responsible for Customs matters.
- (vi) Addition or deletion of locations or branches involved in international supply chain.

14.3 The AEO status holder should notify the AEO Programme Team as soon as the change is known or, at least within 14 days of the change taking place.

14.4 If the legal entity changes, the AEO status holder needs to reapply for AEO in the name of new legal entity.

14.5 If the AEO status holder makes Customs related errors, they must be reported to the local “Client Relationship Manager” (CRM) as well as the AEO Programme Team. Errors that are voluntarily disclosed will not impact the AEO status provided

that the AEO status holder has:

- (i) Examined the reasons for the errors.
- (ii) Taken appropriate remedial action to prevent recurrence.

15. Review of AEO Status:

15.1 The AEO Programme Team will review AEO status periodically to ensure continued adherence to the conditions and standards of grant of Certificate of AEO Status. Thus, it is recommended that the AEO status holder should continue to re-assess its compliance with the conditions of certification and act upon any identified problems as soon as they arise. The frequency of such review will be three years for AEO-T1 and AEO-T2, and five years in case of AEO-T3 and AEO-LO. As far as possible, the review and the onsite PCA, if applicable, will be conducted simultaneously.

16. Suspension or downgrading of AEO Status:

16.1 The AEO Programme Manager may suspend the Certificate of AEO Status in the following cases:

- i. Where any non-compliance with the conditions or criteria for the Certificate of AEO Status has been detected; or
- ii. In the case of a Custodian or Custom Broker or Warehouse Operator, where the basic license as a Custodian or Custom Broker or Warehouse Operator, as the case may be, has been suspended by the competent authority.

16.2 In the case of an AEO importer or an AEO exporter, if any show cause notice has been issued alleging infringement of Customs/GST/erstwhile Central Excise or Service Tax law, other than those covered under para 3.2.1 of the said circular as amended, AEO Programme Manager may downgrade the status of an AEO-T3 to AEO-T2 or AEO-T1, or downgrade the status of an AEO-T2 to AEO-T1, or suspend the status of the AEO, as deemed appropriate. The decision shall be taken after due diligence and on careful evaluation of the material evidence and arguments against the AEO of the case. The AEO Programme Manager may consult the jurisdictional Commissionerate before arriving at the final decision in this regard. The decision to downgrade the AEO status shall be purely an administrative decision.

17. Restoration of suspended/ downgraded AEO Status:

17.1 Where AEO status had been suspended on account of detection of any non-compliance with the conditions or criteria for the Certificate of AEO Status, and if the AEO holder takes the necessary remedial measures to the satisfaction of the AEO Programme Manager within 60 days of suspension, the AEO Programme Manager may restore the AEO status from a date to be notified by him.

17.2 Where AEO status had been suspended on account of suspension of the basic license as a Custodian or Custom Broker or Warehouse Operator or as the case

may be, and subsequently such suspension of the basic license is revoked by the competent authority, the AEO Programme Manager may consider restoration of AEO status, and if deemed appropriate may restore the AEO status from a date to be notified by him.

17.3 Where AEO status had been suspended on account of issue of a show cause notice, and if the ratio of disputed duty demanded or drawback demanded or sought to be denied in SCNs issued under the Customs Act, 1962 during the last three years to the total duty paid and drawback claimed during the said period is not more than ten percent, the AEO Programme Manager may consider restoration of AEO status, and if deemed appropriate may restore the AEO status from a date to be notified by him.

17.4 In case an AEO status has been downgraded, it shall be open to the entity to apply again for higher status as and when the eligibility conditions and criterion are met by it. AEO Programme Manager will consider such applications by following the procedure adopted while granting the fresh AEO status.

18. Revocation of AEO Status:

18.1 In following circumstances, the Certificate of AEO Status will be revoked:

- (i) Where the Certificate of AEO Status is already suspended and the AEO holder fails to take the remedial measure within 60 days to have the suspension withdrawn; or
- (ii) Where there is a reasonable belief that an act has been perpetrated that is liable to lead to prosecution and /or is linked to an arrest of person under Customs Act, 1962 as mentioned in Para 3.2.2 of the said circular as amended; or
- (iii) A show cause notice has been issued to them involving fraud, forgery, outright smuggling, clandestine removal of excisable goods or cases where Service Tax has been collected from customers but not deposited to the Government as mentioned in Para 3.2.1 of the said circular as amended; or
- (iv) Where the AEO status holder requests the authorization be revoked.

18.2 Prior to any decision to revoke authorization, the applicant will be notified. Revocation is applied from the day following the authorization holder being notified.

18.3 In case the AEO status is revoked, the AEO-T1 and AEO-T2 status holder will not be entitled to reapply for the AEO certificate for a period of one year from the date of revocation.

18.4 In case the AEO status is revoked, the AEO-T3 and AEO-LO status holder will not be entitled to reapply for the AEO certificate for a period of three years from the date of revocation.

19. Mutual Recognition

- 19.1 As part of Indian Customs' efforts to enhance global supply chain security and facilitate the movement of legitimate goods, Indian Customs endeavours to sign Mutual Recognition Arrangements or Agreements (MRA) with its major trading partners.
- 19.2 Through MRAs, Indian Customs and its partner Customs administrations mutually recognize the security requirements, validation process and accredited entities of each other's supply chain security programmes.
- 19.3 Under an MRA, the participating Customs administration recognizes certified companies (commonly known as Authorised Economic Operators, in short, AEOs) under each other's supply chain security programme as secure entities. Goods imported from such companies can thus enjoy a higher level of facilitation at clearance domestically and overseas.

20. India's MRA Partners

- 20.1 Indian Customs has signed eight Mutual Recognition Agreements with the Customs administrations of Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, the USA, UAE, Australia, Russia and Japan Joint Action Plan (JAP)/Joint Work Plan (JWP) has already been signed with the East African Community (EAC), South Africa, Bahrain, Singapore, Uganda, Belarus, the UK, New Zealand BRICS, Brazil and Peru. The Joint Action Plan is a broad framework of timeline and actions that needs to be completed in a phased manner to conclude an MRA. Further, 'letter of intent' for signing the MRA has been relayed to India's major trade partner countries and initial discussions with them are ongoing.

21. Modification in Benefits

- 21.1 Consequent to the mid-term review of Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) wherein certain additional benefits have been assigned to AEO Certified entities, some modifications were done in the existing CBEC's Circular No.33/2016-Cus. dated 22.07.2016.2. Additionally, in order to maximize the reach of this programme, it was decided by the competent authority to decentralise the processing of AEO applications so as to meet the objective of trade facilitation and ease of doing business.

[Refer Circular No. 3/2018-Customs dated 17.01.2018]

22. Extension of Deferred payment of Customs duty benefits to 'Authorised Public Undertakings'

- 22.1 Notification No.78/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 19.08.2020 permitted 'Authorised Public Undertakings' (APU) to avail the facility of deferred payment of Customs import duty under proviso to sub-section (1) of section 47 of the Customs Act, 1962. This facility was made available to eligible APUs w.e.f. date of publication of Notification No.78/2020-Customs(N.T.) dated 19.08.2020.

23. Special measures to facilitate MSME for AEO T1 & T2 accreditation:

23.1 The Board has decided to facilitate MSMEs by further relaxing the current accreditation process and reducing the compliance burden for their AEO accreditation. The procedural modifications/relaxations for AEO accreditation of MSMEs are as under:

- (i) The eligibility requirement of handling a minimum of 25 documents during the last financial year has been relaxed to 10 documents, subject to handling at least 5 documents in each half- year period of the preceding financial year (Ref.: Para 3.1.7 of the Master Circular).
- (ii) The requirement for the applicant to have "business activities for at least three financial years preceding the date of application" has been relaxed to two financial years. (Ref.: Para 3.1.6 of the Master Circular).
- (iii) The qualifying period for legal and financial compliance has been reduced from 'the last three financial years' to 'the last two financial years'. (Ref.: Paras 3.2 & 3.4 of the Master Circular).
- (iv) For AEO T1 and T2 accreditation, the present annexures i.e., Annexure A, B, C, D, E.1-E.4 have been supplanted with two annexures viz. MSME Annexure 1 and 2. Similar rationalized annexures 1 and 2 are presently being utilized for AEO T1 accreditation only in accordance with the CBIC Circular No. 26/2018-Customs dated 10.08.2018.
- (v) For AEO 72 certification, the present annexures i.e., Annexure E.5.1-E.5.7 for physical verification have been rationalized to a single annexure viz. MSME Annexure 3. The rationalization has been carried out to ensure that the security requirements for an MSME are objective and cover the minimum verifiable security criteria. (Ref.: Para 3.5 of the Master Circular).
- (vi) The time limit for processing of MSME AEO T1 & AEO T2 application has been reduced to fifteen working days (presently one month) and three months (presently six months) respectively after the submission of complete documents for priority processing by customs zones.
- (vii) The benefit of relaxation in furnishing of Bank Guarantee for AEOs has been further relaxed to 25% from 50% and 10% from 25% of that required to be furnished by an importer/exporter who is not an AEO certificate holder, for MSME AEO T1 and MSME AEO T2 entities respectively (Ref.: Para 3.5 of the Master Circular).

23.2 The aforesaid relaxations shall apply only to an applicant who has a valid MSME certificate from the line-Ministry. Further, the approved MSME must ensure their continuous MSME status during the validity of its AEO certification, if granted.

[Refer Circular No.54/2020-Customs dated 15.12.2020]

24. Roll out of Automated Out of Charge for AEO T2 and T3 Clients.

- 24.1 Sustained efforts by CBIC in simplifying trade procedures, enhancing transparency, and adopting best practices have enabled it to achieve steady improvements across various trade facilitation indicators. As part of a broader initiative to enhance trade efficiency, improve compliance, and reduce the administrative burden on businesses, CBIC has decided to roll out Automated Out of Charge in case of AEOs T2 and T3 where there is no requirement of CCR verification.
- 24.2 In the first phase, the Bes of AEO-T2 & T3 clients, meeting the following criteria will be eligible for Auto-OOC on web based goods registration:
- a) Not selected for examination or scanning or for any PGA related NoC.
 - b) Assessment is complete
 - c) Authentication of BE by way of OTP is complete for duty deferment.
- 24.3 The Auto-OOC will be allowed on risk basis for the eligible BEs. However, in case of any intelligence, the option for "HOLD" is provided in Customs Systems to override the Auto-OOC by the concerned officer of Customs.

[Refer Circular No. 01/2025-Customs dated 01.01.2025]



36

Customs Functions related
to Preferential Trade
Agreements

Chapter 36: Customs Functions related to Preferential Trade Agreements

1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of the chief functions of Customs, as the guardian of the economic frontiers of the country, is to administer tariffs, valuation and origin regulations and, also, strike a fine balance with trade facilitation.
- 1.2 Bilateral and multilateral '*Preferential Trade Agreements*' have become a prominent feature, in the trading system, allowing preferential tariff treatment to partnering countries. Customs officer, at the port, is required to have sufficient knowledge of all existing trade agreements and ability to apply and implement the correct rules corresponding to each of trade agreements, under which the preferential benefit claim has been made.
- 1.3 With each such agreement laying down a unique set of trade rules, and with the proliferation of such agreements, there also being overlap of within multiple trade agreements, the role of customs officer has assumed much greater significance as well as has become equally challenging.
- 1.4 Under the overarching umbrella of such bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs has a direct role to play in the following aspects-

Policy

- To analyse impact of the proposed preferential trade agreement on revenue.
- To provide inputs on Rules of Origin Chapter and related operational certification procedures under negotiation.
- To notify the agreed tariff rate under each of the agreements, under the Customs Act 1962.
- To notify the Rules of Origin, as agreed under Customs Act 1962.
- To highlight any issues in implementation of the agreement and suggest amendments.
- To study possible mechanisms to reduce compliance costs and dwell time, with respect to clearance of goods, claiming preferential tariff.

At the time of Customs clearance

- To ensure that goods claiming preferential tariff treatment meet all the conditions as laid out in respective Agreements.
- To ensure that Customs declaration claiming preferential tariff is supported by all necessary information, as listed out in the customs notification, with respect to the said preferential trade agreement as well as Section 28DA of the Customs Act, 1962 read with the Customs

(Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020 [CAROTAR, 2020] notified vide notification No. 81/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 21.08.2020

- To ensure that the proof of origin is valid, authentic and complete.

Enforcement

- Conduct detailed investigation, in cases where misuse is suspected or reported. Make appropriate references for verification of suspect documents during the course of investigation

2. Rules of Origin

- 2.1 "Rules of origin" are the criteria used to define where a product was made/obtained. They are an essential part of trade rules because a number of policies discriminate between exporting countries: quotas, preferential tariffs, anti-dumping actions, countervailing duty (charged to counter export subsidies), and more. Rules of origin are, also, used to compile trade statistics, and for "made in.." labels that are attached to products.
- 2.2 GATT has no specific rules governing the determination of the country of origin of goods in international commerce. Before the Uruguay round, each contracting party was free to determine its own origin rules, and could even maintain several different rules of origin depending on the purpose of the particular regulation.

3. Types of Rules of Origin

- 3.1 Preferential Rules of Origin: Used to implement trade preferences.
- 3.2 Non-Preferential Rules of Origin: Used for '**Most Favored Nation**' treatment, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, safeguard measures, origin marking requirements and any discriminatory quantitative restrictions or tariff quotas, as well as those used for trade statistics and government procurement.

4. WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin (Uruguay Agreement)

- 4.1 The Agreement on Rules of Origin aims at harmonization of non-preferential rules of origin, and to ensure that such rules do not themselves create unnecessary obstacles to trade. The Agreement sets out a work programme for the harmonization of rules of origin to be undertaken after the entry into force of the World Trade Organization (WTO), in conjunction with the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- 4.2 Through this Agreement, members commit to negotiate common rules of origin for all non- preferential trade purposes. The Agreement only sets out broad principles for launching the negotiations for the harmonization of non-preferential rules of origin. However, these negotiations are still ongoing, and therefore, there are no common rules of origin at the WTO.

5. The Harmonization Work Programme (HWP)

- 5.1 Article 9:2 of this Agreement provided that the HWP be completed within three years of initiation. Its agreed deadline was July 1998. While substantial progress was made at that time in the implementation of the HWP, it could not be completed due to the complexity of issues. In July 1998, the General Council approved a decision, whereby, Members committed themselves to making their best endeavours to complete the Programme by a new target date, November 1999. However, due to various outstanding issues, this work is still under process.
- 5.2 The above work is ongoing at both the WTO Committee on Rules of Origin (CRO) in Geneva and in the WCO Technical Committee (TCRO) in Brussels.

(a) Overall architectural design

The CRO and the TCRO have established an overall architectural design within which the harmonization work programme is to be finalized.

This encompasses:

- General rules, laid down in eight Articles provisionally entitled:
 - (i) Scope of Application;
 - (ii) the Harmonized System;
 - (iii) Definitions;
 - (iv) Determination of Origin;
 - (v) Residual Rules of Origin;
 - (vi) Minimal Operations or Processes;
 - (vii) Special Provisions; and
 - (viii) De Minimis;
- Three Appendices:
 - Appendix 1: Wholly obtained goods;
 - Appendix 2: Product rules - substantial transformation;
 - and Appendix 3: Minimal operations or processes.

(b) Disciplines during the transition period

- 5.3 During the transition period (i.e. until the entry into force of the new harmonized rules) Members are required to ensure that:
- (a) rules of origin, including the specifications related to the substantial transformation test, are clearly defined;
 - (b) notwithstanding the measure or instrument of commercial policy to which they are linked, their rules of origin are not used as instruments to pursue trade objectives directly or indirectly;
 - (c) rules of origin do not themselves create restrictive, distorting or disruptive

- effects on international trade and do not require the fulfilment of conditions not related to manufacturing or processing of the product in question;
- (d) rules of origin applied to trade are not more stringent than those applied to determine whether a good is domestic, and do not discriminate between Members (the GATT MFN principle). However, with respect to rules of origin applied for government procurement, Members are not to be obliged to assume additional obligations other than those already assumed under the GATT 1994 (the national treatment exception for government procurement contained in GATT Article III:8).
 - (e) rules of origin are administered in a consistent, uniform, impartial and reasonable manner;
 - (f) rules of origin are based on a positive standard. Negative standards are permissible either as part of a clarification of a positive standard or in individual cases where a positive determination of origin is not necessary;
 - (g) rules of origin are published promptly;
 - (h) upon request, assessments of origin are issued as soon as possible but no later than 150 days after such request, they are to be made publicly available; confidential information is not to be disclosed, except if required in the context of judicial proceedings. Assessments of origin remain valid for three years, provided the facts and conditions remain comparable, unless a decision contrary to such assessment is made in a review, referred to in (j). This advance information on origin is considered as a great innovation of the Agreement;
 - (i) new rules of origin or modifications, thereof, do not apply retroactively;
 - (j) any administrative action in relation to the determination of origin is reviewable promptly by judicial, arbitral or administrative tribunals or procedures independent of the authority issuing the determination; such findings can modify or even reverse the determination;
 - (k) confidential information is not disclosed without the specific permission of the person providing such information, except to the extent that this may be required in the context of judicial proceedings.

6 Main components of preferential Rules of Origin in existing Trade Agreements:

- 6.1 While there are no harmonized preferential rules of origin, the existing trade agreements do follow the general principles as laid out in the Uruguay round Agreement on Rules of Origin. The main

components have been listed and briefly explained to assist in comprehension of rules of origin under various existing bilateral and regional trade agreements. Each Trade Agreement, however, has its own set of Rules of Origin, and precise definition of each of the term listed below may vary.

Customs officers are, therefore, advised to refer to the respective Rules of Origin also, as notified in terms of sub-section (1) of section 5 of the Customs Tariff Act, 1975.

6.2

- (i) Originating Criteria

A good is originating if it is wholly obtained in the partnering country or deemed to be originating if it undergoes substantial transformation.

(a) Goods Wholly Obtained

The origin category of “Goods Wholly Obtained” covers the good which is entirely obtained, extracted, or produced in a single country, without incorporating any non- originating input material.

(b) Goods that are produced using non-originating materials, i.e. not Wholly Obtained

Goods under this category are required to undergo substantial transformation in a country for the good to be qualified as originating. Each Trade Agreement sets its own rules to define substantial transformation/sufficient working. However, broadly, there are three criteria used to define the originating criteria, which are used in various combinations or standalone, which are as given in the Table 36.1 below:

Table 36.1: Criteria used to define the originating criteria in Trade Agreements

<p>Change in Tariff Classification (CTC) criterion</p>	<p>This rule requires that non-Party goods, when used in manufacture of the final product, must undergo changes in tariff classification. Depending upon Trade Agreement requirements, the changes could range from mere change at Sub Heading (HS six digit) level to change at Chapter (HS two digit) level.</p>
<p>Value Addition/Ad Valorem criterion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This rule requires that a certain minimum percentage of good's value originating in a partner country must be added for the good to be considered as originating. • Every Agreement, also, lays down components of value and formula for calculation of such value addition.
<p>Process Rule criterion</p>	<p>This rule requires the good, which is being considered as originating, to be produced through specific process in the originating country.</p>

(c) General Rule versus Product Specific Rules

Depending upon the Trade Agreement, either a single set of rule applies to all/most of the goods that are produced using non-originating materials and thus termed as “General Rules” or specific rules for the goods based on HS classification are framed and termed as “ Product Specific Rule”.

Note: There are Trade Agreements which provide option to an exporter

to choose general or product specific rule to claim origin. In few cases however, general rule cannot be applied when a product specific rule is provided for. Customs officer should therefore read the Non-Tariff Customs notification to check for same.

(ii) Additional Provisions which influence Rules of Origin

The originating criteria under trade agreements are additionally influenced by other elements, which either restrict or broaden the application of same. A customs officer should therefore read all provisions as notified under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975, for each trade agreement. Some such elements which should be considered while inspecting a preferential claim or investigating are as listed below:

(a) Cumulation

Cumulation allows for treating inputs, imported from or, processes carried out, in the partnering country, as originating in or done within the exporting country. In effect, imported inputs would be considered to be domestic for origin purposes. Level of such cumulation is defined under each Trade Agreement and may vary from agreement to agreement.

(b) De-Minimis

This provision allows that non-originating materials that do not satisfy an applicable rule may be disregarded, provided that the totality of such materials does not exceed specific percentages in value or weight of the goods or otherwise said there is a certain tolerance to be applied with regard of the requirements to fulfil the origin criteria.

(c) Indirect Materials/ Neutral Elements

They are goods used in the production, testing or inspection of goods but not physically incorporated in the goods, such as goods used in the maintenance of buildings or the operation of equipment associated with the production of goods. These materials are either treated as originating or not taken into account while establishing criteria based upon value addition, depending upon the mutually agreed Rules of Origin between the contracting parties.

(d) Direct Consignment

Under normal conditions all trade agreements allow preferential tariff treatment to only those goods which are transported directly between Parties. However, in case a good is not transported directly, it should meet the conditions and be supported by documents, as laid out under Rules of Origin of the said Trade Agreement.

(e) Minimal Operations Rule

This rule lists processes or operations considered as insufficient to confer originating status, even if it meets prescribed value addition or/and tariff classification change criterion.

(f) Absorption/Roll-up:

The absorption or roll-up principle allows intermediate products to maintain their originating status when they are used for subsequent manufacturing operations. This means that if a material which contains non-originating input(s) satisfies the applicable origin criterion and has acquired originating status, the entire material is treated as originating when assessing the origin of the subsequently produced product.

(iii) Document submitted as Proof of Origin:

Traditionally, all trade agreements have relied upon a CoO, issued by a competent body, as proof of origin and is a requirement to claim tariff preference. Elements like, the format and data, validity, security features, if any, are as prescribed under specific agreement.

Note: Following provisions (generally termed as the operational certification procedures) are specific to each agreement and, therefore, cannot be taken as a standard practice as there is a scope of variance from agreement to agreement -

- i. Need to claim tariff preference at time of filing customs declaration.
- ii. Need for original proof of origin at time of filing customs declaration.
- iii. Validity of such document.
- iv. Provision for rectifying minor errors in such document.
- v. Time line of issuance of Proof of origin vis-a vis date of shipment. Retroactive documents can only be accepted, if specifically provided for in the Rules of Origin. It, also, defines the conditions and time period within which a proof origin can be issued retroactively.
- vi. Options available, in case of loss of original document.

(iv) Verification of Proof of Origin

Rules of Origin for each trade agreement provides for mechanism for seeking details from exporting country, should a need be felt to supplement investigations done domestically to ascertain validity of origin of a good. The procedure and timelines for same are prescribed and vary from agreement to agreement. Rule 6 of CAROTAR, 2020 provides for timeline for receiving information from Verification Authority and subsequent finalization of preferential tariff claim based on information received.

[Notification No. 81/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 21.08.2020]

Note: It is important to clearly state reasons for verification request and quote the rule under which same is sought. CBIC has issued detailed guidelines on

this issue vide Circular No. 38/2020-Customs dated 21.08.2020.

[Circular No. 38/2020-Customs dated 21.08.2020]

7 Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020 [CAROTAR, 2020]:

Finance Act, 2020 inserted Section 28DA in the Customs Act, 1962 so as to provide for proper administration of rules of origin under various trade agreements and to lay down procedure regarding claim of preferential tariff on goods imported into India. The Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020 [CAROTAR, 2020] have been notified vide notification No. 81/2020-Customs (N.T.) dated 21.08.2020 which prescribe form, time limit, conditions and restrictions, as provided in the section 28DA of the Customs Act, 1962. Some of the major provisions under the above-named rules provide for the following-

- 7.1 CAROTAR requires that the importer or his agent shall, to claim preferential rate of duty under an agreement, at the time of filing bill of entry, -
- (a) make a declaration in the bill of entry that the goods qualify as originating goods for preferential rate of duty under that trade agreement;
 - (b) produce certificate of origin (CoO), covering each item on which preferential rate of duty is claimed;
 - (c) enter details of CoO in the bill of entry, namely: CoO reference number, date of issuance, originating criteria etc; and
 - (d) indicate status regarding accumulation/cumulation, third country (back-to-back) issuance of CoO and/or direct transportation of goods from country of origin, where applicable.
- 7.2 It also, requires an importer to possess sufficient information about the origin of goods. In this regard, a form has been suggested for ease of reference, containing a list of basic minimum information, which an importer is required to obtain to claim preferential tariff under an agreement. This information is not required to be submitted with every bill of entry and needs to be presented only when an inquiry is made by a Customs officer.
- 7.3 In case of a doubt with regard to origin of goods, information is required to be first called upon from the importer of the goods, before initiating verification with the partner country, as maybe provided, under the respective trade agreement.
- 7.4 CAROTAR specifically provides for circumstances that may necessitate verification request pertaining to a CoO from concerned verification authority of partnering country during the course of customs clearance or thereafter, as detailed below, where:

- (a) there is a doubt regarding genuineness or authenticity of CoO for reasons such as mismatch of signatures or seal;
- (b) there is reason to believe that the country of origin criterion, stated in the CoO, has not been met or the claim of preferential rate of duty made by importer is invalid; or
- (c) verification is being undertaken on random basis, as a measure of due diligence to verify whether the goods meet the origin criteria, as claimed.

7.5 For such verification requests, timeline for receiving information and subsequent finalization of preferential tariff claim based on information received even in cases where these timelines may not be provided in the related agreement are clearly spelled out.

7.6 Further, with a view to safeguarding rightful revenue, Clause 10 of Section 28DA of Customs Act, 1962 read with CAROTAR provide that preferential tariff treatment may be denied without verification under the following circumstances:

- (a) the tariff item is not eligible for preferential tariff treatment;
- (b) complete description of goods is not contained in CoO;
- (c) any alteration in the CoO not authenticated by the Issuing Authority;
- (d) CoO is produced after the period of its expiry.

8 List of Trade Agreements:

Table 36.2: List of Trade agreements

S.No	FTA	Notification		General Rules	Countries
		Tariff	Non-Tariff		
1	Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (formerly known as The Bangkok Agreement)	50/2018-Cus dated 30.06.2018	94/2006-Cus (N.T.) dated 31.08.2006	Value of Non-Originating material <= 55% or PSR	Lao PDR, Bangladesh, China, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka

S.No	FTA	Notification		General Rules	Countries
		Tariff	Non-Tariff		
2	Free Trade Agreement Between the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Republic of India	26/2000-Cus dated 01.03.2000	19/2000-Cus (N.T.) dated 01.03.2000	Value of Non-originating material <= 65% + CTH	Sri Lanka
3	Agreement between the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan and Republic of India	76/2003-Cus dated 13.05.2003	33/2003-Cus. (N.T.) dated 13.05.2003	Value of Non-originating material <= 50% + CTH	Afghanistan
4	India-Thailand Early Harvest Scheme	85/2004-Cus dated 31.08.2004	101/2004- Cus (N.T.) dated 31.08.2004	PSR (exclusive) or [40% + CTSH]	Thailand
5	Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between Republic of India and Republic of Singapore	73/2005-Cus dated 22.07.2005; 74/2005-Cus dated 22.07.2005; 75/2005-Cus dated 22.07.2005; 10/2008-Cus dated 15.01.2008	59/2005-Cus (N.T.) dated 20.07.2005	[35% + CTSH] or PSR	Singapore

S.No	FTA	Notification		General Rules	Countries
		Tariff	Non-Tariff		
6	Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA)	99/2011-Cus dated 09.11.2011; 68/2012-Cus dated 31.12.2012	75/2006-Cus (N.T.) dated 30.06.2006	[Value of Non-originating material <= 60% + CTH] or PSR *10% relaxation for LDCs and 5% relaxation for Sri Lanka	Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan
7	Preferential Trading Agreement between the Republic of India and the Republic of Chile	101/2007-Cus dated 11.09.2007	84/2007-Cus (N.T.) dated 17.08.2007	[Value of Non-originating material < 60% + CTH] or PSR	Chile
8	Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for Least Developed Countries	96/2008-Cus dated 13.08.2008	29/2015-Cus (N.T.) dated 10.03.2015	30% + CTSH	93 countries ³

³ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Timor Leste, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia

S.No	FTA	Notification		General Rules	Countries
		Tariff	Non-Tariff		
9	India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement	57/2009-Cus dated 30.05.2009	56/2009-Cus (NT) dated 30.05.2009	Value of Non-originating material < 40%	Argentina Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay
10	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the Republic of India and the Republic of Korea	151/2009-Cus dated 31.12.2009 152/2009-Cus dated 31.12.2009	187/2009-Cus (N.T.) dated 31.12.2009	PSR (exclusive) or [35% + CTSH]	Republic of Korea
11	Treaty of Trade between Government of Nepal and the Government of India	104/2010-Cus dated 01.10.2010		Value of Non-originating material <= 70%	
12	India- ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement	46/2011-Cus dated 01.06.2011	189/2009-Cus (N.T.) dated 31.12.2009	35% + CTSH	Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Viet Nam
13	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the Republic of India and Japan	69/2011-Cus dated 29.07.2011	55/2011-Cus (N.T.) dated 01.08.2011	[35% + CTSH] or PSR	Japan
14	Comprehensive Economic Cooperation	53/2011-Cus dated 01.07.2011	43/2011-Cus (N.T.) dated 01.07.2011	[35% + CTSH] or PSR	Malaysia

S.No	FTA	Notification		General Rules	Countries
		Tariff	Non-Tariff		
	Agreement (CECA) between Republic of India and Malaysia				
15	Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Republic of India and Republic of Mauritius	25/2021-Cus dated 31.03.2021	38/2021-Cus (N.T.) dated 31.03.2021	PSR	Mauritius
16	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the Government of the Republic of India and the government of the United Arab Emirates	22/2022-Cus dated 30.04.2022	39/2022-Cus (N.T.) dated 30.04.2022	PSR	United Arab Emirates
17	India-Australia Economic Cooperation dated Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Australia	62/2022-Cus dated 26.12.2022	112/2022-Cus (N.T.) dated 22.12.2022	PSR	Australia

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1	02/04/1938	Notification No. 78-Cus (N.T.)	--	18	4.1
2	06/02/1965	Notification No.19/65-Cus (N.T.)	Drawback rates-goods taken into use- after importation	23	1.3
				20	3.2
3	24/09/1966	Notification No.174/66-Cus (N.T.)	Re-imported private personal property	20	2.3
4	28/01/1977	Clarification issued vide F. No. 353/91/74-Cus	--	8	3.1
5	01/10/1977	Notification No. 208-Cus (N.T.)	Drawback of import duty not allowed on certain goods	23	5.2
6	09/01/1978	Instruction F. No.511/7/77-Cus.VI	--	8	3.1
7	29/05/1984	Circulars No. 23/84-CX-6	--	26	16.2
8	10/06/1986	Instruction F.No. 305/105/85-FTT	--	26	32.1
9	11/01/1988	Instruction F.No. 11018/63/87-Ad IV	--	25	32.1
10	13/01/1993	Instruction F.No. 390/170/92-JC	--	32	10.2
					11.8
11	02/03/1994	Circular No. 27/27/94-CX	--	32	11.8
12	13/07/1994	Notification No. 154/1994-Cus (N.T.)	Exemption to samples, price lists, commercial samples or prototypes imported as baggage or by post. Air or Courier service and prototypes of engineering goods imported as samples for executing or securing export orders	19	4.1
13	07/01/1994	Notification No. 33/94-Cus (N.T.)	Certain powers to be exercised by Chief Commissioner and Commissioner	23	1.1
14	13/07/1994	Notification No. 154/94-Cus (N.T.)	--	18	6.2
15	17/08/1994	Instruction F.No. 268/35/92-CX-8	--	26	16.2
16	23/02/1995	Circular No. 15/95-Cus	Horticulture etc. 100% EOUs - Exemption from Customs Supervision	26	6.1
17	10/04/1995	Circulars No.36/95-Cus	Import Manifest (Vessels) Amendment Regulations, 1995	2	8.1
					12.2
18	26/05/1995	Notification No.32/95-Cus (N.T.)	--	15	7.1
19	26/05/1995	Notification No. 100/95-Cus (N.T.)	--	19	4.1
20	26/05/1995	Notification No. 101/95-Cus (N.T.)	--	19	4.1

21	30/05/1995	Circular No.56/95-Cus	Courier imports - Normal duty but benefit of exemption notifications available - Imports of gifts/ /samples are duty free up to specified value and documents	17	13.1
22	05/06/1995	Circulars No. 59/95-Cus	Customs refund applications regulations - CBEC clarification	15	7.1
23	14/11/1995	Notification No.158/95-Cus as amended vide Notification 43/2017-Cus (N.T.)	Reimported Indian goods and parts thereof (whether of Indian or foreign manufacture) when imported for repairs, reconditioning, reprocessing, remaking or similar other process examples	20	2.3
24	17/11/1995	Circular No.156/67/95-CX	--	32	11.8
25	16/09/1996	Circular No. 47/96-Cus	Export Cargo Transportation by Private Airlines Permitted	11	16.2
26	07/07/1997	Instruction F.No. 450/82/95-Cus IV	Appointment of Officers of Customs	16	3.5
27	20/08/1997	Circular No. 330/46/97-CX	Problems faced by 100% EOUs and units in EPZ, STP and EHTP units for assessment of scrap and waste generated	26	16.2
28	26/12/1997	Notification No. 75/97-Cus (N.T.)	Drawback rates - Notification No. 53/97-Cus. (N.T.) supersedes and Notification No. 22/97-Cus	19	4.1
29	17/10/1997	Circular No. 52/97-Cus	ICD / CFS -Cost Recovery Charges	29	2.33
30	21/11/1997	Circular No. 63/97-Cus	Specified Import Cargo- Fast Track Clearance Procedure	26	12.1
31	10/03/1998	Circular No. 14/98-Cus	Single Bond required for Surety/ security	26	10.3 12.1
32	16/03/1998	Circular No. 17/98-Cus	Clearing of Laptop computers and Video Projection System from EHTP/ STP and EPZ Unit	26	27.1
33	27/03/1998	Circular No. 22/98-Cus	Samples for DTA Sale/Export	26	22.2
34	19/06/1998	Circular No. 42/98-Cus	EOUs/ EPZ Units - Option to Execute Single B-17 Bond (sur) or Bond and BG upto 5% of Bond Value	26	10.3
35	04/08/1998	Circular No. 57/98-Cus	Export Cargo movement by containers/ trucks from hinterland to Seaport / Air Cargo complexes - Procedure Prescribed	11	16.2
36	15/09/1998	Circular No. 66/98-Cus	EOUs / EPZ / EHTP / STP Units- Reliefs in Execution of B-17 Bond	26	10.3
37	26/10/1998	Circular No. 80/98-Cus	No direct correspondence on Policy Issues by Ministries with Customs Commissionerate's	29	2.33
38	05/11/1998	Circular No. 83/1998-Cus	Movement of containers and containerized cargo	11	3.2
39	13/11/1998	Circular No. 85/98-Cus	Assessment of clearance of goods imported / exported through courier mode - courier Imports and Exports (Clearance) Regulation, 1998	17	13.1
40	02/12/1998	Circulars No. 88/98-Cus	EOUs- Bonding Procedure	26	9.1

			Liberalized		33.2
41	08/12/1998	Circular No. 90/98-Cus	Simplification in procedure for movement of export goods from factories, 100% EOUs/EPZs etc. on the basis of self-certification and reduced percentage of Physical examination - reg. 2. Reduction in percentage of Physical Examination of Export Cargo.	26	12.4
42	29/04/1999	Circular No. 19/99-Cus	Diamond Gem & Jewelry Export Promotion Scheme - Amendments	26	19.4
43	27/05/1999	Circular No. 31/99-Cus	Procedure of transshipment of export cargo from gateway ports like Chennai and JNPT	11	16.2
44	22/06/1999	Instruction F.No. 394/71/97-Cus (AS)	--	31	10.7
45	06/07/1999	Notification No. 86/99-Cus (N.T.)	Samples, price lists, commercial samples or prototypes imported as baggage - Amendment to Notification No. 154/94-Cus. - 86/99 - Customs -Tariff	19	4.1
46	20/08/1999	Circular and No. 52/99-Cus	Clearance of Samples from EOUs/EPZ/EHTP/STP Units to DTA	26	22.2
47	10/09/1999	Circular No. 60/99-Cus	Difficulty being faced by EOU/EPZ/STP units in regard to replacement of goods exported or imported and found damaged or defective or otherwise unfit for use	26	13.2
48	06/10/1999	Circular No. 69/99-Cus	Movement of Imported Cargo by Containers / Trucks from Airport / ACCs to ICDs / CFSs / Airports / ACCs	11	13.3
49	17/11/1999	Circular No. 76/99-Customs	--	26	10.3 10.5
50	18/02/2000	Circular No. 515/11/2000-CX	Committee on Disputes between Govt. and PSUs -Proforma for Forwarding Proposals revised	32	11.8
51	21/02/2000	RBI Circular No. COEXD.3109/05.62.05/1999 - 2000	--	26	11.3
52	03/05/2000	Circular No. 34/2000-Cus	Transshipment of import and export cargo from/through gateway ports	11	16.2
53	03/05/2000	Notification No. FEMA.23/2000-RB	Foreign Exchange Management (Export of goods and services) Regulations, 2000	3	18.1
54	24/05/2000	Circular No. 50/2000-Cus	EOUs/EPZ/EHTP/STP Units---B17 bonds - debit of only 25% of duty foregone	26	10.5

55	30/06/2000	Circulars No. 55/2000-Cus	Cargo - Consolidation of cargo at gateway port	12	3.2
					4.2
56	04/07/2000	Instruction vide F.No. 305/48/2000-FTT	--	26	17.2
57	05/07/2000	Circular No. 56/2000-Cus	Transshipment of Containers from Gateway ports to ICDs/CFSS	11	16.2
58	13/07/2000	Circular No. 61/2000-Cus	Cargo - Movement of imported cargo by containers / trucks from Airports / ACCS to ICDs/CFSS/Airports/ACCS	12	16.2
59	24/07/2000	Instruction F.No.450/80/2000-Cus.IV	--	9	10.1
60	17/08/2000	Circular No. 67/2000-Cus	Consolidation of cargo at gateway port-procedure	12	4.2
61	18/08/2000	Circular No. 68/2000-Cus	Facility for permitting imports under DEPB Scheme at customs bonded warehouses through TRA procedure	24	2.2
62	16/10/2000	Circular No. 84/2000-Cus	Clearances of Laptop Computers and Video Projection System from EHTP/STP and EPZ Units	26	27.1
63	23/02/2001	Circular No. 11/2001-Cus	Valuation (Customs) - Cases handled by Special Valuation Branch of the Custom Houses - Review of instructions	7	9.7
64	17/04/2001	Circular No. 22/2001-Cus	Consolidation of cargo at the gateway port-procedure	12	3.2
					4.2
65	24/05/2001	Circular No. 31/2001-Cus	Amendments in Exim Policy and Handbook of Procedures, 1997-2002 relating to Gem& Jewellery Sector and EOU/EPZ/ STP/ EHTP/SEZ Scheme- Issuance of Customs/ Central Excise notifications	26	25.2
66	20/06/2001	Circular No. 578/15/2001-CX	Dispute between the Department and PSU - COD clearance	32	11.8
67	31/07/2001	Circular No. 42/2001-Cus	Speedy Customs clearance to avoid payment of detention/demurrage charges	16	3.5
68	03/08/2001	Notification No. 36/2001-Cus. (N.T.)	This Notification is Amended by Notification No. 62/2001-Customs (N.T.)	7	2.1
69	06/08/2001	Circular No. 43/2001-Cus	Import of livestock products	9	6.3
					10.1
70	25/10/2001	Circular No. 58/2001-Cus	Application of PFA Act, 1954 and other Acts for the clearance of consignments of food articles - instructions	9	4.7
					10.1
71	05/12/2001	Circular No. 75/2001-Cus	Movement of export cargo from one	11	9.1

			port to another by rail		16.2
72	07/12/2001	Circular No. 78/2001-Cus	Bank guarantee for transshipment of cargo from gateway ports to feeder ports/ICDs/CFSS-reg.	11	14.1
					16.2
73	23/01/2002	Circular No. 06/2002-Cus	Examination norms for export goods at port of export	3	21.4
74	25/02/2002	Circular No. 15/2002-Cus	Carriage of coastal cargo from one Indian port to another port in foreign going vessels	11	16.2
75	01/03/2002	Notification No. 21/2002-Cus (N.T.)	Supersession of the notification No.17/2001-Customs, dated the 1 st of March, 2001	18	4.3
76	05/03/2002	Circular No. 16/2002-Cus	General permission for release of imported currency through post	18	7.3
77	13/03/2002	Circular No.18/2002-Cus	Customs procedure for export of container cargo from ICDs/CFSS in India to Bangladesh and Nepal through LCSs	11	16.2
78	29/07/2002	Circular No. 46/2002-Cus	Transshipment of containers to ICDs/CFSS	11	6.2
					16.2
79	13/09/2002	Circular No. 60/2002-Cus	General permission for Authorized Dealers to import currency notes from their overseas branches	18	7.4
80	07/10/2002	Circular No. 65/2002-Cus	Permission to send out goods for job work by EOUs/EPZ/STP/EHTP/SEZ Units	26	26.3
81	19/12/2002	Circular No. 90/2002-Cus	Issuance of Transshipment Permit at Ports on Saturdays	11	6.2
					16.2
82	01/03/2003	Notification No. 28/2003-Cus (N.T.)	Amends various notifications	19	4.1
83	06/03/2003	Circular No. 14/2003-Cus	Decentralization of the work relating to fixation of Brand Rate of drawback under Rule 6 and Rule 7 of the Customs & Central Excise Duties Drawback Rules, 1995.	23	2.12
84	24/03/2003	Circular No. 17/2003-Cus	Removal of Laptop Computers and Video Projection System Temporarily out of EOU or EHTP / STP/SEZ Unit	26	27.1
85	28/03/2003	Circular No. 21/2003-Cus	Requirement of registration of manufacturing premises of foreign drugs manufacturer prior to their import in the country under Drugs and Cosmetics Rules	9	10.1

86	01/04/2003	Circular No. 26/2003-Cus	Permission to send out goods for job work by EOUs/STP /EHTP /SEZ Units	26	26.3
87	18/07/2003	Circular No. 61/2003-Cus	Customs procedure for export of container cargo from ICDs/CFSS in India to Bangladesh and Nepal through LCSs	11	16.2
88	11/08/2003	Circular No. 72/2003-Cus	Facility for permitting imports under DEPB Scheme at Customs bonded warehouses through TRA procedure	24	2.2
89	12/09/2003	Notification No. 75/2003-Cus (N.T.)	Central Government hereby fixes the rate of interest at six per cent - per annum for the purposes of the 27A Section Custom Act 1962	15	7.1
90	06/10/2003	Circulars No. 87/2003-Cus	Movement of Domestic Courier bags on domestic segments of international flights	11	16.2
91	22/12/2003	Circular No.110/2003-Cus	Filing of Import Manifest before arrival of the vessel or aircraft	2	4.2
					12.2
92	16/02/2004	Circular No. 15/2004-Cus	Filing of Import Manifest before arrival of the vessel or aircraft	2	4.2
					12.2
93	25/03/2004	Notification No. FEMA.116/2004-RB	Foreign Exchange Management (Export of Goods and Services) (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2004	4	18.1
94	06/04/2004	Circular No. 27/2004-Cus	Appointment of custodian for Air cargo Complex and Seaports	29	2.11
					2.33
95	16/04/2004	Circular No. 30/2004-Cus	Filing of Import Manifest before arrival of the vessel or aircraft	2	4.2
					12.2
96	26/04/2004	Circular No. 31/2004-Cus	Directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 14.10.2003 in the matter of WP No. 657/95	21	4.1
					6.1
97	13/05/2004	Circular No. 34/2004-Cus	Filing of Import Manifest before arrival of the vessel or aircraft	3	12.2
98	07/10/2004	Circular No. 52/2004-Cus	Bank Guarantee for transshipment of import & export cargo from Gateway Ports to Feeder Ports/ICDs/CFSS and vice versa regarding	11	16.2
99	13/10/2004	Circular No. 54/2004-Cus	Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) announced on 31.8.2004- Amendment of notifications relating to EOU and Gems and Jewelry Export Promotion Schemes	26	10.3
100	04/01/2005	Instruction F.No. 450/132/2004-Cus.IV	Import of livestock and livestock products	9	6.3
101	04/03/2005	Circular No. 12/2005-Cus	Fast Track Clearance Procedure	26	9.2
102	08/04/2005	Notification No. 32/2005-Cus (N.T.)	Exempts goods when imported into India against a duty credit certificate issued under the Target Plus Scheme in accordance with paragraph 3.7 of the Foreign Trade Policy	24	9.1
103	11/03/2005	Circular No. 13/2005-Cus	Delayed, incomplete or incorrect	2	5.4

			filing of Import Manifest of Import Report		12.2
104	11/03/2005	Circular No. 18/2005-Cus	No requirement of permission for palletization	3	23.2
105	20/05/2005	Notification No. 50/2005-cus (N.T.)	Amends/further amends notification numbers 154/94-Customs, dated the 13th July, 1994, 55/2001-Customs, dated the 16th May, 2001 and 52/2003-Customs, dated the 31st March, 2003	19	4.1
106	25/07/2005	Circular No. 31/2005-Cus	Containers/cargo-Movement of containers and containerized cargo	11	3.2 16.2
107	13/10/2005	Instruction F.No. 450/122/2005-Cus.IV	--	9	6.3
108	24/11/2005	Circular No. 43/2005-Cus	Introduction of Risk Management System (RMS) in Imports	9 3 3	4.7 11.1 15.1
109	24/11/2005	Circular No. 44/2005-Cus	Delayed, incomplete or incorrect filing of Import Manifest or Import Report	2	5.4 12.2
110	24/11/2005	Circular No. 45/2005-Cus	Transshipment of import and export cargo - waiver of bank guarantee	11	14.1 16.2
111	24/11/2005	Circular No. 46/2005-Cus	Automation of movement of containerized cargo from Gateway Ports to hinterland ports - SMTP	11	16.2 7.5
112	24/11/2005	Circular No. 47/2005-Cus	--	11	16.2
113	24/11/2005	Instruction F.No. 450/66/2005-Cus.IV	Movement of Less than Container Load (LCL) cargo from one CFS to another CFS	12	3.2 4.2
114	28/11/2005	Circular No. 48/2005-Cus	Import of livestock products	9	6.3
115	01/12/2005	Circular No. 50/2005-Cus	Procedure for disposal of unclaimed/ uncleared cargo under section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962, lying with the custodians	19 21 29	4.1 3.5 6.1 2.13
116	09/12/2005	Circular No. 52/2005-Cus	Procedure for disposal of unclaimed/ uncleared cargo under section 48 of the Customs Act, 1962, lying with the custodians	21	3.5
117	30/12/2005	Circular No. 54/2005-Cus	Guidelines for compounding of offences under Customs and Central Excise Acts	31	17
118	13/01/2006	Circular No. 07/2006-Cus	Procedural relaxation under EOU and Gem and Jewelry Export Promotion Schemes	26	36.12
119	16/02/2006	Circular No.11/2006-Cus	Measures for expeditious disposal of goods -Procedure for disposal	21	6.1
120	01/06/2006	Circular No. 17/2006-Cus	Revision of Foreign trade Policy (FTP) announced on 07.04.2006-	26	7.2

			Amendment of notification relating to EOU and Gems & Jewellery sector and Procedural changes made effected		30.2
121	25/08/2006	Circular No. 23/2006-Cus	Examination norms concerning import & export through courier mode-regarding	17	7.1
					13.1
122	25/08/2006	Circular No. 24/2006-Cus	Transshipment of import and export cargo through airports- waiver of bank guarantee	11	2.8
					12.7
					16.2
123	22/11/2006	Circular No. 40/2006-Cus	Improving vigilance administration by leveraging technology: Increasing transparency through effective use of websites in discharge of regulatory, enforcement and other functions of Govt. organizations.	15	7.1
124	22/01/2007	Circular No. 08/2007-Cus	Export of perishable cargo	3	21.5
125	22/01/2007	Circular No. 06/2007-Cus	Transshipment procedure between any two Customs Airports	11	13.3
					14.1
					16.2
					12.5
126	02/03/2007	Circular No. 13/2007-Cus	Clearance of livestock and livestock products	9	6.3
127	16/03/2007	Circular No. 14/2007-Cus	International transshipment of LCL containers at Indian Ports	11	4.3
				12	16.2
					4.2
128	03/05/2007	Circular No. 19/2007-Cus amended by Circular No. 19/2015	Re - warehousing of goods imported and/ or procured indigenously by EOU/EHTP/STP/BTP units	26	9.3
129	08/05/2007	Notification No. 47/2007-Customs (N.T.) as amended vide notification No. 56/2018- Customs (N.T.)	Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007	22	3.7
					4.3
130	21/05/2007	Notification No. 74/2007-Cus	Amends notification No.154/94-Customs, dated the 13 th of July, 1994	19	4.1
131	02/07/2007	Circular No. 24/2007-Cus	Delay in payment of customs duty refunds	15	7.1
132	21/08/2007	Circular No. 29/2007-Cus	Guidelines for compounding of offences under Customs (Compounding of Offences) Rules, 2005	31	17
133	29/08/2007	Circular No. 31/2007-Cus	Issues concerning import & export through courier mode	17	13.1
134	09/10/2007	Circular No. 38/2007-Cus	Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 - Instructions	7	6.3

135	29/10/2007	Circular No. 41/2007-Cus	Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007 - instructions for implementation	22	3.7
					4.3
136	06/05/2008	Notification No. 62/2008-Cus (N.T.)	Amends notification Nos. 154/94-Customs, dated the 13th July, 1994 and 21/2002-Customs, dated the 1st March, 2002	19	4.1
137	28/05/2008	Circular No. 07/2008-Cus	Sanction of Customs duty refunds - Unjust Enrichment	15	7.1
138	24/07/2008	Circulars No. 12/2008-Cus	Changes/amendments in the EOU/EHTP/STP and Gems and Jewelry Export Promotion Schemes	26	4.4
					17.6
					18.1
					26.1
					36.5
139	02/12/2008	Circular No. 20/2008-Cus	Guidelines for compounding of offences under Customs (Compounding of Offences) Rules, 2005 - regarding	31	17
140	19/12/2008	Circular No. 22/2008-Cus	Procedure relating to sanction and pre-audit of refund claims	15	7.1
141	13/01/2009	Circular No. 01/2009-Cus	Examination norms for goods exported under Reward Scheme	3	21.4
142	02/02/2009	Circular No. 05/2009-Cus	Systems Alert for Monitoring Realization of Export Proceeds in EDI	23	6.2
143	25/02/2009	Circular No. 11/2009-Cus	Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA) Scheme - availment of facility under rule 18(rebate of duty paid on materials used in the manufacture of resultant product) or sub-rule (2) of rule 19 of the Central Excise Rules, 2002 or Cenvat credit under CENVAT Credit Rules, 2004 under Notification number 40/06-Cus dated 1.5.06	24	4.2
144	23/03/2009	Circular No. 13/2009-Cus	Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009	29	2.33
145	08/06/2009	Circulars No.18/2009-Cus	Designation of customs clearance facilities as ICDs or CFSs - Clarification	11	16.2
				17	8.1
				29	2.33
146	04/08/2009	Circular No. 21/2009-Cus	Regarding provisions relating to EDI infrastructure under the "Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009	29	2.33
147	01/09/2009	Circular No. 23/2009-Cus	Powers of adjudication of the officers of Customs	14	6.8
148	11/09/2009	Notification No. 96/2009-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of the Advance Authorization scheme.	24	3.11
149	11/09/2009	Notification No. 98/2009-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of duty free Import authorization scheme(DFIA).	24	4.2
150	11/09/2009	Notification No. 99/2009-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of the Advance Authorization scheme for	24	3.11

			annual requirement		
151	24/09/2009	Notification No 109/2009-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 154/1994-Customs	19	4.1
152	29/09/2009	Notification No.112/2009-Cus (N.T.)	Exempts certain materials required for the manufacture of the final goods from additional duty, safeguard duty and anti-dumping duty	24	3.11
153	15/02/2010	Circulars No. 04/2010-Cus	Regarding carriage of domestic cargo on international flights	11	14.1
					16.2
154	16/03/2010	Circulars No. 05/2010-Cus	Regarding verification mechanism and monitoring of export obligation under duty exemption / reward Schemes	24	2.3
					8.4
155	08/04/2010	Circular No. 09/2010-Cus	Regarding issue of Custom House Agent License	17	11.2
					15.4
156	30/06/2010	Instruction F.No. 450/97/2010-Cus.IV	Notification regarding prohibition of import of goods infringing intellectual property rights	22	4.3
157	24/06/2010	Circular No. 13/2010-Cus	Regarding Amendment of the Customs, Central Excise & Service Tax Drawback Rules, 1995 and the Re-Export of Imported Goods (Drawback of Customs Duties) Rules, 1995	23	1.2
158	22/07/2010	Instruction F.No. 450/97/2010-Cus.IV	Regarding measures for expeditious disposal of unclaimed / uncleared goods	21	6.1
159	07/09/2010	Circular No. 33/2010-Cus	Regarding courier Regulations for the manual and the electronic mode	17	13.1
160	21/09/2010	Circular No. 935/25/2010-CX	Measures to streamline the processing of departmental litigation before the Courts and Tribunal	32	7.7
					8.4
					11.8
161	15/10/2009	Circular No. 29/2009-Cus	Guidelines for compounding of offences under Customs Act, 1962	31	17.6
162	29/12/2009	Instruction vide F. No. 450/160/2009-Cus.IV	Regarding implementation of the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008	9	8.5
163	04/01/2011	Circular No. 01/2011-Cus	Provisional release of export - goods detained for investigation	16	3.5
164	06/01/2011	Circular No. 03/2011-Cus	Regarding import of edible / food products	9	4.7
165	10/01/2011	Circular No. 04/2011-Cus	Regarding handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009	29	2.33
166	18/01/2011	Instructions No. 609/119/2010- DBK	Need for detailed Verification Mechanism of scrips issued Reward Schemes and Monitoring of Export Obligations (EO) in respect of Advance Authorization/Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA)/ Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Schemes with Shipping Bills	24	2.3
					8.4

167	18/01/2011	Circular No. 06/2011-Cus	Regarding norms for execution of Bank Guarantee in respect of Advance Authorization / Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA) / Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Schemes	24	4.2
168	18/01/2011	Instruction F.No. 609/119/2010-DBK	Need for detailed Verification Mechanism of scrips issued Reward Schemes and Monitoring of Export Obligations (EO) in respect of Advance Authorization/Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA)/ Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Schemes with Shipping Bills	23	6.2
169	28/01/2011	Circular No. 8/2011-Cus	Regarding procedure for Transfer / Transshipment of cargo	11	12.6
170	09/02/2011	Instruction F.No. 450/54/2008-Cus.IV	Regarding Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010	17	14.4
171	24/02/2011	Circular No. 10/2011-Cus	Regarding Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007 - instructions for implementation	22	3.7
					4.3
172	25/02/2011	Circular No. 11(A)/2011-Cus	Regarding execution of a Common Bond for specified Export Promotion (EP) schemes	24	7.2
173	28/02/2011	Circular No. 13/2011-Cus	Regarding compliance of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM-15) in respect of wood packaging material by exporters	9	11.4
174	24/03/2011	Instruction F.No. 390/R/262/09-JC	Settlement of Disputes between one Govt. Dept. and another and one Govt. Dept. and a Public Enterprise and one Public Enterprise and another	32	9.1
175	05/04/2011	Instruction F.No. 495/2/2011- Cus.VI	Regarding duty free export of samples as personal baggage of the exporter	19	5.1
176	09/05/2011	Instruction F.No.473/19/2009-LC	Regarding import of liquid bulk cargo and storage of the same in Bonded Warehouse outside the port area by transporting through pipeline	2	11.4
177	31/05/2011	Circular No. 24/2011-Cus	Regarding revision in the powers of adjudication of the officers of Customs	1	3.3.3
178	18/07/2011	Circular No. 29/2011-Cus	Regarding Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009-clarification.	29	2.9
179	18/08/2011	Instruction F.No. 450/81/2011-Cus.IV	Regarding installation of Weigh-Bridges at different ports	29	2.9
180	29/12/2011	Circular No. 54/2011-Cus	Clarification regarding handling of cargo in customs areas Regulations, 2009	29	2.15
181	29/07/2011	Circular No. 33/2011-Cus	Regarding making E-payment of Customs duty mandatory	3	7.2

182	12/08/2011	Circular No. 36/2011-Cus	Amendment to Circular No. 54/2004- Customs dated 13.10.2004 regarding waiver from the requirement of Bank Guarantee in respect of EOUs	26	10.3
183	02/09/2011	Circular No. 39/2011-Cus	Regarding Self-Assessment in Customs	4	14.2
184	20/10/2011	Circulars No. 46/2011-Cus	Regarding exports under Duty Drawback Scheme	23	7.2
					7.3
185	04/11/2011	Circular No. 49/2011-Cus	Instructions regarding eligibility of assessment of construction equipment under Project Imports Regulations (PIR), 1986	6	2.6
186	13/02/2012	Instruction F.No.450/160/2011-Cus.IV	Regarding time bound Customs clearance of Cargo from Ports/Land Customs Stations/Air Cargo Complexes, CFSS/ICDs	16	3.6
187	14/03/2012	Instructions F. No.450/24/2012-Cus.IV	Regarding 'Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas Regulations, 2009'	29	2.10
188	05/07/2012	Circular No. 17/2012-Cus	Regarding verification of genuineness, of duty credit scrips issued under Chapter 3 of FTP, before registration	24	2.3
189	26/07/2012	Notification No. 65/2012-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 36/ 2010 - Customs (N.T.), dated the 5th May, 2010 thereby amending Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010	17	14.4
190	26/06/2012	Instruction F.No. 603/01/2011-DBK	Audit Report No. 152011-12, Section 2, Duty Drawback Scheme.	23	7.6
191	05/09/2012	Circular No. 24/2012-Cus	Regarding making E-payment of Customs duty mandatory	3	7.2
192	06/09/2012	Circular No. 25/2012-Cus	Regarding verification mechanism and monitoring of export obligation under duty exemption/ reward Schemes	24	8.3
193	01/01/2013	Circular No. 3/2013-Cus	Installation of Close Circuit Television Systems (CCTV)	29	2.14
194	01/07/2013	Circular No. 25/2013-Cus	Regarding import of Pets under Baggage	27	11.2
195	15/01/2013	Circular No. 4/2013-Cus	Regarding disposal of firearms imported as baggage under transfer of residence	27	10.3
196	08/04/2013	Circular No. 15/2013-Cus	Regarding import of pets under Baggage	27	11.2
197	10/04/2013	Circular No. 16/2013-Cus IV	Regarding Fixation of norms for waiver of payment of cost recovery charges for Customs staff posted at Seaports, Air Cargo Complexes, Courier Terminal, etc.	29	2.33
198	16/04/2013	Instruction F.No.450/39/2012-Cus IV	Deployment of Officials of CLRI at Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata (Ports) and Kanpur and Tughlakabad (ICDs)	9	12.1(b)

199	24/05/2013	Circular No. 22/2013-Cus	Regarding Customs permission for transshipment of goods/containers from a Gateway Port to a Container Freight Station (CFS) of another Customs Station	11	16.2
200	24/06/2013	Circular No. 23/2013-Cus	Introduction of Risk Management Systems (RMS) in Exports	4	12.3
					12.4
					12.1
201	19/07/2013	Circular No. 26/2013-Cus	Regarding Standard Unit Quantity Code (UQC)	3	3.5
202	31/07/2013	Instructions No. 603/01/2011- DBK	Audit Report No. 15/2011-2012, Section 2, Duty Drawback Scheme	23	2.12
					6.2
					7.3
					7.5
					7.6
203	23/07/2013	Instruction F.No.450/19/2005-CusIV	Instructions regarding 'Handling of Cargo in Customs Area Regulations (HCCAR) 2009'	9	2.33
204	06/08/2013	Circular No. 31/2013-Cus	Regarding clarification regarding contract under PIR, 1986	6	3.4
205	05/08/2013	Circular No. 30/2013-Cus	Regarding provisional release of export goods that are detained or seized.	16	3.7
206	16/08/2013	Circular No.32/2013-Cus	Regarding the amount of bond and bank guarantee and insurance under Regulation 5(1)(iii) of HCCAR, 2009.	29	2.33
207	19/08/2013	Notification No. 84/2013-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend Baggage Rules, 1998	27	3.5
208	29/08/2013	Notifications No. 90/2013-Cus (N.T.)	Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations, 2013	27	17.1
209	05/09/2013	Circular No.35/2013-Cus	Audit Report No. 15/2011-12, Section 2 - Duty Drawback Scheme: All aspects to be covered in speaking orders issued in each case of export under section 74 of Customs Act, 1962- regarding	23	1.4
210	16/09/2013	Instruction F.No.450/19/2005-CusIV	Instructions reiterating compliance of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM-15) in respect of wood packaging material by exporters	29	11.5
211	17/09/2013	Circular No. 38/2013-Cus	Regarding guidelines for Arrest and Bail in relation to offences punishable under Customs Act, 1962	31	10.7 (vii)
212	11/10/2013	Instruction F. No. 603/01/2011-DBK	Regarding Audit Report No. 15/2011- 12, Section 2 - Duty Drawback Scheme	23	2.12
					6.2
					7.3
					7.5
213	25/10/2013	Circular No. 42/2013-Cus	Regarding encouragement for stakeholder participation in Customs functioning	33	2.1 (g)

214	30/12/2013	Notification No.133/2013-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend the Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations, 2013	27	17.1
215	31/12/2013	Circular No. 45/2013-Cus	Regarding Handling of Cargo in Customs Area Regulations, (HCCAR) 2009	29	2.33
216	17/01/2014	Notification No. 1/2014-Cus	Regarding export of a prohibited item under Advance Authorization	24	3.6
217	27/02/2014	Circular No. 5/2014-Cus	Regarding implementation of Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations 2013	27	17.1
218	19/09/2014	Instruction F. No.450/148/2014-Cus.IV	Regarding passengers Facilitation at International Airports	27	19.1
219	31/12/2014	Circular No. 19/2014-Cus	Regarding 24x7 Customs clearance	3	28.1
220	16/01/2015	Circulars No. 03/2015-Cus	Regarding Export and Import of Currency	27	9.2
					16.4
221	20/01/2015	Circular No. 04/2015-Cus	Re-export of goods imported under Bonafide mistake	1 17	3.3
					15.4
222	12/02/2015	Circular No. 07/2015-Cus	Regarding amendments to Board Circulars No. 33/2010 dated 07.09.2010 and 04/2015 dated 20.01.2015	17	15.2
223	31/03/2015	Circular No. 09/2015-Cus	Regarding online message exchange between Customs and other regulatory agencies	1	3.2 (1)
224	31/03/2015	Circular No.10/2015-Cus	Regarding usage of Digital Signature Certificate in Remote EDI filing (RES) of Customs Documents	1	3.2 (5)
225	01/04/2015	Circular No. 11/2015-Cus	Regarding facility for suo moto payment of customs duty in case of bona fide default in export obligation under the Advance / EPCG authorizations	24	2.2 (d)
226	30/01/2015	Notification No. 16/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 09/2015-Customs (N.T.), dated the 15 th of January, 2015	24	5.1
					5.2
227	05/02/2015	Notification No. 18/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of Duty-Free Import Authorization Scheme under FTP 2015-2020	24	3.11
					3.12
228	09/02/2015	Notification No.19/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 12/97-Customs (N.T.), dated the 2nd April 1997	24	4.2
229	10/02/2015	Notification No. 20/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend Drawback Rules 1995	24	3.11
					2.2
230	10/02/2015	Notification No. 21/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to make certain changes in AIR Drawback Schedule	24	3.11
					2.2
231	13/02/2015	Notification No. 22/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 36/2001-Customs (N.T.)	24	3.6
					3.11
232	16/02/2015	Notification No. 23/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 64/94-Customs(N.T.)	24	3.11

233	16/02/2015	Notification No. 24/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 64/94-Customs(N.T.)	24	3.11
234	08/4/2015	Notification No. 25/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of Service Export from India Scheme (SEIS) under FTP 2015-2020	24	2.2 (C)
235	01/03/2015	Notification No. 27/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to notify resident firm as class of persons for the purposes of section 28E of the Customs Act, 1962 so as to extend the scheme of Advance Ruling to Resident Firm.	24	3.11
236	04/2/2015	F.No. 394/05/2015-Cus (AS)	--	31	16.2
237	31/03/2015	Circular No. 09/2015-Cus	Online message exchange between Customs and other regulatory agencies	2	3.2
238	13/04/2015	Circular No. 13/2015-Cus	Regarding setting up of Customs Clearance Facilitation Committee (CCFC)	1	3.5
				33	4.6
239	20/04/2015	Circular No. 14/2015-Cus	Foreign Trade Policy 2015 - 2020; Salient changes in Schemes of reward or incentive / advance authorization or DFIA / EPCG or post export EPCG	24	2.3
					8.4
240	18/05/2015	Circular No.15/2015-Cus	Dispensing with SDF form	1	3.4
241	13/03/2015	Notification No. 30/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 36/2001-Customs (N.T.), dated the 3rd August, 2001	26	8.1
242	31/03/2015	Notification No. 34/2015-Cus (N.T.)	Amends Notification No. 36/2001-Customs (N.T.), dated the 3rd August, 2001	26	8.1
243	26/05/2015	Circular No. 17/2015-Cus	Import, trading & re-export of rough diamonds by notified entities in Bharat Diamond Bourse, Bandra Kurla Cargo Complex, Mumbai	20	4.1
244	14/10/2015	Circular No. 24/2015-Cus	Regarding improving Ease of Doing Business Issuance of Electronic Delivery Orders	29	2.34
245	23/10/2015	Circular No. 28/2015-Cus	Revised Guidelines for Arrest and Bail in relation to offences punishable under Customs Act, 1962	31	10.7
246	23/10/2015	Circular No. 27/2015-Cus	Guidelines for launching of prosecution in relation to offences punishable under Customs Act, 1962	31	15.11.3
					15.13
					15.15
					27.13
247	23/10/2015	Circular No. 26/2015-Cus	Use of digital signature for submission of documents	1	3.5
248	30/10/2024	Notification No. 74/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2024	11	16.3
249	27/11/2015	Instruction F.No. 609/59/2012-DBK	Systems Alert for monitoring realisation of export proceeds in EDI under the BRC Module for ICES (introduced in year 2009) and the new RBI BRC Module introduced under DG (Systems) letter dated 28.8.2014[English]	23	6.2

250	17/12/2015	Instructions F.No. 390/Misc./163/2010-JC	Regarding reduction of Government litigations - providing monetary limits for filing appeals by the Department before CESTAT and High Courts	32	10.2
					11.8
251	01/03/2016	Notification No. 30/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to notify Baggage Rules, 2016	27	17.1
252	06/01/2016	Circular No. 01/2016-Cus	Regarding 24x7 clearance	3	28.1
253	03/02/2016	Circulars Nos. 03/2016-Cus	Extending the Indian Customs Single Window to other locations and other Participating Government Agencies	9	4.2
					4.5
254	01/03/2016	Notification No. 31/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to further amend Customs Baggage Declaration (Amendment) Regulations, 2016	27	17.1
255	15/03/2016	Circular No. 10/2016-Cus	Implementing Integrated Declaration under the Indian Customs Single Window	9	4.2
					4.5
256	28/03/2016	Circulars No. 12/2016-Cus	Prevention of use of non-genuine transferable duty credit scrips or DFIA (duty free import authorizations)	24	2.3
					4.2
257	31/03/2016	Notification No. 43/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend Baggage Rules, 2016	27	5
					17.1
258	26/04/2016	Circular No.13/2016-Cus	Regarding relaxation of Know Your Customer (KYC) norms	17	15.2
259	27/04/2016	Circular No. 14/2016-Cus	Regarding carriage of coastal cargo from one Indian port to another port in vessels carrying out coastal runs	11	2.11
260	31/05/2016	Circular No. 22/2016-Cus	Procedure regarding filing of ex-bond bill of entry	3	10.1
261	14/05/2016	Notification No. 70/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Public Warehouse Licensing Regulations, 2016	10	3.2
262	14/05/2016	Notification No.71/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Private Warehouse Licensing Regulations, 2016	10	4.2
263	14/05/2016	Notification No. 72/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Special Warehouse Licensing Regulations, 2016	10	5.2
264	09/05/2016	Circular No.16/2016-Cus	Audit Report No.15/2011-2012, Section 2 - Duty Drawback Scheme: Re-export under section 74 of Customs Act 1962	23	1.5
265	14/06/2016	Circular No. 28/2016-Cus	Single Window Project - Simplification of procedure in SWIFT for clearance of consignments related to drugs & cosmetics	9	8.6
266	30/06/2016	Instruction F. No. 609/14/2014-DBK	Launch of special drive from 1.07.2016 to 30.09.2016 to resolve certain pending issues in drawback cases	23	4.3
267	22/07/2016	Circular No. 33/2016-Cus	Review of entity-based facilitation programmes viz. Accredited Client Programme (ACP) and Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme Revised Guidelines	3	16.7
268	29/07/2016	Circulars No.35/2016-Cus	Removal of mandatory warehousing requirements for EOUs, STPIs,	26	6.2

			EHTPs etc.-Amendment to Notification 52/2003-Customs dt 31.3.2003		9.4
269	11/08/2016	DGFT Notification. No. 21/2015-20	Special Advance Authorization Scheme for export of Articles of Apparel and clothing Accessories Amendment in FTP 2015-2020	24	3.4
270	13/08/2016	Circular No. 37/2016-Cus	Special Advance Authorization Scheme under para 4.04A of FTP 2015-20 in combination with AIR Drawback	24	3.4
271	26/08/2016	Circular No. 40/2016-Cus	Guidelines on safety and security of premises where imported or export goods are loaded, unloaded or stored	29	2.33
272	31/08/2016	Circular No. 42/2016-Cus	Regarding Courier bond executed CCSPs	29	2.33
273	22/08/2016	Circular No.38/2016-Cus	Guidelines regarding Provisional Assessment under section 18 of the Custom Act, 1962	8	3.1
274	22/08/2016	Notification No. 113/2016-Cus (N.T.)	Rescinds Customs (Provisional Duty Assessment) Regulations, 2011 - Notification No. 81/2011-Customs (N.T.) dated the 25th November, 2011	8	3.1
275	09/02/2016	Circular No. 05/2016-Cus	Procedure for investigation of related party import cases and other cases by the Special Valuation Branches (revised and updated on 26.08.2016)	7	9.7
276	22/09/2016	Circular No.44/2016-Cus	Regarding setting up of 'Custom Clearance Facilitation Committee' (CCFC) for Land customs stations and Inland Container Depots-reg	1	3 (5)
277	14/10/2016	Instruction No: F.No.- 605/71/2015-DBK	Rationalization of procedures in handling exporters obligations under EPCG authorizations	24	8.3
278	26/10/2016	Circular No.48/2016-Cus	Regarding clearance of import of metal scrap-Procedure	9	10 (x)
279	02/12/2016	Circular No. 59/2016-Cus	Regarding Outsourcing by an authorized courier	17	15.3
280	07/01/2017	Circular no. 26/2017-Cus	Export procedure and sealing of containerized cargo	3	9.4
					29.6
281	04/01/2017	Circular No. 01/2017-Cus	Extending the Single Window Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT) to Exports	1	3.2
282	16/02/2017	Circular No.04/2017-Cus	Expansion of 24x7 Customs clearance and clarification of levy of MOT charges in CFSs attached to 24x7 ports	13	4.1
				29	2.35

283	29/03/2017	Circular No. 09/2017-Cus	Disposal of seized/confiscated cigarettes of foreign origin vis-a-vis provisions of the cigarettes and other tobacco products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008	9	8.5
284	31/03/2017	Notification 26/2017-Cus (N.T)	Regarding the Bill of Entry (Electronic Integrated Declaration) Amendment Regulations, 2017	3	9.4
285	10/04/2017	Circular No.13/2017-Cus	DTA clearance of goods procured by EOUs/EHTP/STP units from indigenous sources - charging of Duty	26	18.1.2
286	11/04/2017	Circular No. 14/2017-Cus	Delayed, incomplete or incorrect filing of Import manifest	2	6.4
287	02/05/2017	Circular No. 16/2017-Cus	Monitoring of export obligation fulfillment under EPCG and Advance Authorization Schemes reg	24	8.2
288	05/07/2017	Circular No. 27/2017-Cus	Disposal of seized/confiscated cigarettes of foreign origin vis-vis provisions of the Cigarettes and other Tobacco products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008.	9	8.5
289	30/06/2017	Notification No.45/2017-Cus	Seeks to grant exemption to re-import of goods exported under duty drawback, rebate of duty or under bond on or after the 1st July 2017	20	2.3
290	30/06/2017	Circular No.21/2017-Cus	Drawback of Integrated Tax and Compensation Cess paid on imported goods upon re-export under Section 74 of the Customs Act, 1962	23	1.6
291	30/06/2017	Circular No. 25/2017-Cus	Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, 2017-Implementation thereof-reg.	26	12.2
292	30/06/2017	Notification No.45/2017-Cus	Seeks to issue Clarification for re-imports through Post under notification No. 45/17-Cus, dated 30.06.17 and 46/17-Cus,	20	2.3
293	17/07/2017	Circular No.29/2017-Cus	Operational problems being faced by EOU in GST regime consequent to amendment in Notification no. 52/2003-Customs dated 31-3-2003	26	9.4
					10.4
					12.2
					24.3
294	18/07/2017	Circular No. 30/2017-Cus	Detailed guidelines for re-testing of samples	1	3.2 (7)
				3	22.3
295	25/07/2017	Circular No. 31/2017-Cus	Extending the Single Window Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT) in Exports with WCCB to all EDI locations.	1	3.2
296	27/07/2017	Circular No. 32/2017-Cus	Clarification regarding exports under claim for drawback in the GST scenario.	23	7.3
297	16/08/2017	Circular No. 35/2017-Cus	Guidelines for provisional release of seized imported goods pending adjudication under Section 110A of the Customs Act, 1962	16	2.9

298	28/08/2017	Circular No. 36/2017-Cus	Implementing electronic sealing for containers by exporters under self-sealing procedure prescribed by Circular 26/2017-Cus dated 1st July, 2017	3	29.6
299	31/08/2017	Instruction No. 12/2017-Cus	Clarification on difficulties related to recent amendments in Customs Act, 1962	3	9.4
300	22/09/2017	Circular No. 38/2017-Cus	The Customs and Central Excise Duties Drawback Rules, 2017 and All Industry Rates (AIRs) of Drawback related changes.	23	2.8
301	20/09/2017	Circular No. 37/2017-Cus	Implementing Electronic Sealing for containers by exporters under self-sealing procedure prescribed by Circular 26/2017-Cus dated 1st July, 2017 and Circular 36/2017 dated 28th August, 2017	3	29.6
302	26/09/2017	Notification No. 91/2017-Cus (N.T.)	Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Amendment Rules, 2017	7	6.2
303	26/09/2017	Circular No. 39/2017-Cus	Clarifications regarding amendments to the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules, 2007 vide Notification No. 91/2017-Customs (N.T.) dated 26.09.2017	7	6.2
304	13/10/2017	Notification No. 79/2017-Cus (N.T.)	Seek to amend various Customs exemption notifications to exempt Integrated Tax/Cess on import of goods under AA/EPCG. schemes	24	3.13
					5.3
305	13/10/2017	DGFT Notification No. 33/2015-20	--	24	3.12
					5.3
306	30/06/2017	Notification No. 47/2017-Cus	Seeks to grant exemption to re-import of goods in Fourth schedule exported under duty drawback, rebate of duty or under bond	24	3.13
					5.3
307	30/10/2017	Notification No.48/2017-Cus	Seeks to grant exemption to re-import of catering cabin equipments, etc. by Indian Airlines	24	3.13
					5.3
308	30/10/2017	Circular No. 41/2017-Cus	Implementing Electronic Sealing for Containers by exporters under self-sealing procedure prescribed by circular 26/2017-Cus dated 1st July 2017, circular 36/2017 dated 28.8.2017 and 37/2017 dated 20.9.2017 reg.	3	29.6
309	15/11/2016	Circular No. 52/2016-Cus	Regarding deferred payment of Customs duty	3	7.2
310	07/11/2017	D.O. F.No. 450/17/2017	--	26	5.2
311	07/11/2017	Circular No. 42/2017-Cus	Refund of IGST paid on export of goods under rule 96 of CGST Rules,2017	15	8.5
312	16/11/2017	Circular No. 43/2017-Cus	Forwarding of samples for testing to the Outside Laboratories	3	22.5
				9	4.7

				19	4.1
313	18/11/2017	Circular No. 44/2017-Cus	Implementing Electronic sealing for Containers by exporters under self-sealing procedure by Circular 26/2017-Cus dated 01.07.2017, 36/2017 dated 28.08.2017, 37/2017 dated 20.09.2017 and 41/2017 dated 30-10-2017	3	29.6
314	21/12/2017	Circular No. 51/2017-Cus	Implementing Electronic Sealing for Containers by exporters under self-sealing procedure by Circular 26/2017-Cus dated 01-07-2017,36/2017 dated 28-08-2017, 37/2017 dated 20-09-2017,41 dated 30-10-2017 and 44/2017 dated 18-11-2017	3	29.6
315	22/12/2017	Circulars No. 52/2017-Cus	Customs procedure for export of cargo in containers and closed bodied trucks from ICDs/CFSS through Land Customs Stations (LCSs) Reg.	11	10.1
316	01/10/2018	Circular No. 35/2018-Cus	Advisory circular for registration of beneficiaries on ICEGATE – regarding	1	3 (6)
317	12/01/2018	Circular No. 02/2018-Cus	Know your customer (KYC) norms	17	15.2
318	17/01/2018	Circular No. 03/2018-Cus	Amendment in the AEO Programme Circular No. 33/2016 dated 22/7/2016	35	21.1
				3	16.7
319	23/02/2018	Circular No. 5/2018-Cus	Refund of IGST on Export Invoice mis-match Cases Alternative Mechanism with Officer Interface	16	8.5
320	16/03/2018	Circular No. 6/2018-Cus	Refund of IGST on Export-EGM Error related cases	16	8.5
321	24/04/2018	Circular No. 10/2018-Cus	Import of EOUs/EHTP/STP /BTP without payment of duty following Rule 5 of Customs (Import of Goods at concessional rate of Duty) 2018 - Clarification	26	12.2
322	11/05/2018	Notifications No. 36/2018-Cus (N.T.)	Bill of Entry (Electronic Integrated Declaration and Paperless Processing) Regulations, 2018	3	27.1
323	14/05/2018	Notification No. 41/2018-Cus (N.T.)	Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations, 2018	30	7.5
324	17/05/2018	Circular No. 11/2018-Cus	Forwarding of samples for testing to the Outside Laboratories	9	4.7
325	24/05/2018	Notification No. 45/2018-Cus (N.T.)	"Customs Audit Regulations, 2018"	34	1.1
326	29/05/2018	Circular No. 12/2018-Cus	Sanction of pending IGST refund claims where the records have not been transmitted from the GSTN to DG Systems	15	8.5
327	13/06/2018	Circular No. 18/2018-Cus	Procedure for e-commerce exports through Post and clarification regarding personal imports (amendment to Circular 14/2018 dated 04 th of June, 2018)	18	15.3
328	08/06/2018	Notification No. 50 /2018-Cus (N.T.)	Powers of adjudication of the officers of Customs	14	4.6

329	20/06/2018	Circular No. 20/2018-Cus	Cigarettes and other Tobacco products (Packaging and Labelling), Second Amendment Rules, 2018	9	8.5
330	07/06/2018	Notification No. 10/2015-2020 of DGFT	Amendments in para 6.08(b) of Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20	26	17.4
331	04/06/2018	Circular No. 14/2018-Cus	Procedure for e-commerce exports through Post and clarification on personal imports.-as amended vide Board's approval	18	15.3
332	07/12/2018	Circular No. 51/2018-Cus	AEO programme digitization - Ease of doing business Development of web-based application for AEO-T1	35	5
333	26/07/2018	DGFT Notification No. 22/2015-20	Amendment in Para 2.47 and para 3.05 of chapter 3 of FTP 2015-2020	24	7.1
334	08/03/2016	Circular No. 08/2016-Cus	Dispensing of Customs Baggage Declaration Form for domestic passengers	27	2.4
335	10/08/2018	Circular No. 26/2018-Cus	Simplification and rationalization of processing of AEO-T1 application	3	16.7
336	14/08/2018	Circular No. 27/2018-Cus	Clarification regarding bank guarantee requirement for bond executed by EOUs	26	10.4
337	30/08/2018	Circular No. 28/2018-Cus	Forwarding of samples for testing to the Outside Laboratories	9	4.7
338	30/08/2018	Circular No. 29/2018-Cus	Pilot Implementation of Paperless processing under SWIFT-uploading of supporting documents (eSANCHIT) in Exports	3	17.3
339	05/09/2018	Circular No. 31/2018-Cus	24x7 Clearance	3	28.1
340	19/07/2018	Notification No. 63/2018-Cus	Exchange Rates Notification No.63/2018-Custom(NT) dated 19.07.2018	24	7.1
341	19/09/2018	Circular No. 33/2018-Cus	Sanction of pending IGST refund claims where the records have not been transmitted from GSTN to DG (System)	15	8.5
342	09/10/2018	Circular No. 37/2018-Cus	Cases where IGST refund have not been granted due to claiming higher rate of drawback or where higher rate and lower rate were identical	16	8.5
343	24/10/2018	Circular No. 40/2018-Cus	IGST Export Refunds extension in SB005 alternate mechanism and revised processing in certain cases including disbursement of compensation Cess	16	8.5
344	02/11/2018	Circular No. 42/2018-Cus	Procedure for a Pilot on Transshipment of Export Cargo from Bangladesh to third countries through Land Customs Stations (LCSs) to Kolkata Port / Airport, in containers or closed bodied trucks reg.(as amended vide Board's approval dated 05.08.2019).	11	16.7

345	05/11/2018	Notification No.91/2018-Cus (N.T.)	Notification giving Chief Commissioners powers to assign the cases for adjudication of show cause notices within their respective jurisdiction.	14	4.8
346	08/11/2018	Circular No. 43/2018-Cus	Implementation of Paperless Processing under SWIFT-Uploading of Supporting Documents(eSANCHIT) in Exports	3	17.3
347	27/11/18	Circular No. 46/ 2018-Cus	Advisory on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) including e-Cigarettes, Heat-Not-Burn devices, Vape, e-Sheesha, e-Nicotine Flavoured Hookah, and the like products	9	8.4
348	03/12/2018	Circular No. 48/2018-Cus	Procedure for movement of goods under TIR Carnets	11	11.12
349	03/12/2018	Circular No. 49/2018-Cus	Procedure for disposal of un-claimed/un-cleared cargo under section 48 of the Customs Act,1962, lying with the custodians	21	3.5
350	06/12/2018	Circular No. 50/2018-Cus	Clarification with respect to amendments to Customs and Central Excise notifications for EOUs	26	3.4
351	08/01/2019	Circular No. 02/2019-Cus	Customs Post Clearance Audit	34	4.2
352	28/02/2019	Circular No.09/2019-Cus	Turant Customs-Next generation reform for Ease of Doing Business	3	4.3.1
					11.5
					4.3.2
					4.3.3
353	07/03/2019	Notification No. 14/26/2016-IT (Vol II)	--	24	10.1
354	12/03/2019	Circular No. 10/2019-Cus	Scheme for Rebate of State and Central taxes and Levies on export of garments and made-ups (RoSCTL)	24	10.1
355	01/04/2019	Notification No. 29/2019-Cus	Handling of Cargo in Customs Areas (Amendment) Regulations, 2019	29	2.9
356	09/04/2019	Circular No. 11/2019-Cus	Phasing out of physical copies of Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)/Services Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) Duty Credit Scrips issued with EDI port as Port of registration	24	11.1
357	25/04/2019	Notification No. 33/2019-Cus (N.T.)	Shipping Bill (Electronic Integrated Declaration and Paperless Processing) Regulations, 2019	3	27.1
358	24/05/2019	Circular No. 12/2019-Cus	Guidelines for launching of Prosecution in relation to offences punishable under the Customs Act, 1962	31	15.4

359	19/06/2019	Circular No. 17/2019-Cus	Applicability of Additional Customs duty on goods re-imported under Customs Notification No. 94/96-Customs dated 16.12.1996 exported earlier for exhibition purpose/consignment basis	20	5.1
360	24/07/2019	Circular No. 21/2019-Cus	Clarification regarding applicability of Notification No. 45/2017-Customs dated 30.06.2017 on goods which were exported earlier for exhibition purpose/consignment basis	20	5.2
361	3/9/2019	Circular No. 27/2019-Cus	Roll out of Project Import Module in ICES	6	4.2
362	13/09/2019	Circular No. 31/2019-Cus	Revised Norms for Execution of Bank Guarantee under Advance Authorisation, DFIA and EPCG Schemes	24	3.8
363	31/10/2019	Circular No. 36/2019-Cus	SNZ Surat: Import, trading & re-export of rough diamonds by notified entities in Gujarat Hira Bourse, Ichhapore Surat.	20	4.2
364	01/10/2019	Notification No. 70/2019-Cus (N.T.)	Warehouse (Custody and Handling of Goods) Amendment Regulations, 2019	10	20.A.4
365	01/10/2019	Notification No. 71/2019-Cus (N.T.)	Warehoused Goods (Removal) Amendment Regulations, 2019	10	20.A.4
366	05/11/2019	Circular No. 37/2019-Cus	Generation and quoting of Document Identification Number (DIN) on any communication issued by the officers of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) to taxpayers and other concerned persons	33	6.1
367	21/11/2019	Circular no. 38/2019-Cus	Amendment in Import policy of Iron & Steel and incorporation of policy condition in Chapter 72, 73 and 86 of ITC(HS), 2017 Schedule-1	9	14.2
368	29/11/2019	Circular No 42/2019-Cus	Mandatory uploading of specified supporting documents and mention of document code and IRN in Bills of Entry (BoE)	1	3.3
369	29/11/2019	Circular No.40/2019-Cus	Auto Out of Charge under Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS)	3	13.2
370	27/01/2020	Circular No.05/2020-Cus	Implementation of automated clearance on pilot basis	3	4.3.3
					11.5
371	21/01/2020	Circular No. 4/2020-Cus	Clarification relating to import of gifts	18	5.1
372	28/02/2020	Circular No. 15/2020-Cus	Implementation of automated clearance on all India basis	3	11.5
373	19/02/2020	Circular No. 13/2020-Cus	Schemes for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (ROSC TL) and Additional Ad-hoc Incentive for export of garments and made-ups.	24	10.3
374	27/02/2020	Notification No 16/2010-Cus	Seeks to amend Notification No.154/94-Cus	19	4.1
			Implementation of automated	3	4.3.3

375	28/02/2020	Circular No.15/2020-Cus	clearance on all India basis		11.5
376	13/04/2020	Circular No. 19/2020-Cus	Paperless Customs Electronic Communication of PDF based Gatepass and OOC Copy of Bill of Entry to Custom Brokers/Importers	3	4.4.1
377	05/06/2020	Instruction No. 09/2020-Cus	1st phase of All India roll-out of Faceless Assessment	4	3.4
					4.2
					5.2
					8.6
378	22/06/2020	Circular No. 29/2020-Cus	Procedure for Transshipment of Export Cargo from Bangladesh to third countries through Land Customs Stations (LCSs) to Port/Airport, in containers or closed bodied trucks)	11	16.7
379	22/06/2020	Circular No. 30/2020-Cus	Paperless Customs Electronic Communication of PDF Based Copies of Shipping Bill & e-Gatepass to Custom Brokers/Exporters	3	4.4.2
380	06/07/2020	Circular No. 32/2020-Cus	Circular No.32/2020-Customs dt 6th July 2020 on Turant Customs Turant Suvidha Kendra and Other Initiatives for Contactless Customs	3	4.3.4
					4.3.5
					4.3.6
					4.3.7
				33	5.1
381	17/08/2020	Notification No. 77/2020-Cus (N.T)	Special Warehouse (Custody and Handling of Goods) Amendment Regulations, 2020	10	20.A
382	17/08/2020	Notification No. 75/2020-Cus (N.T.)	Manufacture and Other Operations in Special Warehouse Regulations, 2020	10	22.2
383	17/08/2020	Circular No. 36/2020-Cus	Procedure to be followed in cases of manufacturing or other operations undertaken in special warehouses under section 65 of the Customs Act	10	22.2
384	19/08/2020	Notification No. 78/2020-Cus (N.T.)	Amendment of Notification No.135/2016-Customs (N.T.) dated 02.11.2016, for Extension of Deferred Payment of Import Duty to Authorized Public Undertakings	3	7.2
385	19/08/2020	Circular No. 37/2020-Cus	Extension of Deferred payment of Customs duty benefits to `Authorized Public Undertakings`	3	7.2
				35	22.1
386	21/08/2020	Notification No. 81/2020-Cus (N.T.)	Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020.	36	6.2
387	21/08/2020	Circular No. 38/2020-Cus	Guidelines regarding implementation of section 28DA of the Customs Act, 1962 and CAROTAR, 2020 in respect of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements (FTA/PTA/CECA/CEPA) and verification of Certificates of Origin	36	6.2

388	04/09/2020	Circular No. 39/2020-Cus	Customs procedure for export of cargo in containers and closed bodied trucks from ICDs/CFSS through Land Customs Stations (LCSs)	11	10.1
389	04/09/2020	Circular No. 40/2020-Cus	All India roll-out of Faceless Assessment	3	4.2.2
					1.5
					2.3
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390	07/09/2020	Circular No. 41/2020-Cus	Auto Let Export Order under Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS).	3	13.2
391	29/09/2020	Circular No. 42/2020-Cus	Amending Circular 38/2016- Customs on Guidelines for Provisional Assessment under Section 18 of the Customs Act 1962	8	3.1
392	30/09/2020	Circular No. 43/2020-Cus	Implementation of the Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations.	1	3.3.1
				2	4.2
393	08/10/2020	Circular No. 44/2020-Cus	Procedure for inspection of ICDs/CFSS/AFSS	28	9.2.6
					10.16
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394	12/10/2020	Circular No.45/2020-Cus	Faceless Assessment - Measures for timely assessment of Bills of Entry and clarification on defacement of physical documents	4	8.6
					11
395	15/10/2020	Circular No. 46/2020-Cus	Testing of outside samples by Revenue Laboratories	1	3.3.4
				3	22.4
396	27/10/2020	Circular No. 48/2020-Cus	Manufacturing and other operations undertaken in bonded warehouses under Section 65 of the Customs Act, 1962	10	21.7
397	05/11/2020	Circular No. 50/2020-Cus	Policy and Guidelines for setting up of Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Container Freight Stations (CFSS) and Air Freight Stations (AFSS)	28	8.1
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398	20/11/2020	Circular No.51/2020-Cus	Clarifications regarding availment of exemption on temporary import of durable Containers	20	7.1
399	15/12/2020	Circular No. 54/2020-Cus	Special measures to facilitate MSME for AEO T1 and T2 accreditation	35	23.2
		Circular No. 55/2020-Cus	Faceless Assessment- Clarifications	3	4.2.4

400	17/12/2020		on the Issues raised by Stakeholders	5	2.11
401	30/12/2020	Circular No. 57/2020-Cus	Implementation of PGA eSANCHIT Paperless Processing under SWIFT- Uploading of Licenses/Permits/Certificates/Other Authorizations (LPCOs) by PGAs	1	3.2.6
402	16/12/2020	Instruction No. 21/2020-Cus	Instructions for time bound processing of Duty Drawback claims	23	9
403	19/01/2021	Circular No.02/2021-Cus	Posting of staff at Customs areas and collection of Cost Recovery Charges	29	3.8.2
404	03/02/2021	Circular No. 03/2021-Cus	Systemic improvements regarding modification in the Bond (B-17) Execution process	26	10.6
405	22/02/2021	Circular No. 07/2021-Cus	Clarification regarding payment of Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) by EOU under various situations and amendment to Circular no. 35/2016-Cus	26	17.8
406	29/03/2021	Circular No. 08/2021-Cus	Clarifications on the legislative changes in Section 46 of Customs Act, 1962	3	9.3
407	21/06/2021	Instruction No. 14/2021-Cus	CRCL Module -Forwarding of samples using electronic Test Memo to CRCL and other Revenue Laboratories	1	3.3.4
				4	8.6
408	30/06/2021	Circular No. 12/2021-Cus	Implementation of the Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations	1	3.3.2
409	07/07/2021	Circular No.14/2021-Cus	Improvements in Faceless Assessment - Measures for expediting Customs clearances	3	4.2.5
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410	15/07/2021	Circular No. 15/2021-Cus	Implementation of RMS for processing of Duty Drawback claims	23	8.1
411	19/07/2021	Circular No. 16/2021-Cus	Clarification regarding applicability of IGST on repair cost, insurance and freight, on goods re-imported after being exported for repairs, on the recommendations of the GST Council made in its 43rd meeting	20	6.1
412	23/07/2021	Circular No.17/2021-Cus	Efforts required to Reduce the compliance burden for citizens and business activities	2	4.2
				11	16.3
413	23/07/2021	Notification No. 62/2021-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend Customs Brokers Licensing Regulations, 2018	30	5

414	16/08/2021	Circular No. 20/2021-Cus	De-notification of Inland Container Depots/Container Freight Stations/Air Freight Stations	28	10.16
415	16/08/2021	Circular No. 19/2021-Cus(revised Circular No.38/2016 dated 22.08. 2016.Rescinded Customs Instruction No. 4 of 2020)	Amendment in Circular No.38/2016-Customs with the insertion of a new entry 5(d) to enable Pr. Commissioners/Commissioners of Customs to decide the amount of security required in certain cases of provisional assessments-reg	8	3.1
416	30/09/2021	Circular No. 22/2021-Cus	Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) Scheme on export of apparel/garments/made-ups	24	10.2
417	27/10/2021	Circular No. 24/2021-Cus	Reducing compliance burden regarding registration of Authorized Courier	17	16
418	23/11/2021	Instruction No. 23/2021-Cus	Import of wireless equipment by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) on the basis of self-declaration	9	14.3
419	27/02/2022	Circular No. 04/2022-Cus	Implementation of automation in the Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, 2017	26	12.2
420	23/04/2022	Instruction No. 03/2022-Cus	Revised guidelines for National Risk Management Committee (NRMCM) for Customs & GST	3	14.3
421	26/09/2022	Circular No. 22/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Amendments to Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) Scheme	34	7.1
422	31/03/2022	Notification No. 26/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Notification to assign functions to officers and to officers in rank above to them as proper officers.	34	7.1
423	31/03/2022	Notification No 22/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Notification to appoint officers at the level of Commissioner of Customs and below till AC/DC for zones overseeing Audit	34	7.1
424	17/05/2022	Circular No. 08/2022-Cus	Customs procedure for export of cargo in closed containers from ICDs to Bangladesh using inland waterways	11	16.5
425	30/06/2022	Notification No. 56/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations 2018	11	16.3
426	30/06/2022	Notification No. 57/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing), Amendment, Regulations, 2022 for facilitating E-commerce exports of jewelry	17	17.1
427	30/06/2022	Circular No. 09/2022-Cus	Simplified regulatory framework for e-commerce exports of jewelry through Courier	17	17.1
428	21/07/2022	Instruction No. 16/2022-Cus	Compendium of orders/ circulars/ guidelines issued from WPC Wing, DoT in regard to Import licensing requirement from WPC wing for import of wireless equipment	9	14.4

429	29/07/2022	Circular No. 11/2022-Cus	Extension of customs clearance beyond normal working hours in inland container Depots	3	28.2
430	16/08/2022	Circular No. 13/2022-Cus	Revised Guidelines for Arrest and Bail in relation to offences punishable under Customs Act, 1962	31	10.7
431	16/08/2022	Circular No. 12/2022-Cus	Guidelines for launching of Prosecution in relation to offences punishable under the Customs Act, 1962	31	15.2
432	23/08/2022	Circular No. 15/2022-Cus	Simplification for procedure for compounding of offences under Customs Act, 1962	31	17.6
433	29/08/2022	Circular No. 16/2022-Cus	Faceless Assessment –Standard Examination Orders through RMS - Phase 1, Part 1	3	4.2.6
					5.2
				4	13
434	09/09/2022	Circular No. 17/2022-Cus	Customs procedure for export of cargo in closed containers from ICDs to Bangladesh using Inland Waterways	11	16.4
435	14/09/2022	Circular No. 19/2022-Cus	Transshipment through India of containerized export cargo of Bangladesh destined for third countries using Riverine and Land routes	11	16.6
436	26/09/2022	Circular No. 22/2022-Cus	Amendments to Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) Scheme	24	10.2
437	14/10/2022	DGFT Public Notice No. 31/2015-20	Inclusion of Paragraph 2.79C (D) in the Handbook of Procedures of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20 to notify the procedure for General Authorisation for Export after Repair in India (GAER)	20	8
438	03/11/2022	Circular No. 23/2022-Cus	Faceless Assessment - Anonymized Escalation Mechanism & extension of Standard Examination Orders through RMS (Phase 1, Part 2)	3	4.2.6
					5.2
				4	13
439	09/12/2022	Circular No. 25/2022-Cus	Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022 and implementation of PBE Automated System	18	9.1
440	09/12/2022	Notification No. 103/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Exports by Post (Amendment) Regulations, 2022	18	10.1
					2.3
				19	2
441	09/12/2022	Notification No. 104/2022-Cus (N.T.)	Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022	18	2.3
					10.1
				19	2
442	11/01/2023	Circular No. 01/2023-Cus	Customs (Assistance in Value Declaration of Identified Imported Goods) Rules, 2023 (CAVR, 2023)	7	12.4
443	11/01/2023	Circular No. 02/2023-Cus	Faceless Assessment –Standard Examination Orders through RMS - Phased implementation of Standardized Examination Orders through RMS	3	4.2.6
				4	13

444	07/02/2023	Circular No. 03/2023-Cus	Amendment in Circular No. 29/2020-Customs dated 22.06.2020 for allowing transshipment of Bangladesh export cargo to third countries through Delhi Air Cargo notifications related thereto with reference to appointment of officers of customs and assignment of functions	11	16.7
445	01/03/2023	Circular No. 06/2023-Cus	Authorization of Booking Post Offices and their corresponding Foreign Post Offices in terms of the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022	18	9.1
446	07/03/2023	Circular No. 07/2023-Cus	Implementation of body worn cameras	2	13.1
447	13/03/2023	Circular No. 08/2023-Cus	Telecom equipment in the context of notification no 02/2019-customs dated 29.01.2019 amending notification no 57/2017-Customs	9	14.5
448	30/03/2023	Circular No. 09/2023-Cus	Phased Implementation of Electronic Cash Ledger (ECL) in Customs w.e.f. 01.04.2023	1	3.2.8
449	31/03/2023	Notification No. 21/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to provide commencement date for various provisions of Finance act, 2023	29	4.2
450	31/03/2023	Notification No. 22/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Implementation of "Agreement" signed between FSSAI, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and Bhutan Food and Drug Authority (BFDA)	18	3
451	31/03/2023	Notification No. 23/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Amendment, Regulations, 2023	18	3
452	01/04/2023	Notification No. 21/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of Advance Authorization Scheme under Foreign Trade Policy, 2023	24	3.11
453	01/04/2023	Notification No. 22/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of Advance Authorisation Scheme for deemed export under Foreign Trade Policy, 2023	24	3.11
454	01/04/2023	Notification No. 23/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of Advance Authorisation Scheme for annual requirement under Foreign Trade Policy, 2023	24	3.5
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					7.1
455	01/04/2023	Notification No. 24/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of Advance Authorisation Scheme for export of prohibited goods under Foreign Trade Policy, 2023	24	3.6
					3.11
456	01/04/2023	Notification No. 26/2023-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding implementation of EPCG Scheme under Foreign Trade Policy, 2023	24	5.1
457	01/04/2023	Notification No. 27/2023-Cus	Regarding Exemption for import of fabrics under Special Advance Authorization Scheme under para 4.04A of Foreign Trade Policy, 2023 for manufacture and export of garments	24	3.11
458	11/04/2023	Circular No. 10/2023-Cus	Online filing of AEO-LO application	35	11.3

459	24/05/2023	Circular No. 12/2023-Cus	Foreign Trade Policy 2023	26	3.5
					7.3
					10.3
460	31/05/2023	Circular No. 13/2023-Cus	Faceless Assessment – Re-organisation of National Assessment Centres and Faceless Assessment Groups	3	4.2.27
				4	3.4
461	03/06/2023	Circular No. 14/2023-Cus	Electronic Repairs Services Outsourcing (ERSO) – initiation of pilot at ACC Bengaluru	20	8.2
462	07/06/2023	Circular No. 15/2023-Cus	Mandatory additional qualifiers in import/export declarations in respect of certain products	5	2.12
463	15/06/2023	Circular No. 17/2023-Cus	Simplified regulatory framework for e-commerce exports of Jewelry through Courier mode	17	18.1
464	05/07/2023	Instruction No. 20/2023-Cus	Notification of Authorised Officers under Section 25 read with Section 47 (5) of Food Safety Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 and Regulation 13 (1) of FSS (Import) Regulation, 2017	30	7.6
465	18/07/2023	Instruction No. 24/2023-Cus	Suspension of License of Customs Broker	30	7.2
466	02/08/2023	Circular No. 19/2023-Cus	Expansion of automatic LEO facility in ECCS	3	23.3
				17	15.5
467	07/08/2023	Circular No. 20/2023-Cus	Authorization of Booking Post Offices and their corresponding Foreign Post Offices in terms of the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022	18	9.1
468	14/09/2023	Circular No. 21/2023-Cus	Norms for posting of officers and benchmark performance criteria while granting exemption from payment of cost recovery charges (CRC) at Air Freight Stations (AFS)	29	4.2
469	30/09/2023	Circular No. 23/2023-Cus	Mandatory additional qualifiers in import/export declarations in respect of certain products	5	2.12
470	20/10/2023	Notification No. 77/2023-Cus (N.T.)	All Industry Rates of Duty Drawback Schedule	23	2.4
471	02/11/2023	Instruction F. No. 390/Misc/30/2023- JC	Reduction of Government litigation – providing monetary limits for filing appeals by the department of CESTAT	32	2.5
472	01/11/2023	Circular No. 27/2023-Cus	Authorization of Booking Post Offices and their corresponding Foreign Post Offices in terms of the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022	18	9.1

473	02/11/2023	Instruction F. No. 390/Misc/30/2023- JC	Reduction of Government litigation - providing monetary limits for filing appeals by the Department before CESTAT, High Courts and Supreme Court	32	10
474	08/11/2023	Circular No. 28/2023-Cus	Allowing advance assessment of Courier Shipping Bills	17	15.6
475	01/02/2024	Circular No. 01/2024	Authorization of Booking Post Offices and their corresponding Foreign Post Offices in terms of the Postal Export (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2022	18	9.1
476	15/02/2024	Instructions No. 02/2024-Cus	Arrest Report and Incident Report (where arrest not made) – revised guidelines and formats	31	10.8
					10.9
477	08/03/2024	Circular No. 02/2024-Cus	Encouraging Women participation in International Trade	1	3.3.6
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478	08/03/2024	Circular No. 03/2024-Cus	Inclusion of gender specific infrastructure facilities to be provided by the Custodian CCSP-CFS/AFS/ICD under the HCCAR, 2009	29	2.36
479	29/05/2024	Instruction No. 15/2024	Disbursal of Drawback amounts into the exporter's accounts through PFMS	23	8.2
480	25/06/2024	Circular No. 7/2024-Cus	Launch of exchange rate automation module	7	3.4
481	05/07/2024	Instruction No. 17/2024-Cus	Authorized Officers under Section 25 read with Section 47 (5) of Food Safety Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 and Regulation 13 (1) of FSS (Import) Regulation, 2017	9	4.2
					4.5
482	16/10/2024	Instruction No. 21/2024-Cus	Retrospective issuance of certificates of origin under India-UAE CEPA	9	15.4
483	09/07/2024	Circular No. 09/2024-Cus	Amendment in Circular No. 29/2020-Customs dated 22.06.2020 for allowing transshipment of Bangladesh export cargo to third countries through Air Cargo Complex, Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru	11	12.3
484	22/07/2024	Circular No. 19/2024-Cus	Provisional attachment of bank account(s) - Section 110 (5) of Customs Act, 1962	31	2.4
485	23/07/2024	Notification No. 29/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Seeks to amend notification No. 154/94-Customs dated the 13 th of July, 1994 which provides for duty free import of commercial samples.	19	4.1

486	20/08/2024	Circular No. 10/2024-Cus	Use of ICETABs for efficient examination and clearance process	1	3.2.9
487	31/08/2024	Notification No. 57/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Sea Cargo Manifest and Transhipment (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2024	1	3.3.1
488	03/09/2024	Instruction No. 20/2024-Cus	Implicating Customs Brokers as co-notice in cases involving interpretative disputes	30	7.6
489	12/09/2024	Circular No. 15/2024-Cus	Extending export related benefits for exports made through courier mode	17	15.7
				18	15
490	12/09/2024	Notification No. 60/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Amendment Regulations, 2024	17	15.7
491	22/10/2024	Instruction No. 24/2024-Cus	Issuance of Equipment Type Approval (ETA) for License-Exempt Wireless Equipment Devices – reg.	5	2.12
				9	14.4
492	30/10/2024	Circular No. 21/2024-Cus	Mandatory additional qualifiers in import/export declarations in respect of Synthetic or Reconstructed Diamonds w.e.f 01.12.2024	5	2.12
493	30/10/2024	Notification No. 74/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Sea Cargo Manifest and Transhipment (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2024	11	16.3
494	01/11/2024	Instruction No. 27/2024-Cus	Guidelines for Customs field formations in maintaining ease of doing business while engaging in investigation into tax evasion cases in import or export	31	18.8
495	07/11/2024	Notification 75/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Amendment in Regulation 5 and 10 of HCCAR, 2009	29	2.20
				30	2.28
496	08/11/2024	Circular No. 22/2024-Cus	Clarification on Insurance Amount and Bond Value for CCSPs and validity of Bond for AEO-LO	29	2.20
					2.27
					2.28
497	20/11/2024	Circular No. 24/2024-Cus	Mandatory additional qualifiers in import declarations in respect of coking/ non-coking coal w.e.f 15.12.2024	5	2.12

498	28/11/2022	Circular No. 24/2022-Cus	Improvements in SWIFT: Integration of ICEGATE with AQCS-ICS (Animal Quarantine and Certification Services-Import Clearance System) effective 01.12.2022	1	3.2.1
499	16/12/2024	Notification no. 86/2024-Cus (N.T.)	Notification to specify the manufacturing processes and other operations in relation to a class of goods in a warehouse	10	21.8
500	23/12/2024	Circular No. 27/2024-Cus	Enabling Voluntary Payment electronically on ICEGATE e-payment Platform	3	7.3
501	01/01/2025	Circular No. 01/2025-Cus	Roll out of Automated Out of Charge for AEO T2 and T3 Clients	35	24
502	15/01/2025	Notification No. 02/2025-Cus (N.T.)	Regarding Sea Cargo manifest and transshipment regulations	1	3.3.1
				2	4.2

List of Email IDs of various Directorate Generals/Directorates of Customs and Zonal Chief Commissioners/Commissionerates of Customs and Central GST

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	(ii) National Anti-Profiteering Authority (GST)	secretary.naa@gov.in
3	DG Audit Indirect Taxes & Customs	dg.audit-cbec@nic.in
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5	DG GST Intelligence	admndggi.hq@gov.in
6	DG Goods & Services Tax	dggst-cbic@gov.in
7	DG Human Resource Development (HRM-I)	dghrdhrm1.cbic@gov.in
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5	Chennai Zone	ccchennaizone.tn@nic.in
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18	Thiruvananthapuram Zone	ccu-cexcox@nic.in
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