



ICS User Representative Newsletter

27 July 2004

Number 19

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“Customs is right on track for the CMR Exports system to ‘Go Live’ on 22 September this year”

Exports ‘Go Live’ Date

As reported by Customs earlier this year, and noted in my last newsletter, Customs is right on track for the CMR Exports system to ‘Go Live’ on 22 September this year, and switch over to the ICS permanently from 6 October.

While Customs has announced (and missed) implementation dates in the past, this time you can be confident that the dates will be met. Software Developers are on track with their in house final stage preparation and Customs has addressed all critical software and performance issues.

From the Customs webpage, I provide a handy checklist you might like to print out and complete to ensure you are on track for a smooth implementation.

checklist for exporters

What needs to be communicated to Customs?

- Export Declarations

		Steps to complete	Tick or N/A
Section 1	Complete this section if you will be communicating directly with the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) through the Customs Interactive facility.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage an Internet Service Provider (ISP) 2. Purchase digital certificate/s 3. Complete digital certificate and client registration by undertaking the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ download and sign User Agreement ○ complete CCF Digital Certificate and ICS Client Registration form, with details of each digital certificate 4. Post the User Agreement and CCF 	

		<p>Digital Certificate and ICS Client Registration form to Customs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. After receiving confirmation of registration from Customs. Supplement and amend client details in ICS. The steps to be completed are outlined in the Supplementing and amending ICS client register details guide. 6. Attend a free Customs training session 	
Section 2	<p>Complete this section if you will be communicating directly with the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) via electronic data interchange (EDI).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain software (purchase via a third party or developed in-house) 2. Complete digital certificate and client registration by undertaking the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o download and sign User Agreement o complete CCF Digital Certificate and ICS Client Registration form, with details of each digital certificate 3. Post the User Agreement and CCF Digital Certificate and ICS Client Registration form to Customs 4. After receiving confirmation of registration from Customs. Supplement and amend client details in ICS. The steps to be completed are outlined in the Supplementing and amending ICS client register details guide. 5. Attend a free Customs training session 	
Section 3	<p>Complete this section if you will be using the services of a bureau to communicate with Customs.</p>	<p>Employ the services of a Bureau. A list of bureau services is available on the Customs website.</p>	
Section 4	<p>Customs advises electronic data interchange (EDI) users to consider their contingency plans. If the ICS cannot be accessed via EDI, the Customs Interactive facility may be used to lodge documents instead.</p>	<p>Obtain access to the Customs Interactive facility, as per the steps outlined in Section 1 of this checklist.</p> <p>Quick reference guides that provide a step-by-step guide on how to use functions within the Customs Interactive are available on the Customs website.</p>	
Section 5	<p>If Customs declares an ICS outage, contingency measures must be adopted. If a client is unable to access the ICS, alternative procedures should be considered. For EDI users, Software developers may be able to provide assistance. Other alternatives include the use of a bureau service. A bureau may be used to lodge documents to Customs on your behalf.</p>	<p>Obtain details of what to do in an ICS outage from Customs. Information can be obtained from the Customs website as soon as it is finalised. The section titled Export Contingency Measures will provide this information. Contact your software developer to discuss contingency arrangements. Obtain details of bureau services and develop a contingency plan for outages.</p>	

“Customs is holding two types of industry sessions for people involved in exports”

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Export Training Dates

Customs is holding two types of industry sessions for people involved in exports. Firstly, there are “Export Business Changes Workshops” which are being held nationally for those who have not previously attended an export session. Dates for the future sessions can be found here:

http://itools.customs.gov.au/exports_business_changes.php

Secondly, for those who have already attended a Customs, AFIF or CBFCA session on exports, Customs and Industry (AFIF and CBFCA) are presenting a joint session in most capital cities. Dates for the future sessions can be found here:

http://itools.customs.gov.au/exports_refresher.php

Both sessions cover all the critical information you will need to use the CMR system including Digital Certificates, Client Registration and Exports Business changes.

Update for EXDOC Users

One issue that has arisen during the Customs training sessions to date is how EXDOC users will be affected with the introduction of CMR. In particular, those exporters of dairy, meat and fish commodities need to ensure all permits have been obtained and validated prior to requesting a PRA or taking their cargo to the point of departure. The following update has been prepared in conjunction with the System Administrator of the EXDOC program within AQIS.

Note: These steps apply to EU Countries for Dairy, Fish and Meat commodities only.

Step 1) Exporter applies through EXDOC for a "Request for Permit" (RFP). At this stage they know they are exporting goods requiring a permit but do not have final details required for the completion of the permit. They need to include FOB and AHECCS of the goods for Customs purposes. The information is sent to Customs at this stage, but Customs cannot create an EDN so an 'EDN in error' is returned to EXDOC and sent through to the client. AQIS also send back to the client an RFP number (which is not a permit). (No clear EDN at this stage).

Step 2) Exporter packs the container and is now aware of contents, slaughter dates etc. They can then send the RFP through to EXDOC, this time formally lodging the information and this information is again forwarded onto Customs. The RFP is now at a status of INIT (initial) or FINL (final) and is ready to be "Validated" or authorised by an AQIS Inspector. No EXDOC permit is issued at this stage (next step) so the EDN from Customs is again returned in error to EXDOC and sent to the client.

Step 3) Exporter faxes a copy of the RFP to the relevant meat, fish or dairy inspector who must then go into EXDOC to "Validate" the permit. At this stage, EXDOC again sends the information to Customs who then create the clear EDN. Dairy and Fish exporters should contact the relevant Export Program within AQIS if they need advice on procedures for AQIS authorisation of RFPs.

Only at this last stage can an exporter apply for the PRA and be assured of obtaining one.

“Industry issues that arise from this largely centre on timings”

“I hope you have made the big decisions about how you are going to deal with Customs when the ICS goes live in September!”

“Customs and Industry both recognise the need to have a Continuity Plan”

Non-EU countries allow a PIA (authority number) to be issued by AQIS. This allows the exporter to obtain a clearance from Customs using the PIA on the understanding that this will be replaced by an AQIS issued permit before the goods are loaded or within two working days. Using the PIA a clear EDN can be obtained at Step 1.

Industry issues that arise from this largely centre on timings: you must have your RFP validated prior to sending the cargo to the wharf or airport. The practice of sending your cargo to the terminal at the same time you fax your RFP at final to the inspector could see the cargo delayed.

Secondly, it would be worthwhile keeping in close communication with your inspectors to ensure they are available to validate your RFP in a timely manner.

Digital Certificate Update

Well I hope you have made the big decisions about how you are going to deal with Customs when the ICS goes live in September! By now, you should have considered whether **your** business needs access to the Customs Interactive, and if you do how many Digital Certificates you will need.

Keep in mind that the process for obtaining Digital Certificates takes at least 2 weeks and only 500 out of an estimate of more than 5000 have been purchased to date. In addition, the later you leave it the more people you will be in competition with resource wise so get started today.

Both Customs and Verisign have excellent reference information on their web sites and the current training sessions outlined above cover Digital Certificate matters.

Business Continuity Plan

Customs and Industry both recognise the need to have a Continuity (or contingency) Plan in place in case the ICS fails to operate or has severe performance issues.

Since the beginning of this year, I have chaired a group responsible for the development of this plan. Representatives from the following groups have been involved:

Organisation
ICS User Representative
Air Transport Association of Australia
Qantas Airways Limited
Shipping Australia Limited
Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia (CBFCA)
Tradegate ECA
P&O Ports
Patrick
Australian Federation of International Forwarders (AFIF)
Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers
Connect
AQIS
Ernst & Young

“The plan is in its final stages and will soon be released to industry”

“Customs has announced that the Client Registration system will come on line on 3 Aug”

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The plan is in its final stages and will soon be released to industry through the CMR website.

It is beyond the scope of the current newsletter to provide a comprehensive report into how the BCP will operate. I can confirm however that during a 'declared outage' (where the system is going to be down for more than three hours), only Export Declarations, Export Cargo sub-manifest Reports and Vessel Departure Reports need to be provided to Customs manually or by fax. Essentially, the BCP is a paper reflection of how the proposed electronic system will operate.

In my next newsletter, I will tackle this issue in more detail.

Client Registration System online soon

Customs has announced that the Client Registration system will come on line on 3 August 2004.

Quoting information from the Customs CMR Client Registration web page (http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?area_id=7&nav_id=1764)

“A 'client' is considered to be an organisation or individual that has either direct or indirect contact with Customs. Therefore, Customs clients required to be registered for the exports release in the ICS include:

- every business that is reporting/communicating directly to Customs
- every exporter identified on an export declaration (currently known as an export entry), and
- each individual that is not part of an organisation and does business with Customs.

Upon completion of the registration process, clients will be issued with a Customs Client Identifier (CCID). If a client has an Australian Business Number (ABN) that will become their unique identifier. Where a client does not have an ABN, a unique CCID will be created for you.”

Those brokers, cargo reporters or other export agents who have already obtained Digital Certificate will be able to use them to register new clients from 3 August.

Customs has already registered about 45,000 exporters whose ABN was quoted at least twice in the past eighteen months. You can find out if your company has been registered by checking online or downloading a text file into your own system.

You can do that here:

http://itools.customs.gov.au/registered_abns.php

My next newsletter will provide detailed information on the BCP, Client Registration FAQs and an update on PRAs (Pre Receipt Advices) and FWBs (Forward Waybills)
