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for imports & exports

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Introduction

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCP) is the government institution in charge of making sure that the ammunitions of terrorist groups do not enter the American soil. This institution is also tasked with safeguarding and managing the importation and exportation process while implementing plenty of policies and guidelines to ensure the legality of these transactions.

The BCP annually handles millions of dollars of exports and imports that have passed their strict guidelines and standards. These guidelines being imposed by the BCP are never compromised because doing so would endanger the security of the citizens of America (Capela, 2008). The implementation of these import and export guidelines and policies is attained with the help of other concerned economic institutions that share the same goal with preventing anomalies and fraudulent activities in these multi-million dollar transactions.

It is evident that CBP's responsibilities are important, and they are made complicated by the various complaints that are being filed to them by people who claim that they got the raw end of the deal in the import or export transactions that they were involved with. This is the reason why CBP frequently identifies the common trade concerns that typically result to tremendous deficits and the trade policies that are usually exploited to make sure that these problems are immediately addressed. The CBP always makes the necessary adjustments to prevent the problems from getting worse and assure the American public that importing and exporting products can still be done effectively as authorities are always ready to help and monitor these transactions.

United States Customs Clearances for Imports

A. General Importation Policies

A person could create his personal customs clearance of imports for whatever purpose he intends to. As a general rule, all imported products entering America has to be approved by the BCP. Customs clearance is comprised of various stages, and they all have to be passed before the imports are allowed to enter American soil.

It is not in the policy of BCP to demand the importing party to get a permit. This can be a requirement though for other institutions based on the imported products. What the BCP checks is the identification number of the importing party. This way, the BCP will have an idea whether the importing party is legitimate or not.

BCP also requires the importing party to determine the significance of the products being imported as well as provide the right product category codes. The customs officers meticulously check these details, and simple mistakes or inaccuracies in this information could mean lengthy delays in the approval of clearance for the imported products involved (Sherman, 2010). BCP also makes sure that the importing party settles all the fees that have been imposed before approving the clearance for the imported products. The importers are given assurance by the customs officers that all the fees being charged to them are legal and properly documented.

The usual problem being faced by Customs officers among importers is that the imported products they carry along with them fail to satisfy some of their simple guidelines, such as appropriate labels and the absence of appropriate permits that are necessary for the imported products to enter American soil.

B. Arrival of Imported Products

Imports cannot be allowed to penetrate American borders until they are visibly present in the specified port and approved by the BCP for entry. There are plenty of documents that have to be submitted and approved first to the Customs officers by the importing party, so this process could consume a long period of time. This is why importers make sure to fix all the needed documents and submit them to BCP eve days ahead of the arrival of the imported products at the port. When these imported products finally settle at the port, the importer will just have to get approval of the Customs officers for transportation within American soil.

The BCP has no information with regard to the exact dates when the imported products would arrive at the port. The shipping company delivering the imported products is the one that knows the exact dates (Glick, 2008). This frequently causes problems as the importing party also is usually clueless with the exact date of arrival of the imported products, which leads to long disruptions to the Customs clearance process.

Aside from making sure that the imported products are already settled at the port for initial inspection, the Customs officers also check the timely submission of important files and requirements before giving clearances. BCP always has a set standard of fifteen days upon arrival of the imported products at the port for the importer to fix all the requirements imposed on them, or else the imported products get stuck at a storage facility. What is worse is that the importing party would still have to settle the storage fees that his imported products are incurring every single day they stay there. In half a year's time, the imported products will eventually be auctioned to the people if the importer still fails to complete the necessary requirements.

C. Entry of Imported Products

Imported products could enter America informally if the Customs officers determine and approve that these products would eventually be sold or of the imported products do not really have heavy price tags. This condition does not apply though, to some products that are frequently subjected to quota limits. On the other hand, imported products that are determined to have expensive price tags would have to enter American soil formally. Of course, formal entries of imported products in America would cost the importer much more compared to informal entries of imported products. Customs officers are always keen at charging additional processing fees for imported products that will enter America formally.

To guarantee that the importer will follow all the guidelines and settle all the fees charged to the formal entry of the imported products, Customs officers also place a bond with hefty consequences for non-payment or non-compliance. Thus, the importer is truly locked and is left with no choice (Seyoum, 2008). This policy has been instituted over the problems experienced by BCP in the previous years where some importers tried to negotiate through bribes an informal entry with lesser charges even if the imported products they were trying to bring to America were truly very expensive.

Imported products verified by Customs officers to rightfully enter America informally are not tagged anymore with bonds. All the importing party has to do is pay the transportation fees being charged by the shipping organization and present the receipt to the Customs officers for approval. Other thorough inspections will be done by the Customs officers before giving clearances.

D. Product Category

All imported products that would penetrate the American borders have specific codes based on the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. This information is also checked by the Customs officers. Imported products need to belong to their respective product groups because the fees and other charges that will be placed on them will be based on the specific product categories. Mistakes in this part of the clearance process usually lead to lengthy delays and issues on wrong fees charged on imported products.

E. Inspection of the Imported products

The final part of the Customs clearance process is when the officers thoroughly inspect the imported products upon their arrival at the port. If there are no problems encountered in the inspection process, the imported products are then given to the importing party (Johnson, 2010). There are instances when a part of the imported products are kept by the Customs officers for their further evaluation while letting go of the rest. They will all be eventually returned to the importing company.

There are instances when the Customs officers experience difficulties trying to determine whether the imported products are not potential health hazards or fake items. In these situations, the inspection process takes a longer period of time than usual. Additional charges can also be imposed depending on the evaluation of the Customs officers. If the officers find out that certain inaccuracies were caused by negligence of the importing party, sanctions and additional fees would be charged depending on the severity of the impacts of the infractions and experience of the importing company.

United States Customs Clearances for Exports

A. General exportation policies

An individual trying to export a product must be able to submit to Customs officers the necessary documents that will provide the important details regarding the product. Exporting of products can only be allowed after the exporter is able to submit the right documents and prove that there is nothing illegal or harmful on the product being exported that would inevitably delay the clearance process.

B. Appropriate Documents

Customs officers usually look for documents that will validate the rightful owners of the products being exported. This is to make sure that the products being exported are not illegally obtained or stolen properties. The authenticity of the documents presented is also checked thoroughly.

C. Date of submission

For products that will be exported through ship or by plane, the necessary certifications as well the product itself has to be submitted to Customs officers a minimum of three days before the exportation takes place. For products that will be exported by way of land transportation, the necessary certifications have to be presented to the Customs officers also at least three days along with the products (Morgan, 2009). This will give the Customs officers more than enough time to do their routine investigations regarding the legalities and authenticities of the documents and certificates submitted to them by the exporter.

D. Place of submission

The administrators of ports would be in charge of determining the places where the exporting parties would have to submit the necessary certifications as well as the products being exported. The administrators would have to inform the exporters ahead of time the site of presentation for them to avoid getting caught by surprise and be able to prepare everything that they would have to submit.

E. Validation of certificates

Customs officers would identify the validity of the certifications provided by the exporters. Validation of documents is perhaps the most time consuming step in the clearance process, and it has its reasons. Customs officers make sure they are not accepting falsified documents and the people mentioned in the documents have attested to their authenticity. After inspection, the officers would obtain a photocopied version of the certificates while the true copies are given back to the exporting parties.

F. Export Licenses

In obtaining this, exporters are allowed to participate in a specific kind of export deal. An export license is given by BCP after investigating the information about the export deal. However, because of the frequent anomalies and complaints of fraud in this kind of transaction, BCP has rarely entertained requests by exporters to be granted with export licenses to avoid controversies and criticism and instead have mainly relied on the tried and tested, traditional exportation policies.

Conclusion

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCP) makes sure that the clearance process of exported and imported products is done in legal terms. Its respectable and competent officers are tasked with the challenging responsibility of implementing the policies and regulations regardless of the situation or the social status of the person trying to import or export a product.

The clearance process of imports and exports is an extensive and thorough process. Every piece of document submitted to the Customs officers are meticulously inspected for authenticity. The products being exported or imported are also carefully inspected to determine whether they are of excellent quality or they could just pose serious risks to the safety of the people that will use them.

Customs officers in America do not tolerate even the slightest and simplest mistakes or infractions committed by the exporter or importer. Once these mistakes or anomalies are discovered, it is a guarantee that the clearance process will take a longer period of time to finish than usual. Aside from the extensive delays, the exporter or importer would also have to face the possibility of getting penalized financially as a result of their costly mistakes. Clearly, exporters and importers are put in such disadvantageous situations any time they forget to include or submit important details. This is the reason why to ensure to smooth clearance process, BCP advises exporters and importers to always follow their guidelines and avoid those simple yet costly mistakes. These guidelines are available on their website, and Customs officers are always ready to answer questions from exporters and importers to clarify any issues or problems that they may have.

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