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Airport and Maritime
Operations Manual

Maritime Operations

Prerequisites to Clearing Vessels

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Introduction

The *Prerequisites to Clearing Vessels* section of Maritime Operations provides procedures that are required to be completed prior to clearing vessels. The purpose of Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) maritime activities is to minimize the risk of introducing agricultural pests that are associated with the movement of vessels. All vessels from foreign locations, U.S. territories and possessions, and Hawaii are subject to inspection.

Advance Notification of Arrival

Require commercial¹ vessel owners, operators, agents, or representatives to provide advance notification of arrival at least 12 hours prior to vessel arrival when the vessel arrives from one of the following:

- ◆ Foreign country
- ◆ Territory or possession of the United States
- ◆ Hawaii
- ◆ Coastwise vessels (see definition)

Exemptions from advance notification requirements are allowed for the following vessels:

¹ Vessels that carry cargo or passengers for a fee, including fishing vessels that have passed through the Panama Canal or have called at foreign ports.

- ◆ Vessels that **do not** carry passengers or cargo for a fee
- ◆ Vessels that have written notification from PPQ that advance notification is **not** required

Advance notification must be given at least 12 hours prior to arrival and must include the following:

- ◆ Name of the vessel
- ◆ Date and estimated time of arrival (ETA) at the port; require an updated ETA if the ETA changes by more than 1 hour
- ◆ Location of arrival², providing the most site-specific data available (dock, pier, wharf, berth, mole, or anchorage)
 - ❖ If the location changes after notification, require that both the PPQ office that expected the arrival and the newly affected PPQ office be notified immediately
- ◆ Names of all foreign and non-continental U.S. ports where any cargo, crew, or passengers destined for the continental United States have boarded the craft since its most recent arrival at a port in the United States

Failure to Provide Advance Notification

Assess civil penalties to owners or operators who fail to provide the required advance notification. You may assess the civil penalty through the captain of the vessel, the agent, or the representative.

PPQ Form 592, Notice of Violation

PPQ Form 592, Notice of Violation, is used to document the failure to provide advance notification of arrival. Civil penalty action consists of completing PPQ 592 and settling the case at the port by collecting a fine. When civil penalties are **not** collected at the port, PPQ Form 592, PPQ Form 288, an Officer's Statement, and any other pertinent documents must be forwarded to Investigative and Enforcement Services, APHIS Business Services (ABS) Regulatory Services. See ***PPQ Form 592, Notice of Violation*** on **page A-1-80** for instructions.

Safety

Safety guidelines for boarding vessels, inspecting containers (interior and exterior inspection), and inspecting dunnage follow.

² If arrival is at an anchorage of the specific site (such as berth, mole, pier) to which the vessel will be moving as well as its estimated date and time of arrival at that site.

Vessel Boarding

When preparing to board a vessel, bring the following safety equipment:

- ◆ Hard hat
- ◆ Flotation jackets (only needed for instream boarding)
- ◆ Dust mask for certain bulk carriers



If you arrive at a vessel before it is docked, be sure to keep yourself and your vehicle at least 100 feet away from the vessel. This will avoid being struck by tie-up lines that may snap during docking.

Safety Requirements When Inspecting Vessels

Observe the following safety requirements when inspecting vessels:

1. Wear a hard hat during vessel inspections and around discharge conveyor belts.
2. Require that a stable, safe gangway be available for boarding.
3. **Do not** board a low draft vessel by stepping directly on the deck or by walking across a plank between the dock and the vessel.



Exception: When boarding small vessels that ply the Caribbean, it may be necessary to step directly on the deck. Do so with extreme caution.

4. **Do not** use a Jacob's ladder for boarding.
5. Be aware of metal objects protruding from the deck and overhead.
6. Be aware of slippery conditions on the deck and stairways.
7. When conducting a cargo hold inspection, be sure to:
 - A. Conduct your inspection during the less busy hours of the day.
 - B. Wear your hard hat at all times.
 - C. Inform the captain or chief mate as well as the longshoreman supervisor of your intent to enter and inspect the cargo hold.
 - D. Use extreme caution when descending ladders into the hold; use a crane with a safety cage attached to it if available.
8. Instream boarding (required approval of the Regional Director):
 - A. Consider your physical capabilities.
 - B. Use a flotation jacket.
 - C. **Do not** use a Jacob's ladder for boarding.

- D. If you don't board the vessel while in port and it is moving to another U.S. port, then notify PPQ at the next port to board the vessel.
- 9. Stay alert.
- 10. Be aware of hazardous conditions at maritime docking locations, especially forklifts, container movers, and tie downs (hooks and chains and block and tackle) being removed from containers.
- 11. Avoid parking under and walking under discharge conveyor belts, grain spouts, and cranes even when the vessel is **not** working. (Often the equipment operators have a poor field of vision because of the large items they move and the design of the equipment itself.)

Container Inspection

Interior Inspection of Full or Empty Cargo Containers

Bring the following safety equipment for interior inspection of full or empty cargo containers:

- ◆ Flashlight
- ◆ Dust respirator (3M Particulate Respirator) when inspecting dusty cargos
- ◆ Hard hat
- ◆ Work gloves

Follow these guidelines when inspecting the interior of full cargo containers:

1. To avoid unexpected tractor hookup or movement of the containers, notify the agent or responsible person in the area that you will be inspecting containers. Ports need to develop their own method of identifying that an officer is inspecting a container. A colorful flag can be used as a means of identification.
2. Make sure the containers are securely parked.
3. Have the importer or the importer's agent open and close the container doors during inspection.
4. Stand clear of the doors when they are being opened. Cargo may be lying against them and fall out once the doors are opened.
5. Don't climb on unstable cargo. A ladder may be necessary to see the top of cargo. Preferably, have cargo removed for inspection if necessary.
6. Be aware of machinery and other cargo that have protruding parts which pose a hazard.

Exterior Inspection of Full or Empty Containers

7. Look for signs of pesticide usage prior to entering the containers. Signs such as white dust (phosphine residue) over the cargo, the sharp odor of chloropicrin, or containers of fumigants are indications that a fumigant has been used.
 - A. If you see signs of phosphine residue or methyl bromide usage, then test with a Draeger tube to make sure the container is safe before entering and conducting your inspection
 - B. If the cargo is moving inbound and you suspect pesticide usage, notify the next PPQ office

Follow guidelines when inspecting the exterior of full or empty containers as follows:

1. Notify the agent or responsible person in the area that you will be inspecting the exteriors of containers in the chassis yard.
2. Inspect the container when it is placed on a chassis.



Do not inspect containers that are suspended by hooks and cables or on container movers.

3. Watch out for moving vehicles.

Dunnage Inspection

When you inspect dunnage, wear a pair of safety goggles to protect your eyes when chipping or prying dunnage, and follow these guidelines:

1. Evaluate the safety conditions before you begin your inspection. If unsafe, get assistance from the agent or responsible person to make dunnage accessible for your inspection.
2. **Do not** climb on top of dunnage piles because they may collapse.
3. Use a hammer and chisel or ax to split open wood; **do not** use a knife for this purpose.

