



Canada Border
Services Agency

Agence des services
frontaliers du Canada

Marine Container Examination Program

Why is my container being examined?

Due to the large available volume within marine containers, they have been found to be a preferred method of transport for illicit goods. Smugglers use elaborate schemes and sophisticated techniques to conceal their illicit goods within marine containers. Even the most reputable importer is at risk to the techniques employed by smugglers. It is for this reason that an examination should not be considered as a cast of suspicion on a particular importer.

Representatives of shipping lines provide the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) with cargo information before containers arrive. Border Services Officers review this information using a number of computerized information systems. They then apply their experience in targeting and analysis to determine whether a container should be examined for contraband.

Why am I charged an additional fee for the CBSA to do its job?

The CBSA pays for the cost of inspection personnel, equipment and tools. The fees for presenting the goods for examination are generated by the facility operator to cover the cost of transportation to and from the examination facility and for unloading and reloading the container. These costs are billed to the shipping lines by the facility operator, who in turn passes the cost to the importer.

Why can't my container be examined at my own facility or a facility of my choice?

Security of the goods and safety of the examination team and their equipment requires that examinations be conducted at a central location. Examination teams can operate more efficiently by using high-tech equipment to conduct thorough and timely examinations. It is not feasible or practical to transport this equipment to various locations to conduct examinations. Use of an examination facility ensures this equipment will be on hand and functional at all times.

How are examination facility operators selected?

The CBSA and the transportation industry have agreed that the best option for examining cargo containers for contraband is to use a specialized central examination facility. In 1989, we outlined the requirements for proper presentation of goods for examination to the shipping industry. It was then the responsibility of the shipping industry to select warehouse operators for the transportation, unloading, and reloading of containers at centralized examination facilities.

Who is responsible for damage to a container or its contents?

Any damage to a container or its contents is unfortunate. The party responsible at each stage of the shipping and examination process is responsible for damages caused while under their control. Border Services Officers conducting an examination of containers do so with the utmost care, carefully noting the condition of the goods, any visible damage, and the depth and intensity of the examination. Border Services Officers use X-ray machines and high-tech equipment such as the Ionscan to make the examinations less intrusive, more streamlined, and to reduce the risk of damage.

What legal authority does the CBSA have to examine my goods?

The examination process is authorized by the *Customs Act*. The Act makes the person reporting the goods responsible for presenting them to a Border Services Officer for examination. This includes the responsibility for all costs associated with transporting the goods to an appropriate and secure examination area, as well as the unloading and reloading of containers.

Why does the CBSA test my container for chemicals?

The CBSA has been taking action to protect its employees from the threat of fumigants for years. We enhanced our fumigant detection procedures in 2006, after an incident of exposure to an employee during a routine examination. As a result, the CBSA has implemented testing procedures for known fumigants and solvents. The CBSA now requires employees to test all marine containers prior to examination. To mitigate the risk of exposure, employees are instructed to follow procedures, which include mandatory testing for known common toxic industrial chemicals and setting ventilation timeframes followed by re-testing until safe levels are reached.

The CBSA remains committed to eliminating, by reducing to safe levels, any exposure of chemicals to its employees. The CBSA also recognizes that the chemical testing process can sometimes cause delay for importers, and has invested in new testing and ventilation equipment to help expedite this process.

If you have more questions about this program, contact your CBSA office.

You can find the listing of CBSA offices and additional information about marine container examination at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca.

La version française de cette publication est intitulée *Programme d'examen des conteneurs maritimes*.

Think recycling!



Printed in Canada