

IMPORTING AND EXPORTING

SHIPPING TO THE U.S. OVERVIEW OF THE RELEASE PROCESS

Learn about the release of goods into the U.S., from documentation to methods.

Importing and Exporting

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Once your carrier picks up your goods, you may be tempted to sit back and forget about your shipment. But if you want to be able to troubleshoot any problems that arise, you should know what information to include with your shipment, and the different methods of releasing goods at the U.S. border. The release of goods is an authorization by U.S. Customs to deliver goods to the U.S. destination. Having an understanding of which customs documents you need to include with your shipment and what information those documents must cover will save you both time and money.

Release information you need to have

Merchandise for which entry is required will be entered within 15 calendar days after landing from a vessel, aircraft or vehicle; or after arrival at the port of destination in the case of merchandise transported in bond. You or your customs broker must file release documents to secure the physical release of your goods from Customs and to allow them to be shipped to their destination in the U.S.

Your release documentation must include the following information:

- The name and address of the exporter;
- The name and address of the producer, if it's different from the exporter;
- The name, address, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) number of the company where the shipment is to be delivered (referred to as ultimate consignee or buyer);

Learn the basics of clearing your goods at the U.S. border.



- The name, address, and IRS number of the company purchasing the product(s), if it's different than the consignee;
- The product/shipment information including the complete description, value, quantity and packing, weight, currency of sale, and country of origin;
- Other information required by Participating Government Agencies (PGAs), if applicable.

Complete the correct documents

To fulfill the information requirements for a customs release, there are a few essential documents you need to complete, including a Bill of Lading, a Packing List, a Cargo Manifest and a Customs Invoice. However, if your goods are subject to PGA regulations, you may also be required to submit licenses, or permits to satisfy those agencies.

The Bill of Lading demonstrates that there is a legal contract between the carrier and exporter to take the goods across the border. A Cargo Manifest, prepared by the carrier, is a comprehensive list of the cargo being carried. The Customs Invoice is a detailed description of the goods, including



the quantity and selling price, freight terms of delivery and payment, insurance, packing costs, weight and volume. This document helps Customs to determine the duty on your shipment.

In lieu of the U.S. Customs Invoice the carrier can provide the required information by submitting one of the following documents or combination thereof: an airway bill, a commercial invoice, or packing lists.

The importer may be required to provide additional documents necessary to determine whether the merchandise may be admitted such as licenses, certificates and permits.

Your customs broker helps with the release

The customs broker performs the following actions to obtain the release of goods:

- Reviews the paperwork and contacts the relevant parties (importer, exporter, carrier, producer, etc.) to obtain missing information or clarify inaccuracies;
- Submits a release package (usually electronic) to U.S. Customs.

If your goods are subject to PGA regulations, you may also be required to submit licenses, or permits to satisfy those agencies.

Contact Livingston

Have questions or need help with your shipments? Contact your account executive, write to us at: simplify@livingstonintl.com or give us a call at **1-800-837-1063**

