



Dear Business Partner:

As active participants in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection C-TPAT program, Saratoga Forwarding is asked to play a role in raising the awareness of our customers and business partners to the importance of having security procedures in place at all points in the supply chain.

Security procedures include but are not limited to proper inspection of the empty container prior to loading, the proper sealing of containers with CBP approved seals, and a responsibility to maintain the integrity of shipping containers and trailers.

It should also be noted that the sealing of trailers and containers to include continuous seal integrity are crucial elements of a secure supply chain. Please note seals used on containers and trailers bound for U.S. destinations are required to meet or exceed the current PAS ISO 17712 standards for high quality seals.

Procedures for recognizing and reporting compromised seals to Customs and Border Protection or the appropriate foreign authority should be outlined and adhered to in order to enhance security within the supply chain as a whole.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection recommend that the 7-Point Inspection Process be followed for empty containers before being loaded, and the 17-Point Inspection Process for trailers/tractors be followed at all times. Both of these inspection processes are outlined below.

If you have any questions about the processes outlined in this mailing please let me know. A more detailed document concerning the container and seal inspection process is available from Customs and Border Protection.

Sincerely,

Eric M. Hromada
President

Seal Affixing Process

Written procedures must stipulate how seals are to be controlled and affixed to loaded containers – to include procedures for recognizing and reporting compromised seals and/or containers to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or the appropriate foreign authority.

Only designated authorized employees must distribute and affix container seals for integrity purposes. The fewer people who have access to seals, the more secure the process will be – unauthorized employees must never handle container seals.

- At the point of stuffing, procedures must be in place to properly seal and maintain the integrity of shipping containers.
- All seals must meet or exceed the current PAS/ISO 17712 standards for high quality seals
- Seals should be affixed to the right door of the container on the hasp that has the welded rivet.
- After the seal is affixed to the container, an authorized employee should make sure that the seal is secure by pulling down on it.

Seal Inspection

A seal inspection process should be implemented throughout the supply chain. The following is an example of a seal inspection process.

- 1 View Seal & Container Locking Mechanisms**
 - a. Excessive damage to the seal or container locking mechanism should be reported to Supervisor before opening the container.
- 2 Verify Seal Number for Accuracy**
 - a. Compare with shipping documents and look for alterations to the seal numbers
- 3 Tug on Seal to make sure it is affixed properly**
 - a. Seals that come apart must be reported to a Supervisor before the container is opened.
- 4 Twist and Turn seal to make sure it does not come off**

7 – Point Container Inspection Process

Procedures must be in place to verify the physical integrity of the container structure prior to stuffing, to include the reliability of the locking mechanisms of the doors.

A 7-Point Container Inspection process is recommended for all containers.

- 1 Outside / Undercarriage**
 - a. Inspect Prior to entering facility
 - b. Support beams on undercarriage should be visible
- 2 Inside / Outside Doors**
 - a. Secure and reliable locking mechanisms
 - b. Look for different color bonding material
 - c. Loose bolts
 - d. Plates and repairs
- 3 Right Side**
 - a. Unusual repairs to structural beams
 - b. Repairs to walls on the inside of the container must be visible on the outside
 - c. Use tool to tap the side walls – listen and feel for hollow sound
- 4 Left Side**
 - a. Unusual repairs to structural beams
 - b. Repairs to walls on the inside of the container must be visible on the outside
 - c. Use tool to tap the side walls – listen and feel for hollow sound
- 5 Front Wall**
 - a. Blocks and Vents are visible
 - b. Use tool to tap front wall – listen and feel for hollow sound
 - c. Range finder, measuring tape and/or string can be used to determine length of container
- 6 Ceiling / Roof**
 - a. Ceiling is a certain height from floor. Blocks and vents are visible.
 - b. Uncomfortable feeling inside container
 - c. Repairs to inside of the container should be visible on the outside
 - d. Use tool to tap ceiling – listen and feel for hollow sound
- 7 Floor**
 - a. Floor should be a certain height from ceiling
 - b. Floor should be flat – do not need to step up to get inside
 - c. Different floor heights
 - d. Unusual repairs

17-Point Tractor & Trailer Inspection Process

Procedures should be in place to verify the physical integrity of the trailer structure prior to stuffing, to include the reliability of the locking mechanisms of the doors. Border crossing tractors and trailers should be inspected upon the arrival at the domestic facility.

A 17-point Tractor & Trailer Inspection process is recommended for all trucks and trailers arriving from foreign points.

- 1 Bumper
- 2 Engine
- 3 Tires (truck & trailer)
- 4 Floor
- 5 Fuel Tanks
- 6 Cab/Storage Compartments
- 7 Air Tanks
- 8 Drive Shafts
- 9 Fifth Wheel
- 10 Outside/Undercarriage
- 11 Floor
- 12 Inside/Outside Doors
- 13 Side Walls
- 14 Ceiling/Roof
- 15 Front Wall
- 16 Refrigerated Unit
- 17 Exhaust

After the seal(s), container, tractor and trailer pass all inspections, the container/trailer doors can be opened. Seals should be kept for investigative purposes.

A cursory inspection of cargo should be conducted when the container/trailer doors are opened. If contraband is encountered, close the container/trailer doors and contact a Supervisor. The Supervisor should contact the appropriate authorities and Customs and Border Protection.

Overages or shortages of cargo should be documented and recorded. These records may be needed to conduct future investigations.