

[Update On CBP'S ACE Program – Contributed By Spill Center For NTTC Washington Newsletter]

**E-MANIFEST COMING** – The U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has released its plans for mandatory implementation of the new Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) Truck Manifest System. Under ACE, carriers will be required to transmit advance electronic cargo information to CBP before arriving at U.S. land border ports of entry. The program is meant to enhance border security and expedite trade. This update is provided by Spill Center, a leader in hazmat spill support and environmental claims management.

Currently, motor carriers are participating in ACE voluntarily. By October, some 2,600 carriers had established ACE accounts and were transmitting electronic manifests (e-Manifests) to CBP. E-Manifests, which contain the same information as paper manifests currently in use, can be filed either by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) or via the Internet, using the web-based ACE Secure Data Portal.

Effective Jan. 25, 2007, CBP will begin the staged phase-in of ACE, initially making it mandatory at ports in Arizona, Washington and eastern North Dakota. Trucks entering the U.S. through those ports will be required to file electronic manifests. The remaining states have been divided into 5 groups for ACE implementation. CBP will provide 90 days advance notice in the Federal Register to set dates for the others.

Spill Center's Julie Cummins participated in CBP's ACE Exchange Conference in early November. She reports that the program is on track for a smooth launch and that the CBP plans to issue warnings to carriers not in compliance during the first few weeks and work with them to ensure success. CBP is urging motor carriers to enroll in ACE now to avoid the last-minute rush before electronic manifests become mandatory. By June 2007, all 99 land border crossings will be ACE ports, and e-Manifests will be mandatory at all of them by the end of 2007.

To enroll, go online to the CBP website: [www.cbp.gov/modernization](http://www.cbp.gov/modernization), and download the ACE application. Or you can send an e-mail to [ACENOW@dhs.gov](mailto:ACENOW@dhs.gov), and an application will be sent to you. An ACE account will be created, enabling you to file e-Manifests. A list of EDI software providers is posted at the web site. Alternatively, companies can develop their own software, which needs to be tested with CBP systems for compatibility. Carriers can also elect to use a service provider with an ACE portal account. Assistance in filing can be obtained from customs brokers, service providers, and other authorized filers.

Carriers will be required to transmit E-manifests at least an hour in advance of a truck's arrival at the port or 30 minutes if qualified in the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program. At the border, as the truck approaches the primary booth, the online e-Manifest is retrieved and reviewed by a CBP officer. If the truck is equipped with a CBP-approved electronic transponder (not required), ACE will automatically retrieve the data along with matching pre-filed entries or in-bond requests.

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In addition to improving border security, the government expects the ACE system to reduce port processing time for carriers, reduce errors, and enable the storage of trip information, avoiding the need to enter the same data multiple times. ACE will also allow carriers to submit manifest and mandatory advance cargo information about in-bond cargo all in one filing. The ACE Secure Data Portal web site will also allow users to view the status of shipments, trips, conveyances, crew, and equipment, including in-bond cargo movements.

Tom Moses, president of Spill Center, intends to propose a concept developed by his company to enhance border security within ACE even further. Spill Center has developed Public Sector Reporting Center (PSRC) technology that can continuously monitor and analyze e-Manifest data using automated, rule-engine software to predict when transported material poses a threat. PSRC would automatically send real-time alerts to CBP personnel directing them to the high-risk cargo. Information on available public and private response resources would also be provided.

According to Tom, PSRC could be programmed to send customized alerts to agencies and departments responsible for everything from screening and intelligence to interdiction and emergency response. The benefits of PSRC were demonstrated during U.S. DOT's Hazardous Material Safety and Security Field Operational Test of technologies to prevent commercial vehicles carrying hazardous materials from being used in terrorist attacks.

According to CBP, several carrier companies now using ACE have reported a significant time and cost savings by no longer having to fax paper shipping documents and by the reduction in driver paperwork. Some companies have experienced administrative start-up and training costs, and have added monitoring procedures to verify the status of manifest filings. But they report that the time-savings of e-Manifest filings are worth it. CBP reports that ACE has resulted in an average 25% faster processing of trucks at land border ports. Don't put off enrollment in ACE. It's the law.

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