



## **C-TPAT Overview**

The importing community has a stake in the fight against terrorism. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) has worked to form partnerships with the trade community, establishing security standards and best practices that protect the entire supply chain against exploitation by terrorists. The C-TPAT program sets security standards for all links in the supply chain; including facilities, conveyances, personnel and containers. In November 2001, C-TPAT was established with seven major importers. There are now more than 5,800 certified partners who have met the C-TPAT minimum-security criteria; having been scrutinized by CBP's law enforcement and trade databases, and have an established import history. Of these, almost 4,000 have been validated.

With all the focus on security, it is Customs' intention to increase their examination of cargo from high-risk importers. U.S. Customs and Border Protection definition of a high-risk Importer is anyone who is not a Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) participant.

Importers should consider joining C-TPAT. C-TPAT participants will not only ensure a more secure supply chain for their employees, suppliers, customers, and products, but also may be entitled to certain benefits offered by Customs, including:

1. Reduced number of cargo inspections
2. An assigned account manager
3. Access to C-TPAT membership list
4. Eligibility for other trade initiative programs (i.e. ISA, FAST)

Importers who are C-TPAT participants will benefit greatly from reduced examinations and the savings associated with additional drayage and cargo exam inspection fees incurred at the seaport.

In order to join C-TPAT, an importer as a participant will need to meet all of the defined security criteria. The security criteria cover all the workings of the program—physical security such as gating, lighting, and facility access controls; personnel security practices and information technology systems. In return for meeting these thorough standards, CBP provides partner companies reduced examinations at the port of arrival and expedited processing at the border. Requirements and details can be found at:  
[http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial\\_enforcement/ctpat/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial_enforcement/ctpat/).

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