

What information should commercial carriers (i.e. truckers) know before transporting cargo from Canada or Mexico into the United States?

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) holds you responsible and liable for the cargo while it is in your custody until it is released to a warehouse, a recipient in the United States (U.S.) or exported to a foreign country. Therefore, it is imperative that you know and understand your responsibilities as a carrier and what you can do to ensure you meet the requirements of CBP. First and foremost, before you can operate as an international carrier transporting cargo into and through the U.S., you must have an [International Carrier bond](#) on file with CBP. The bond can be filed with the port you most commonly use. A list of ports can be located [here](#). To obtain an International Carrier bond, you must contact an approved Surety. A list of approved sureties is identified as Circular 570 on the [Treasury's Financial Management Service's Web site](#). In addition to acquiring the bond, you should participate in the [Free and Secure Trade \(FAST\)](#) program that promotes free and secure trade (FAST North for Canada and FAST South of Mexico) while expediting legitimate trade across the Canada -United States (U.S.) border. If approved, you will be issued a FAST card. The participation in FAST requires that every link in the supply chain be certified under the [Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism \(C-TPAT\)](#) program, from manufacturer to carrier, driver and importer.

The [User Fee Decal Program](#) is a collection that is used for the inspectional processing provided by Customs for commercial vehicles (trucks). Before bringing goods to the U.S. you should take the following measures: Make sure the carrier of the goods make notification of arrival. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the importer or their broker is informed immediately of arrival so that the entry can be filed and the goods cleared through CBP. If arrangements are not made with a broker in advance to clear the cargo, the importer is responsible for clearing the goods and submitting cargo information to CBP in advance via one of the Interchanges mentioned below.

Currently, the interchanges approved by CBP to submit cargo information electronically are the Pre-Arrival Processing System (PAPS), Customs Automated Forms Entry System (CAFES), Automated Broker Interface (ABI) or Border Release Advance Screening and Selectivity (BRASS). If you use the BRASS interchange to submit advance cargo information to CBP, the trucker transporting the goods to the U.S. must be a FAST participant and have a FAST driver card in his or her possession when entering the U.S., otherwise he or she will be denied entry. Be aware, if you are going to clear the goods on behalf of the importer (on a one-time basis), you must have power of attorney to do so. (If you clear goods for customers on a regular basis - you will have to obtain a broker's license). See the [Ports](#) section of this site for a list of brokers in the state the goods will arrive. Ensure you have the proper documents (i.e. commercial invoice, Declaration of Unaccompanied Goods CBP 3299, government issued permits etc.). For example, if you are transporting household and personal effects on behalf of an importer, you should have them complete a CBP 3299 and provide proof that they have a legal right to live in the U.S. (i.e. copy of their passport and Green Card / INS Form I-551, a Reentry Permit, or a Returning Resident Visa). Let the importer know the CBP 3299 is available under the [Forms](#) section of our website. Ensure your advance cargo information is submitted to CBP in a timely manner when transporting goods to the U.S. from Canada or Mexico. For the time frames advance cargo information must be submitted to CBP, please see the related [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Contact the port of arrival in advance to ensure the paperwork is sufficient before transporting the goods into the United States.

The following documents may be needed:

1. Complete manifest filled out properly
2. Applicable CBP forms (i.e. CBP 3299 or CBP 7512 etc.,)
3. Proof of Bond (CBP 301)
4. Bill of Sale or Commercial Invoice (if applicable)
5. User Fee Decal (if participating)
6. FAST Card (if participating)
7. Permits issued by Federal Government (if required)
8. Importer/Immigrants Legal Documents (if moving to the U.S.)
9. Required Personal Documents and Identification.

To obtain a SCAC code from the [National Motor Freight Traffic Association](#) call (703) 838-1810. After you receive a letter and SCAC code from the NMFTA, you should fax the letter to the Office of Information and Technology at (703) 921-7173, for input into the Automated Commercial System and create a bar code.

As of November 15, 2004, CBP enforced the [Required Advance Electronic Presentation of Cargo Information](#) regulation, which requires importers, carriers, and commercial truck drivers to meet the requirements of the Trade Act of 2002. Therefore, you or the broker representing the importer will be responsible for providing CBP with advance cargo information electronically when transporting goods to the U.S. from Canada or Mexico. However, if you are transporting domestic cargo through Canada or Mexico to another U.S. destination or the goods are considered an informal entry exempt from the regulation, you do not have to submit advance cargo information to CBP.

For instance, if you are transporting household and personal effects with a Declaration of Unaccompanied Articles form CBP 3299, advance notice is not required. Carriers/truckers that do not submit advance cargo information to CBP will be issued a noncompliance notice at the border and will be subject to denial of entry and/or monetary penalty.

If the trucker has a DUI conviction, CBP will not deny them entry - although if there are multiple convictions for this and/or other misdemeanors, they could be denied entry. Generally, any convictions for drug possession can result in denial of entry. If the conviction was long ago, they can contact the U.S. Embassy, Office of Consular Affairs in their country to obtain a waiver. If you are entering the U.S. in-transit to a foreign destination you must post a bond and file a transportation entry in advance via CAFES. For additional information on in-bond entry procedures or how to obtain in-bond numbers, you should contact the entry office at the first port of arrival.

If you are a U.S. carrier transporting goods through Canada to a U.S. destination, you should contact [Canada Border Services Agency \(CBSA\)](#) at (204) 983-3500 or 506-636-5064.

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