

## § 163.9

date fixed in the summons as the date to produce the records. If the person entitled to notice under paragraph (a) of this section issues a stay of compliance with the summons in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section, no examination of records shall take place except with the consent of the person staying compliance or pursuant to an order issued by a U.S. district court.

(f) *Exceptions to notice and stay of summons provisions*—(1) *Personal liability for duties, fees, or taxes.* The notice provisions of paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to any summons served on the person, or on any officer or employee of the person, with respect to whose liability for duties, fees, or taxes the summons is issued.

(2) *Verification of existence of records.* The notice provisions of paragraph (a) of this section shall not apply to any summons issued to determine whether or not records of transactions of an identified person have been made or kept.

(3) *Judicial determination.* The notice provisions of paragraph (a) of this section and the stay of compliance provisions of paragraph (c) of this section shall not apply with respect to a summons described in paragraph (a) of this section if a U.S. district court determines, upon petition by the issuing Customs officer, that reasonable cause exists to believe that the giving of notice may lead to an attempt:

(i) To conceal, destroy, or alter relevant records;

(ii) To prevent the communication of information from other persons through intimidation, bribery, or collusion; or

(iii) To flee to avoid prosecution, testifying, or production of records.

## § 163.9 Enforcement of summons.

Whenever a person does not comply with a Customs summons, the issuing officer may request the appropriate U.S. attorney to seek an order requiring compliance from the U.S. district court for the district in which the person is found or resides or is doing business. A person who is entitled to notice under § 163.8(a) shall have a right to intervene in any such enforcement proceeding.

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### § 163.10 Failure to comply with court order; penalties.

(a) *Monetary penalties.* The U.S. district court for any judicial district in which a person served with a Customs summons is found or resides or is doing business may order such person to comply with the summons. Upon the failure of a person to obey a court order to comply with a Customs summons, the court may find such person in contempt and may assess a monetary penalty.

(b) *Importations prohibited.* If a person fails to comply with a court order to comply with a Customs summons and is adjudged guilty of contempt, the Commissioner of Customs, with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, for so long as that person remains in contempt:

(1) May prohibit importation of merchandise by that person, directly or indirectly, or for that person's account; and

(2) May withhold delivery of merchandise imported by that person, directly or indirectly, or for that person's account.

(c) *Sale of merchandise.* If any person remains in contempt for more than 1 year after the Commissioner issues instructions to withhold delivery under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the merchandise shall be considered abandoned and shall be sold at public auction or otherwise disposed of in accordance with subpart E of part 162 of this chapter.

### § 163.11 Compliance assessment and other audit procedures.

(a) *Conduct of a Customs compliance assessment or other audit.* In conducting a compliance assessment or other audit, the Customs auditors, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c) of this section, shall:

(1) Provide notice, telephonically and in writing, to the person who is to be the subject of the compliance assessment or other audit, in advance of the compliance assessment or other audit and with a reasonable estimate of the time to be required for the compliance assessment or other audit;

(2) Inform the person who is to be the subject of the compliance assessment or other audit, in writing and before

commencing the compliance assessment or other audit, of his right to an entry conference at which time the objectives and records requirements of the compliance assessment or other audit will be explained and the estimated termination date will be set;

(3) Provide a further estimate of any additional time for the compliance assessment or other audit if, in the course of the compliance assessment or other audit, it becomes apparent that additional time will be required;

(4) Schedule a closing conference upon completion of the compliance assessment or other audit on-site work to explain the preliminary results of the compliance assessment or other audit;

(5) Complete a formal written compliance assessment or other audit report within 90 calendar days following the closing conference referred to in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, unless the Director, Regulatory Audit Division, at Customs Headquarters provides written notice to the person who was the subject of the compliance assessment or other audit of the reason for any delay and the anticipated completion date; and

(6) After application of any exemption contained in 5 U.S.C. 552, send a copy of the formal written compliance assessment or other audit report to the person who was the subject of the compliance assessment or other audit within 30 calendar days following completion of the report.

(b) *Petition procedures for failure to conduct closing conference.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c) of this section, if the estimated or actual termination date for a compliance assessment or other audit passes without a Customs auditor providing a closing conference to explain the results of the compliance assessment or other audit, the person who was the subject of the compliance assessment or other audit may petition in writing for such a conference to the Director, Regulatory Audit Division, U.S. Customs Service, Washington, DC 20229. Upon receipt of such a request, the Director shall provide for such a conference to be held within 15 calendar days after the date of receipt.

(c) *Exception to procedures.* Paragraphs (a)(5), (a)(6) and (b) of this sec-

tion shall not apply after Customs commences a formal investigation with respect to the issue involved.

#### § 163.12 Recordkeeping Compliance Program.

(a) *General.* The Recordkeeping Compliance Program is a voluntary Customs program under which certified recordkeepers may be eligible for alternatives to penalties (see paragraph (d) of this section) that might be assessed under §163.6 for failure to produce a demanded entry record. However, even where a certified recordkeeper is eligible for an alternative to a penalty, participation in the Recordkeeping Compliance Program has no limiting effect on the authority of Customs to use a summons, court order or other legal process to compel the production of records by that certified recordkeeper.

(b) *Certification procedures*—(1) *Who may apply.* Any person described in §163.2(a) who is required to maintain and produce entry records under this part may apply to participate in the Recordkeeping Compliance Program.

(2) *Where to apply.* An application for certification to participate in the Recordkeeping Compliance Program shall be submitted to the Director, Regulatory Audit Division, U.S. Customs Service, 909 S.E. First Avenue, Miami, Florida 33131. The application shall be submitted in accordance with the guidelines contained in the Customs Recordkeeping Compliance Handbook which may be obtained by downloading it from the Customs Electronic Bulletin Board (703-921-6155) or by writing to the Recordkeeping Compliance Program, Regulatory Audit Division, Office of Strategic Trade, U.S. Customs Service, 909 S.E. First Avenue, Suite 710, Miami, Florida 33131.

(3) *Certification requirements.* A recordkeeper may be certified as a participant in the Recordkeeping Compliance Program after meeting the general recordkeeping requirements established under this section or after negotiating an alternative program suited to the needs of the recordkeeper and Customs. To be certified, a recordkeeper must be in compliance with Customs laws and