

with this part whether or not copies thereof are retained by Customs.

#### § 163.4 Record retention period.

(a) *General.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b) of this section, any record required to be made, kept, and rendered for examination and inspection by Customs under §163.2 or any other provision of this chapter shall be kept for 5 years from the date of entry, if the record relates to an entry, or 5 years from the date of the activity which required creation of the record.

(b) *Exceptions.* (1) Any record relating to a drawback claim shall be kept until the third anniversary of the date of payment of the claim.

(2) Packing lists shall be retained for a period of 60 calendar days from the end of the release or conditional release period, whichever is later, or, if a demand for return to Customs custody has been issued, for a period of 60 calendar days either from the date the goods are redelivered or from the date specified in the demand as the latest redelivery date if redelivery has not taken place.

(3) A consignee who is not the owner or purchaser and who appoints a customs broker shall keep a record pertaining to merchandise covered by an informal entry for 2 years from the date of the informal entry.

(4) Records pertaining to articles that are admitted free of duty and tax pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 1321(a)(2) and §§10.151 through 10.153 of this chapter, and carriers' records pertaining to manifested cargo that is exempt from entry under the provisions of this chapter, shall be kept for 2 years from the date of the entry or other activity which required creation of the record.

(5) If another provision of this chapter sets forth a retention period for a specific type of record that differs from the period that would apply under this section, that other provision controls.

#### § 163.5 Methods for storage of records.

(a) *Original records.* All persons listed in §163.2 shall maintain all records required by law and regulation for the required retention periods and as original records, whether paper or electronic, unless alternative storage methods

have been adopted in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section. The records, whether in their original format or under an alternative storage method, must be capable of being retrieved upon lawful request or demand by Customs.

(b) *Alternative method of storage—(1) General.* Any of the persons listed in §163.2 may maintain any records, other than records required to be maintained as original records under laws and regulations administered by other Federal government agencies, in an alternative format, provided that the person gives advance written notification of such alternative storage method to the Director, Regulatory Audit Division, U.S. Customs Service, 909 S.E. First Avenue, Miami, Florida 33131, and provided further that the Director of the Miami regulatory audit field office does not instruct the person in writing as provided herein that certain described records may not be maintained in an alternative format. The written notice to the Director of the Miami regulatory audit field office must be provided at least 30 calendar days before implementation of the alternative storage method, must identify the type of alternative storage method to be used, and must state that the alternative storage method complies with the standards set forth in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. If an alternative storage method covers records that pertain to goods under Customs seizure or detention or that relate to a matter that is currently the subject of an inquiry or investigation or administrative or court proceeding, the appropriate Customs office may instruct the person in writing that those records must be maintained as original records and therefore may not be converted to an alternative format until specific written authorization is received from that Customs office. A written instruction to a person under this paragraph may be issued during the 30-day advance notice period prescribed in this section or at any time thereafter, must describe the records in question with reasonable specificity but need not