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Overview of the Automated Commercial Environment

The Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) is the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) commercial trade processing system designed to automate border processing, to enhance border security and foster our Nation's economic security through lawful international trade and travel. ACE will eventually replace the current import processing system for CBP, the Automated Commercial System (ACS). ACE is part of a multi-year CBP modernization effort that is being deployed in phases. ACE provides a solid technology foundation for all border security initiatives within CBP and will:

- Allow trade participants access to and management of their trade information via reports
- Expedite legitimate trade by providing CBP with tools to efficiently process imports/exports and move goods quickly across the border
- Improve communication, collaboration and compliance efforts between CBP and the trade community
- Facilitate efficient collection, processing and analysis of commercial import and export data
- Provide an information-sharing platform for trade data throughout Partner Government Agencies (PGA)



Overview of ACE Secure Data Portal

Initial work on the design and development of ACE began in August of 2001. In June 2003, 41 importers volunteered to establish ACE Secure Data Portal accounts and serve as champions during the initial deployment phases of ACE. These initial 41 portal accounts helped CBP identify issues and develop solutions to make ACE a user-friendly business tool for the trade community. The primary benefit for these portal accounts was realized in October 2003 with the deployment of the ACE Secure Data Portal. CBP then invited customhouse brokers associated with the initial 41 portal accounts to establish portal accounts to test periodic monthly statement. To date, almost any entity doing business with CBP can now establish a free ACE portal account thereby taking advantage of a consolidated approach for tracking activity in a single comprehensive, account-based view.

The ACE Secure Data Portal is an interactive, on-line tool that provides a single, user-friendly gateway to access CBP information via the Internet. The portal has three major user groups: 1) CBP, 2) trade community and 3) PGAs.

The ACE Secure Data Portal offers each account user:

- Near real-time review of CBP entry, entry summary and manifest data accessible via the Reports link
- Account-based view
- Secure account creation and assignment of user access privileges
- Ability to post information, track and/or respond to CBP on compliance and operational issues

ACE Features Currently Available

ACE will continue to be delivered in phases over the next several years. Each phase offers the trade community, CBP and PGAs new tools to expedite the flow of trade and to help the United States strengthen its border. Since the initial 41 ACE portal accounts were established in June 2003:

- ACE e-Manifest: Trucks has been deployed nationally to all land border ports
- ACE became the only approved EDI for transmitting required advance rail and sea cargo information and ABI in-bond transactions to CBP (e-Manifest: Rail and Sea)
- Approximately 21,000 ACE portal accounts have been established
- More than 65 percent of all duties and fees are collected each month via periodic monthly statement in ACE
- Twenty-nine PGAs are currently utilizing ACE



- The most common entry summary types (Types 01, 03, and 11), which represent nearly 99 percent of all entries filed, can be filed in ACE

Account Management Capabilities

ACE portal accounts are created based on the company's organizational structure and provide a national account based view of company information. For example, the account can be set up with related subsidiaries consolidated into one account view or the information for each subsidiary can be viewed separately. There are many existing tools to help users better manage and organize the account, including single sign on for multiple accounts, restriction of individual user access within the account and much more. For additional information on managing an account, review the "Manage User Access" or "Managing Cross Account Access" User Guides located under ACE Training and Reference Guides on CBP.gov/modernization.

Reports Capabilities

There are over 125 downloadable reports available in the ACE Portal which can be customized to meet the accounts needs. The reports feature can be used as a management business tool to analyze and track operational, financial and compliance data. These reports can be tailored by setting filters, choosing specific data elements, sorting and organizing data fields and customizing to an individual user's needs. Users can save reports to a personal folder, save reports in Excel, PDF or CSV files for data manipulation and analysis and schedule reports to run automatically. Report categories include Account Management, Account Revenue, Authorized Data Extract, Entry Summary, Multi-Modal Manifest, References, Shared Reports and Transactions.

There are four types of reports available:

1. Standard Reports
 - Viewing reports with pre-set data fields
2. Modified Reports
 - Modifying standard reports by adding and/or deleting data fields
3. Customized Reports
 - Building a fully customized report from a blank slate
4. Authorized Data Extract
 - Scheduling a report to download with data that exceeds current data limits of 65,000 lines

In April 2012, CBP delivered Shared Reports which provides trade users with the ability to share customized reports with any user of their account who has access to reports.



For more information regarding the different types of reports and how to run them, see the “Running ACE Reports for all Importer, Broker and Surety Trade Users”, the “Running ACE Reports for Truck Carriers” and the “Running ACE Reports for Rail and Sea Carriers” User Guides located under ACE Training and Reference Guides on CBP.gov/modernization.

Revenue Capabilities

Periodic Monthly Statement processing was introduced in June 2004 and allows users to consolidate periodic daily statements and pay on a monthly basis. With the inception of the periodic monthly statement, operations for many filers have now changed from a single transaction or a day-by-day payment process to a consolidated account-based periodic monthly statement process. This process allows importers to pay for all eligible shipments released during the month on the 15th working day of the following month.

Additional benefits include:

- Provide additional flexibility in the management of the working capital required for duty payments and potentially significant cash flow advantages
- Allow importer/filers to pay designated entry summaries for a given month on one statement
- Streamline accounting and reporting processes
- Allow the filer to select either a national or a port statement
- Allow the broker to pay on behalf of the importer
- Shift the payment process from a transaction-by-transaction payment process to an interest-free periodic monthly statement process
- Allow users to view the periodic monthly statement as it is being built during the month

For more information on Periodic Monthly Statement, see the “Periodic Monthly Statement” User Guide located under ACE Training and Reference Guides on CBP.gov/modernization.

Cargo Control and Release Capabilities

The Trade Act of 2002 and implementing regulations require all truck carriers to submit advanced electronic cargo information to CBP no later than one hour prior to the carrier reaching the first port of arrival in the United States. Through a series of Federal Register Notices, CBP announced the mandatory use of the ACE Truck Manifest System (also known as “e-Manifest”) as the approved electronic data interchange for the transmission of required electronic cargo information. e-Manifest for trucks helps create a secure and streamlined environment for processing and releasing cargo at the land borders.



The first land border port to deploy e-Manifest was Blaine, Washington in December 2004. Since then, e-Manifest has been deployed to all 99 land border ports.

ACE e-Manifest: Truck benefits include:

- Enable carriers to comply with the advanced cargo rule
- Reduce processing times at ports and increase likelihood that trucks will be released at primary booth
- Store conveyance, crew, equipment, shipper, and consignee information in an account, thus reducing the amount of information submitted with each crossing
- Track the status of crew, conveyances, equipment and shipments, i.e. note they have arrived, are being held or have been released
- Enable users to request in-bond moves directly from the manifest
- Report the arrival of in-bond freight via ACE when the shipments arrive at their U.S. destination
- Send copies of the shipment records to the customhouse broker (broker download)
- Receive "*entry advisory*" messages in ACE when the customhouse broker files entries
- Link a driver's account information to their truck carrier account thereby eliminating the need to create a duplicate record of the driver's account information in each carrier account
- Create customizable reports to evaluate and identify compliance issues and risks

The electronic submission of e-Manifests by carriers enables CBP to pre-screen the crew, conveyance, equipment and shipment information before the truck arrives at the border. Electronic truck manifests allow for greater efficiency in data recording by eliminating redundancy. In addition, with transponder technology, ACE can identify trucks/drivers from a distance and activate the retrieval of manifest and entry data for CBP Officers.

For more information on the benefits, importance and enforcement phases of e-Manifest, review the "e-Manifest: Trucks" User Guide located under ACE Training and Reference Guides on CBP.gov/modernization or review the Federal Register Notices on the Modernization web pages of CBP.gov.

In August 2011, CBP delivered e-Manifest: Rail and Sea (M1) that includes the following features:

- Validation of trade partner authorization to use custodial bonds to be maintained by the trade
- Extension of the 'broker download' functionality into the sea cargo environment



- Increase in the number of Secondary Notify Parties to 25
- Notification to carriers as to which PGA has held the shipment
- Ability for CBP to place and remove holds at the container level
- Ability to create and maintain ocean conveyance records via the ACE portal
- Retirement of ACS vessel and rail manifest processing
- Access to new Portal reports to include manifest, bill of lading, in-bond, equipment and commercial party data
- Ability to share reports with other users of the ACE Portal account

On September 29, 2012, ACE became the only approved EDI for transmitting required advance rail and sea cargo information and ABI in-bond transactions to CBP.

On November 11, 2011, CBP published a Federal Register Notice announcing the initial pilot of Cargo Release/Simplified Entry for the Air mode of transportation. Simplified Entry is the first phase of Cargo Release in ACE. In December 2011, the selection of the initial nine pilot participants was announced. Beginning on May 29, 2012, the first Simplified Entries were filed at the three initial pilot ports by the pilot participants. Based on the success of the initial pilot, CBP published a second Federal Register Notice on August 14, 2012 expanding the pilot to additional participants. Eleven additional pilot participants were selected. In addition the pilot was expanded to 13 additional major airports. In November, 2012 CBP added document image capability to the pilot which allows pilot participants to electronically provide supporting cargo release documents to CBP and PGAs via email.

Entry Summary Processing Capabilities

Entry Summary, Accounts and Revenue (ESAR) capabilities provide enhanced account management functions, a single source for master data and an integrated account-based, financial and entry summary processing system. ESAR capabilities will be deployed in phases. On September 9, 2007, CBP successfully deployed the first ESAR capabilities, known as Master Data and Enhanced Accounts (A1). Since that time, ACE has been the system of record for most master data elements required by any CBP system. This means the creation and maintenance of all master data elements and related reference files originate in ACE and are distributed to other CBP systems, e.g. the Automated Commercial System (ACS). With the deployment of A1, CBP has encouraged almost all entities engaged in international trade to establish a free ACE portal account. This expansion of account types has led to the growth in number of ACE accounts to over 21,000.



On April 11, 2009, CBP introduced enhanced ESAR capabilities (A2.2) which allowed for initial entry summary processing in ACE for type 01 and 11 entries.

As part of the ESAR A2.2 release, benefits include:

- Improved ACE portal navigation
- New and enhanced ACE reports
- Ability for importers and CBP to initiate inquiries and receive responses to CBP Forms 28, 29 and 4647 via the ACE portal for ACE entry summaries
- Allowing the trade to post blanket declaration records through the ACE portal for CBP to view nationwide
- A new process by which the trade can electronically correct Census warnings

On January 17, 2010, CBP introduced new capabilities under the ESAR release (A2.3.1a). This ESAR release provides new Portal and EDI capabilities specific to the filing and processing of AD/CVD entries (also known as type 03 entries) and AD/CVD Case Management as well as other enhancements. Benefits of the A2.3.1a release include:

- Ability to search, display and print both AD/CVD case information and AD/CVD messages
- Ability to track the life cycle of an AD/CVD case
- Access to important case information such as the duty deposit rates, entry summary suspension status, bond / cash status, administrative review information and events related to the case history (e.g., "Initiation," "Preliminary," "Final," "Order," "Terminated")
- Access to additional useful information in one easy location such as additional header data elements (e.g., "message status," "Federal Register Notice cite," "Federal Register Notice publication date," "court order number") and ability to run searches within the Portal
- Ability to view and respond to CBP Forms 28, 29 and 4647 via the ACE Portal for **all** entry summaries (that is, both ACS and ACE) for importers with an ACE portal account who select "portal" as their mode of communication
- Ability for brokers with an ACE portal account to create declaration records for their non-portal accounts. (Brokers with clients possessing their own importer portal accounts however, will not be able to create declaration records on behalf of those clients. Brokers will have to be granted access as a "user" on the importer's portal account in order to create the declaration records)
- Ability for EDI trade participants to file entry summaries electronically in ACE for entry types 03 using a better organized, more descriptive ACE ABI CATAIR (Customs and Trade Automated Interface Requirements) document.



- Ability for filers to run an ABI query of AD/CVD case information. Information returned in the query output will include data required by ABI filers to successfully file anti-dumping or countervailing duty entry summaries in ACE
- Access to new and enhanced Portal reports to include AD/CVD entry summary data

On October 31, 2010, CBP introduced enhancements to ACE capabilities related to ESAR that provided new portal and EDI capabilities. The Post Summary Correction (PSC) capabilities of the A2.3.2.a release were delivered June 4, 2011. PSC allows trade participants to submit a correction via ABI for an existing type 01 and 03 ACE entry summary if the correction meets the PSC criteria. The PSC replaces the existing Post Entry Amendment (PEA) hardcopy process for ACE entry summaries. There is no limit to the number of corrections at the header and/or line level. An authorized ACE entry summary filer may submit a post summary correction for an ACE entry summary originally submitted by another ACE entry summary filer if authorized by the same importer of record. Benefits of the A2.3.2.a release deployed on October 31, 2010 and the PSC functionality delivered in June 4, 2011 include:

- A revised ACE Entry Summary Query for ABI filers
- Additional information in Entry Summary status notifications
- New and clearer reject codes when ACE entry summaries are rejected by an Import Specialist
- Elimination of paper corrections for ACE entry summaries, types 01 and 03

For more information on ESAR capabilities, see the “AD/CVD Cases and Messages” “Blanket Declaration Records,” “Receiving and Responding to CBP Forms” and “Post Summary Corrections User Guide” User Guides located under ACE Training and Reference Guides on CBP.gov/modernization.

On July 13, 2011, CBP introduced a link from the ACE Portal to the Importer Security Filing (ISF) Portal for importer, broker, carrier, and surety account types. Benefits include:

- Importers who file infrequently will be allowed to file and track 12 or fewer ISFs annually through the ISF Portal. They will also be able to query the status of their ISF by transaction number and bill of lading number
- Importers will have access to the progress reports that they previously received via email. These reports may be downloaded in a Portable Document Format (PDF) or Excel format, depending on the type of the report
- Progress reports will also be available for Filers and Sureties. Users will be able to download these reports in PDF and Excel formats



- Access to the ATS ISF Portal will be controlled by the Trade Account Owner (TAO). The TAO will also have the ability to grant Cross Account Access to the ATS ISF Portal

In April, 2012 CBP published a Federal Register Notice announcing a test that will allow participants to submit electronic images of specified CBP and PGA forms via the Document Image System.

In October, 2012 CBP deployed functionality that allows Remote Location Filing (RLF) for Antidumping/Countervailing Duty entries (entry type 03) filed in ACE.

Exports

In March, 2012 CBP began a pilot project to have export manifest filed via email into the Document Image System (DIS) in place of the physical paper documents being presented at the port. The initial phase of the pilot was conducted at eight ports under the Atlanta Field Office. In September 2012, the pilot was expanded to all ports and was opened to all carriers.

Near Term ACE Features

Many other features are planned for ACE and will become available in future phases. The following projects will be the focus of CBP's development efforts through 2013:

- Automated Export System (AES) Re-engineering: Migration of AES off the mainframe and creation of single automated export processing platform for all export manifest, commodity, export control and licensing, and export targeting transactions.
- Cargo Release - Automated Corrections/Deletions: Capability to accept (or deny) corrections and/or deletions to an entry sent by the trade community via EDI for Simplified Entries already on file with CBP.
- Partner Government Agency (PGA) Message Set: Capability to establish the first phase of two-way system to system communications between PGAs and CBP. The PGA message set introduces a well-defined, harmonized set of data to be collected electronically from international traders by CBP on behalf of the PGAs.
- Initial Entry Summary Edits: Foundation for the ability to process system "edits" or checks on the quality and accuracy of incoming entry summary data, so CBP can properly assess duties, taxes and fees.

Additional ACE Resources

For additional information about ACE or assistance in navigating through the Portal, several user guides are located under ACE Training and Reference Guides on



CBP.gov/. The URL for the user guides is:

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/trade/automated/modernization/ace_welcome/

Cargo Systems Messaging Service (CSMS)

The Cargo Systems Messaging Service is a subscription based, broadcast message system which provides CBP automated systems users with electronic updates via e-mail. For more information on the service and to sign up for the automatic updates go to:

http://apps.cbp.gov/csms/csms.asp?display_page=1

Web-Based Training

For additional assistance, take the web-based training (WBT) posted on CBP.gov.

The URL for the ACE Online Training Center is:

http://nemo.cbp.gov/ace_online

The screenshot shows the 'ACE Online' training center interface. It features a header with the ACE logo and 'ACE Online' text. Below the header, there are two columns of information. The left column contains introductory text about the ACE Online Training Center, including a note that it is available for a limited time and a link to the ACE portal. The right column is titled 'You can launch a course from the list below:' and lists various courses with their respective ratings in yellow circles. The courses listed are: ACE Initial Login (ACE), Periodic Payments (R3), e-Manifest: Trucks (R4), e-Manifesto: Carriages (R4), ACE Reports for the Trade Community (A), Enhanced ACE Accounts & Master Data (A1), Multi-Modal Manifest & ESAR Enhancements (A2), Forms, Declarations, & AD/CVD Cases (A2.3.1), Post Summary Corrections (A2.3.2), e-Manifest: Rail & Sea (M1), and e-Manifesto: Ferrocarril y Maritimo (M1).



For more information on ACE, send an e-mail to CBP.CBPCSPQ@dhs.gov. If you are a trade caller or if you are calling outside the United States, you can also contact the **Technology Service Desk at 1-866-530-4172.**