



Memorandum D3-1-3 Commercial Importation of Intoxicating Liquors

ISSN 2369-2391

Ottawa 2024

Updates to this D-memorandum

This memorandum has been revised to:

- (a) add definitions;
- (b) update wording to clarify policies;
- (c) remove the section on Sampling of Suspect Intoxicating Liquor; and
- (d) provide clarification on the sealing policy.

This memorandum outlines the procedures to be followed for the interprovincial and international transportation and release of intoxicating liquors.

For information related to non-commercial importations of intoxicating liquors by individuals, please see the [Memoranda D2 series, International Travel](#).

For information on provincial liquor mark-ups/fees for non-commercial importations, please contact the appropriate provincial liquor authority.

Definitions

1. The following definitions apply to this memorandum:

Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS)

(Régime de sanctions administratives pécuniaires (RSAP))

A system whereby the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) issues monetary penalties to commercial clients for violating the CBSA's trade and border legislation. The purpose of AMPS is to provide the Agency with a means to deter non-compliance by its clients and to ensure a consistent application of legislation and border regulation.

Bulk Goods

(Marchandises en vrac)

Goods that are loose or in mass, such that they are confined only by the permanent structures of the vessel, without intermediate containment or intermediate packaging.

Cargo Control Document (CCD)

(Document de contrôle de fret (DCF))

A manifest or other control document that acts as the record of a shipment entering, exiting or moving within Canada, e.g. air waybill, [A8A\(B\), In Bond - Cargo Control Document](#).

Courier
(Messagerie)

A commercial carrier that is engaged in scheduled international transportation of shipments of goods other than goods imported as mail.

Courier Low Value Shipment (CLVS)
(Expédition de faible valeur (EFV) par messagerie)

Goods being imported under the Courier Low Value Shipment (CLVS) program by an approved courier.

Customs Self-Assessment (CSA)
(Programme d'autocotisation des douanes (PAD))

A program designed to simplify import border requirements for low-risk, pre-approved importers, carriers and registered drivers.

Domestic In-transit (Highway and Rail modes only)
(Mouvement en transit domestique (modes routier et ferroviaire seulement))

The movement of goods from a point in Canada to another point in Canada through the United States, as well as the movement of goods from a point in the United States to another point in the United States through Canada. This movement is different from an "in-transit" movement (refer to definition below).

Freight Remaining on Board (FROB)
(Fret restant à bord (FRAB))

- (a) For marine: cargo on a conveyance that is not being discharged at a Canadian seaport, but remains on board the vessel for furtherance to its ultimate destination outside of Canada.
- (b) For air: cargo that is not being discharged at a Canadian airport but remains on board the aircraft for furtherance to its ultimate destination outside of Canada.

In-transit
(En transit)

The movement of foreign goods through Canadian territory from a point outside Canada to another foreign point. This movement is different from the domestic in-transit movement (refer to definition above).

General Information

2. The [Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act](#) outlines who may import, send, take or transport, or cause to be imported, sent, taken or transported, into any province from or out of any place within or outside Canada any intoxicating liquor.

3. The [Customs Act](#), the [Reporting of Imported Goods Regulations](#) and the [Transportation of Goods Regulations](#), establish the time, manner and who is required to send Advance Commercial Information (ACI) data pertaining to commercial cargo and conveyances entering, freight remaining on board (FROB) or moving in-transit through Canada.
4. As outlined in the [Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act](#):
 - (a) Liquor, including wine, considered intoxicating by provincial law may be imported only by a board, commission, officer, or governmental agency legally authorized to sell intoxicating liquor.
 - (b) Spirits imported for blending or flavouring with domestic spirits, or for packaging in Canada and entitled to specific tariff treatments, may be imported directly by a distiller.
 - (c) Beer imported for blending or flavouring with domestic beer may be imported directly by a brewer.
 - (d) Intoxicating liquor for sacramental or medicinal purposes or for manufacturing or commercial purposes other than for the manufacture or use thereof as a beverage, is not restricted to importation only by a board, commission, officer, or governmental agency legally authorized to sell intoxicating liquor.
5. Excise duty is imposed, levied, and collected under the [Excise Act](#) on beer manufactured or produced in Canada. Excise duty is imposed, levied, and collected under the [Excise Act, 2001](#) on all spirit and wine products manufactured or produced in Canada. For imported goods, a customs duty equivalent to an excise duty is levied under Sections 21.1, 21.2, and 21.3 of the [Customs Tariff](#).
6. The [Excise Act, 2001](#) requires an importer to have a particular excise licence to import and possess bulk and non-duty paid packaged spirits and wine. As well, bulk spirits and wine may only be transported by particular licensees or an alcohol registrant. For further information, refer to [Excise duties and technical information under the Excise Act, 2001](#).

Importing Intoxicating Liquors through the Mail

7. Only intoxicating liquors consigned to Provincial Liquor Control Boards or authorized agents, licensed distilleries and breweries can be sent through the mail stream. For further information, please consult the [Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act](#).

Wine

8. Importations of wine must comply with the [Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act](#). The invoice(s) must indicate the provincial or territorial liquor authority as the

importer of record and identify the winery as the consignee. A paper copy of the approved excise licence does not have to accompany the import documentation at the time of report or release. However, if requested by the CBSA, the client will have a maximum of six hours to provide a valid licence (issued by the Canada Revenue Agency, [Excise and Specialty Tax Directorate](#)).

9. In the manufacture of wine, grape juice concentrate becomes wine following the fermentation process. Grape juice concentrate with an alcoholic content of more than 0.5% is considered to be an intoxicating beverage and is therefore subject to the same importation regulations as those governing intoxicating liquors.

Federal Exemption

10. The provincial or territorial liquor authorities do not control importations of intoxicating liquor by federal departments or agencies for official use. Such shipments may be released upon completion of the necessary CBSA documentation and payment of applicable federal duties and taxes.

Shipments Reported but Not Released

11. Non-duty and non-tax paid intoxicating liquors that have been reported to the CBSA but have not been released must be transported by a CBSA bonded carrier. A border services officer may authorize the goods to be moved from the office of report under Section 19 of the [Customs Act](#), or if goods are carried in-transit, through Canada.
12. When the CBSA bonded carrier cannot make direct export in-transit through Canada, the goods may be re-manifested (on a new cargo control document) to an alternate CBSA bonded carrier at a licensed sufferance warehouse to complete the export.
13. Intoxicating liquors imported directly by a distiller must be released at the border or at a licensed sufferance warehouse before shipping to a distillery, as there are no provisions under Section 19 of the [Customs Act](#) for in-bond movements directly to a distillery.

Sealing Requirements

14. All conveyances, containers, or compartments must be sealed with CBSA seals when an alcohol shipment is moved to an inland destination for release, examination, or as part of a domestic in-transit movement. Conveyances, containers, or compartments must also be sealed for in-transit shipments of alcohol destined to a country other than the United States. Using company seals only is not permitted under any circumstances.

15. Customs Self-Assessment (CSA) carriers are not exempt from the sealing requirement. Their conveyances must be sealed with CBSA seals when transporting alcohol products.
16. Any transfer of alcohol from one carrier to another can take place only under CBSA supervision. The seal on the first vehicle must be broken and the second vehicle sealed under CBSA supervision.
17. CBSA seals must be applied by CBSA personnel only.

Customs Bonded or Sufferance Warehouses

18. Shipments of intoxicating liquors may be imported into Canada for storage, transfer, export, ships' stores, and entry into the Canadian market at a sufferance or customs bonded warehouse licensed under the [Customs Act](#) and the [Customs Tariff](#). As per [Memorandum D18-3-1, Reporting and Accounting of Excise Duties on Imported Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Wine and Spirits, and Release of Those Goods](#), imported packaged spirits and wine destined for the Canadian market may be entered into a customs bonded warehouse only if it is imported by an international airline for use on international flights. The imported packaged spirits and wine may also be supplied to domestic flights if they are fully duty and GST/HST paid.
19. The [Customs Bonded Warehouse Regulations](#) require the warehouse operator, as a pre-condition of licensing, to provide a copy of the Provincial/Territorial Liquor Board authorization to receive, transfer, or sell intoxicating liquor within the province or territory. Shipments received in a customs bonded warehouse are documented on a commercial accounting declaration (CAD), and on the corresponding ex-warehouse documents outlined in [Memorandum D17-1-10, Coding of Customs Accounting Documents](#).
20. Where goods intended for export are entered into a sufferance warehouse, outward reporting is required as outlined in [Memorandum D3-1-8, Cargo Export Movements](#). Outward reporting will acquit or cancel the inward waybill (cargo control document). This process applies to all modes of transportation.

Courier Shipments

21. Provincial and territorial liquor authorities may import commercial shipments of intoxicating liquor by courier through the commercial stream and must report and account for these goods using normal commercial processes.

Note: Commercial shipments of intoxicating liquors cannot be imported under the Courier Low Value Shipment (CLVS) Program as they do not qualify. For more information regarding the importation of intoxicating liquors for personal use under the Courier LVS Program, refer to [Memorandum D17-4-0, Courier Low Value Shipment Program](#).

Penalty Information

22. For more information on the administrative penalty system (AMPS), refer to [Memorandum D22-1-1, Administrative Monetary Penalty System](#). Information on AMPS penalties is also available on the [CBSA external website](#).
23. Other administrative sanctions, such as the revocation of program privileges and penalties of [Other Government Departments](#), may also be applicable.
24. Under Sections 36 and 37 of the [Customs Act](#), commercial importations of intoxicating liquors that are unclaimed, abandoned, or not removed from a sufferance or bonded warehouse within the prescribed time limits, are forfeited to the Crown.

Additional Information

25. For more information, within Canada and United States, call the Border Information Service at **1-800-461-9999**. From outside Canada call 204-983-3500 or 506-636-5064. Long distance charges will apply. Agents are available Monday to Friday (except holidays). TTY is also available within Canada and the United States: **1-866-335-3237**. Additional information can also be found on the [CBSA website](#).

References

Consult these resources for further information.

[D2 – International Travel series](#)

[D3-1-8, Cargo – Export Movements](#)

[D17-1-10, Accounting and Release Procedures](#)

[D17-4-0, Courier Low Value Shipment Program](#)

[D18-3-1, Reporting and Accounting of Excise Duties on Imported Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Wine and Spirits, and Release of Those Goods](#)

[D22-1-1, Administrative Monetary Penalty System](#)

Applicable legislation

[Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act](#)
[Customs Act](#)
[Customs Bonded Warehouse Regulations](#)
[Customs Tariff](#)
[Excise Act](#)
[Excise Act, 2001](#)
[Excise Tax Act](#)
[Reporting of Imported Goods Regulations](#)
[Transportation of Goods Regulations](#)

Superseded memoranda D

D3-1-3 dated May 25, 2017

Issuing office

Program and Policy Management Division
Commercial and Program Directorate
Commercial and Trade Branch

Contact Us

eManifest-Manifeste_electronique@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca