



INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Complaints Handling Procedures

March 2011

**This Instruction & Guideline refers to Practice Statement No:
PS2009/22 – Inspection and Examination of Sea Cargo**

Published date:	14 July 2011
Availability:	Internal and external
Subject:	Container and Cargo Examination Facilities (CEF) Complaint Handling
Purpose:	Describe the handling process for complaints relating to CEF activities. This instruction and guideline is for the use of Sea Cargo Improvement and CEF Managers.
Owner:	National Director Cargo
Category:	Operational
Contact:	Manager, Sea Cargo Improvement Canberra

Summary of main points

- Complaints relating to CEF operations are handled centrally in Sea Cargo Improvement section, Canberra.
- This process outlines steps to follow once a complaint is received, research and analysis undertaken, the referral process and process for recommending reimbursement.

This Instruction and Guideline applies to staff in:

- Container Examination Facilities in Brisbane, Fremantle, Melbourne and Sydney
- Cargo Examination Facilities in Adelaide, Darwin, Launceston, Newcastle, Townsville

The Quality Management system is applied in Cargo Examination facilities in Launceston, Newcastle, Townsville and Darwin although these sites are not required to be certified.

Introduction

Since 10 September 2007, all CEF related complaints are coordinated by Sea Cargo Improvement section, Cargo Business Improvement Branch, Canberra. This approach was agreed at the ISO Top Management meeting on 21 August 2007.

Instructions and Guidelines

Registration of Complaints

External client's are required to lodge all complaints or compliments with the Customs and Border Protection Complaints and Compliments Management unit (Compliments and Complaints).

Complaints are registered on the Customs and Border Protection Complaints and Compliments database and are allocated a case number. The case is then forwarded to the appropriate operational areas for a response within 15 working days.

If further information is requested to be supplied by the client, the 15 work day cycle will commence from date of receipt of that information. If a response cannot be provided within 15 working days, the client is to be informed when the reply can be expected.

If a complaint or compliment is sent directly to Sea Cargo Improvement, the complaint is to be referred to Complaints and Compliments Management unit for registration on Complaints and Compliments database and allocation of a case number.

Research

Sea Cargo Improvement is required to complete the initial system research within the first 48 hours of receipt of the complaint.

If the container is still active (i.e. at the CEF or under a border hold), the complaint is referred to the Customs Support and Information Centre (CI&SC) for response.

BCS CLASSIFICATION: TDFC_POLICY

FILE NUMBER: 2011/002945-01

If the complaint does not relate to Sea Cargo activities, the complaint will be referred back to Australian Complaints and Compliments for referral to another area.

Consultation with CEFs

Some complaints will require consultation with the relevant CEF in order to gather all the background information required to formulate a response.

In these instances the complaint and initial research should be forwarded to the CEF Manager with a request for further information. Complaints that may require CEF input include:

- allegations of damage to goods while at CEF
- allegations that goods have gone missing while at CEF
- lengthy delay moving goods from wharf to CEF
- lengthy delay at CEF
- delays in obtaining LCL cargo from a depot and its subsequent return to the depot
- CEF holds not lifted at time of container return and
- Other particularly complex cases.

CEF Managers will research the case, addressing the questions. CEF Managers will provide their recommendations on what the response to the complainant should contain.

Responses

If the complaint relates to CEF activities, Sea Cargo Improvement will draft response to the complainant based on the research and, where applicable, the views of the CEF Managers.

Once finalised, the response is emailed from the Sea Cargo Ops Complaints mailbox as a read only PDF file, with a cc to the Customs and Border Protection Complaints and Compliments Management Unit for their records. A copy is printed and placed on the complaint file and the Sea Cargo complaints access database is updated.

Review of a decision

If the client is dissatisfied by the initial response, a review of the decision may be undertaken by a more senior officer on the request of the client. The review cannot be conducted by the person who completed the initial investigation.

Reimbursement

In cases where reimbursement of charges is to be recommended the complainant must provide evidence of fees charged or damage costs incurred. A Statement of Facts Minute is required.

All claims must be handled in accordance with Chief Executive Instructions CEI 2.7 Claims against the Commonwealth.

Statistics

CEF Managers are provided with monthly status on complaints and compliments cases received within CEF Monthly Reports.

Corrective Action

A bi-annual report is produced that analyses the trend of complaints together with remedial suggestions and presented to the Cargo Executives.

Related Policies and References

Other Information, Instructions & Guidelines

- CEF Damages Policy I&G
- Customs and Border Protection Complaints and Compliments Management System Guidelines
- Chief Executive Instructions – 2.7 Claims against the Commonwealth
- Australian Customs Cargo Advice 09/04 – Sea Cargo Inspection and Examination Arrangements
- Australian Customs Cargo Advice 09/05 – Sea Cargo Status – Service Levels

Consultation

Internal

The following internal stakeholders have been consulted in the development of these Instructions and Guidelines:

- Sea Cargo Improvement
- CEF Managers
- Complaints and Compliments Management Unit

Approval

Approved on	12 July 2011	
By	National Director Cargo Raelene Vivian	
Review Period	Guideline to be reviewed biennially by Sea Cargo Improvement Section.	