

Container Security Initiative: just the facts

US Customs and Border Protection, Washington, D.C., USA

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, US Customs Service, now US Customs and Border Protection, began developing antiterrorism programmes to help secure the United States. Within months of these attacks, US Customs Service created the Container Security Initiative (CSI). The primary purpose of CSI is to protect the global trading system and the trade lanes between CSI ports and the US. Under the CSI programme, a team of officers is deployed to work with host nation counterparts to target all containers that pose a potential threat. Announced in January 2002, CSI was first implemented in the ports shipping the greatest volume of containers to the United States. Today, customs administrations all over the world have committed to joining CSI and are at various stages of implementation. CSI is now operational at ports in North, Central, and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and throughout Asia.

In October 2007, the US Customs and Border Protection released a fact sheet to better explain what the CSI is and how it works. We feature an abridged version here. Please visit www.cbp.gov for more details.

How does CSI work?

CSI addresses the threat to border security and global trade that is posed by potential terrorist use of a maritime container to deliver a weapon. CSI uses a security regime to ensure all containers that pose a potential risk for terrorism are identified and inspected at foreign ports before they are placed on vessels destined for the United States. Through CSI, CBP officials work with host customs administrations to establish security criteria for identifying high-risk containers. Those administrations use non-intrusive inspection (NII) and radiation detection technology to screen high-risk containers before they are shipped to US ports.

What are CSI's core elements?

The three core elements of CSI are:

- Identify high-risk containers. CBP uses automated targeting tools to identify containers that pose a potential risk for terrorism, based on advance information and strategic intelligence.
- Prescreen and evaluate containers before they are shipped. Containers are screened as early in the supply chain as possible, generally at the port of departure.
- Use technology to prescreen high-risk containers to ensure that screening can be done rapidly without slowing down the movement of trade. This technology includes large-scale X-ray and gamma ray machines and radiation detection devices.

What are CSI's future goals?

Currently, approximately 90 per cent of all transatlantic and transpacific cargo imported into the United States is subjected to prescreening. CSI continues to expand to strategic locations around the world. The World Customs Organization (WCO), the European Union (EU), and the G8 support CSI expansion and have adopted resolutions implementing CSI security measures introduced at ports throughout the world.

Does the US offer reciprocity with CSI participating countries?

Yes. CSI, a reciprocal programme, offers its participant countries the opportunity to send their customs officers to major US ports to target ocean-going, containerised cargo being exported to their countries. Likewise, CBP shares information on a bilateral basis

with its CSI partners. Japan and Canada currently station their customs personnel in some US ports as part of the CSI programme.

Why is containerised shipping a critical component of global trade?

Each year, 108 million cargo containers are transported among seaports around the world, constituting the most critical component of global trade. In fiscal year 2004, more than 9.6 million maritime containers arrived at United States seaports, an average of 26,000 a day. Almost 90 per cent of the world's manufactured goods move by container, much of it stacked many stories high on huge transport ships.

All trading nations depend on containerised shipping for the transportation of manufactured goods. About 40 per cent of all incoming trade to the United States arrives by ship, and most of that is in sea containers. Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and Singapore, are even more dependent on sea container traffic.

58 CSI ports are currently operational.



NII equipment is necessary in order to meet the objective of quickly screening containers without disrupting the flow of legitimate trade.

Why is it necessary to send US officers to foreign ports to enhance security?

Information sharing between the US and other Customs Services enhances the ability of both services to identify all containers that pose a potential threat. By working together, we jointly achieve far greater security for maritime shipping than if we worked independently.

What benefits are there for any foreign ports that sign up?

CSI is a deterrent to terrorist organisations that may seek to target any foreign port. This initiative provides a significant measure of security for the participating port as well as the United States. CSI also provides better security for the global trading system as a whole. If terrorists were to carry out an attack on a seaport using a cargo container, the maritime trading system would likely grind to a halt until seaport security is improved. Those seaports participating in the CSI handle containerised cargo far sooner than other ports that haven't taken steps to enhance security.

Will focusing primarily on the world's largest seaports place smaller seaports at an economic disadvantage?

CSI is not limited to the world's largest seaports. In June 2002, the World Customs Organization unanimously passed a resolution that will enable ports in all 161 of the member nations to begin to develop programmes along the CSI model. On April 22, 2004, the European Union and the Department of Homeland Security signed an agreement that calls for the prompt expansion of CSI through the European Community.

What are the eligibility requirements for the expansion phase of CSI?

To be eligible for the expansion phase of CSI, candidate nation must commit to the following minimum standards:

1. The Customs Administration must be able to inspect cargo originating, transiting, exiting, or being transhipped through a

country. Non-intrusive Inspection (NII) equipment (including equipment with gamma or X-ray imaging capabilities) and radiation detection equipment must be available and utilised for conducting such inspections. This equipment is necessary in order to meet the objective of quickly screening containers without disrupting the flow of legitimate trade.

2. The seaport must have regular, direct, and substantial container traffic to ports in the United States.
3. Commit to establishing a risk management system to identify potentially high-risk containers, and automating that system. This system should include a mechanism for validating threat assessments and targeting decisions and identifying best practices.
4. Commit to sharing critical data, intelligence, and risk management information with the United States Customs and Border Protection in order to do collaborative targeting, and developing an automated mechanism for these exchanges.
5. Conduct a thorough port assessment to ascertain vulnerable links in a port's infrastructure and commit to resolving those vulnerabilities.
6. Commit to maintaining integrity programmes to prevent lapses in employee integrity and to identify and combat breaches in integrity.

Does the addition of US officers cause delays in the flow of goods through ports that participate in CSI, reducing their competitiveness?

No. In fact, it should make the movement of low risk cargo containers even more efficient. Cargo typically sits on the pier for several days waiting to be exported. CSI targets containers and screens them before they depart. This way we use the waiting time at the port of export to do our work, so when the container arrives in the US it can be immediately released. The containers we target are going to be searched. It's a question of where and when, not if.



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Who pays for screening and, if necessary, the unloading of containers?

The host country determines who pays for the direct cost of screening and unloading containers. In the US, however, the importer pays the costs associated with moving, inspecting, and unloading containers.

How many US officers are assigned to a particular port?

The needs of each port are addressed individually. Typically we begin by deploying a small number of officers, then assess the programme and make adjustments as necessary.

Does a CSI port have an economic advantage?

One real advantage would be in the event of a terrorist attack using a cargo container. CSI ports would experience the least disruption because they have a security system, CSI, in place. In the event of a terrorist attack, the CSI ports would have a competitive advantage. They would be rewarded for their foresight.

Can CSI be considered a form of trade barrier?

No. The ultimate trade barrier would be a terrorist attack that would halt trade. Imagine the ridicule any responsible port or government official will face, if a terrorist attack was to occur and we had done nothing to protect our maritime infrastructure. CSI is merely a programme that screens containers before they depart for US ports of entry rather than after they arrive on US shores.

Do host countries incur additional costs for participating in CSI?

We don't believe this initiative entails substantial new costs to the host nations. CBP pays to deploy officers and computers in foreign seaports and many host nations already have screening and detection technology in place. To the extent that additional detector or IT equipment is needed to implement CSI, the investment is well worth it considering that it is insurance – CSI protects the port and the national economy of a CSI host country.

Are officers stationed in foreign ports armed? Do they have arrest powers?

No, Officers at these ports are not armed nor do they have arrest powers. The officers work jointly with the host country authorities to screen US-bound containers. They operate in accordance with the guidelines of the host country and the terms of the declaration of principles to implement CSI.

Do CBP officers stationed at the foreign ports screen all cargo or just cargo bound for the United States?

CBP officers deployed in foreign countries target with the host country only cargo containers destined for or transiting through the United States. Only those US-bound containers identified as potential threats are examined either by NII or physical exams. Host country officials conduct the examination and CBP officers observe the security screening.

Does pre-screened US-bound sea cargo get expedited processing through CBP upon arrival to the United States?

Yes. If a shipment has already been jointly examined by US and the host country's customs officials, that is one less shipment that CBP officers will have to worry about at a US port. It allows us to focus more of our attention on high-risk shipments that have not been prescreened. We are always testing new technology, such as tamper-evident seals, that we hope to place on containers that have been pre-screened overseas to assist in this process. Naturally, CBP ultimately reserves the right to inspect any cargo container that arrives in the United States, whether it has been pre-screened or not. However, this is only done if additional information becomes available during transit, or the integrity of a seal is found to be compromised.

Does CBP provide X-ray or gamma ray detection technology to help scan containers?

CSI implementation requires the host country to have NII equipment. Many of the countries already have large container screening machines. In fact, some ports already have extremely sophisticated detection technology in operation.

Are model laws and regulations available to guide the implementation of CSI in a host country?

When discussing the implementation of CSI, a nation depends upon its native laws and customs. Our response has been to draft separate and unique declarations with each participating port to accommodate differences. In addition, as CSI is a cooperative effort, CBP can assist foreign governments in reviewing existing laws and crafting new legislation to support implementation if they so desire.

Has CSI affect the way trade is conducted, e.g. is there be additional paperwork that is needed prior to export and before it clears CBP?

Through collaborative targeting and analysis, the trade has become more secure in each commercial port. For exports destined for or transiting through the US, they must be compliant with the US 24-hour rule, which requires 14 data elements to be reported 24 hours prior to loading aboard a vessel destined for the US.

Does it take more time to export a product with CSI?

No. The targeting and examination are accomplished during the lag time between the cargo's arrival at the foreign port and it's time of being loaded onto a ship for departure to a US port.

How is trade affected if a port joins/does not join?

The advantages of inspecting containers at the earliest possible point in the supply chain is of benefit to a CSI port. The integrity of the shipment is better ensured by using pre-arrival information and non-intrusive inspection equipment at foreign port locations, thus expediting their clearance upon arrival in the United States.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). CBP combined the inspectional workforces and broad border authorities of US Customs, US Immigration, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the entire US Border Patrol.

CBP includes more than 41,000 employees to manage, control and protect the Nation's borders, at and between the official ports of entry.

ENQUIRIES

US Customs and Border Protection

Contact: Media Services

Washington, D.C.

USA

Tel: +1 202 344 1780

Website: www.cbp.gov