



October 27, 2021

Import Document Assessment Delays - Australia

Dear Valued Customer,

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment have released advice that there are delays in processing lodgements due to high volumes, including an unprecedented number of late lodgements.

Please see the below exert:

“Who does this notice affect?”

Industry who submit documentation to the Department for import assessment via the Cargo Online Lodgement System (COLS) or other Departmental approved systems.

What has changed?

The Department continues to experience high volumes of entry lodgements, including those that are late. The combination of these two issues is resulting in assessment delays, and ultimately the provision of directions. The Department has implemented a new queuing process in its COLS system to identify and prioritise entries. We anticipate that these delays will continue while we continue to experience unprecedented numbers of late lodgements, and while we settle arrangements to separate and prioritise late lodgements from those that are on time.

The unprecedented demand is a result of:

- The continuance of late lodgement practices with approximately 60% of consignments still being lodged late, failing to submit documentation between 5-7 days prior to a vessel's arrival for sea freight and 24 hours for airfreight to avoid delays
 - Following recent changes to COLS/CWMS advised in [IAN 211-2021](#) we are seeing that a significant number of sea freight entries are still being lodged in 12 hours or less of vessel ETA. This results in an unmanageable volume of urgent assessments which cannot be turned around within one day or less
- An increase in document lodgements in COLS by 26 % from the same period in 2020 and 63% from 2019
- Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) workload continues to increase in record volumes up 42% from September 2020 to September 2021
- COVID-19 continues to impact volumes with lockdowns in NSW and VIC necessitating an increase in on-line shopping

What are we doing to manage workload demand?

The Department has implemented a range of strategies to assist with the management of workload. These include:

- System enhancements to COLS and CWMS:
 - The task allocation enhancement in CWMS enables tasks to be automatically allocated on the percentage of tasks in each priority rating. This replaces a manual process that was required as a result of the high volumes of sea freight late lodgements
 - The COLS/CWMS system now has the capacity to identify tariff codes to 10 digits. A tariff code review for all commodities in progress to ensure the appropriate priority rating and importance factors is applied to consignments in the system
- The implementation of novel automation into our Min Docs assessment and SAC screening tasks expected to go live in late November. This will reduce manual, resource intensive functions and speed up the assessment process
- Harmonising the treatment record requirements for onshore treatments to align with offshore and export requirements
- Allocation of reasonable amounts of overtime for staff to process lodgements outside core business hours

How can clients assist?

The ability to meet service standards continues to be significantly impacted by LRNs being lodged late and/or with inaccurate information. This diverts assessment resources which ultimately impacts the broader industry members. As such, industry members can assist to ensure timely turnaround for themselves and broader members by:

- Ensuring that documents are lodged well in advance of arrival of the goods
- Ensure that documents and other information is lodged completely and accurately and in line with the Department's [minimum documentary requirements](#) and import conditions
- Do not provide unnecessary documents, as this can result in longer assessment times as we work through sometimes 50+ documents to find the 4 or 5 required by the minimum documents policy
- Ensure any specific additional information is included in the 'additional information' field in COLS
- Regardless of the expected assessment outcome, nominate a valid Approved Arrangement (AA) inspection location, preferably with the AA registration number and name, to avoid additional processing delays
- Please do not repeatedly call or email the Department checking on the status of a lodgement for document assessment – this compounds the delays as it removes resources from document assessment to responding to queries”

To view the full article, please click [here](#).

Thank you for being our Valued Customer. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your C.H. Robinson commercial representative for further information.

Sincerely,
C.H. Robinson.

Our information is compiled from a number of sources that to the best of our knowledge are accurate and correct. It is always the intent of our company to present accurate information. C.H. Robinson accepts no liability or responsibility for the information published herein.

