

ACE Letter of Intent Instructions

November, 2023



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection



Letter of Intent Instructions

August 22, 2016

General Instructions (applies to all letters of intent except AES):

In order to participate in one of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) automated systems; CBP requires a letter of intent (LOI) requesting access to a specific system as indicated by one of the sections below. If you already have an assigned Client Representative for any CBP system, please contact that individual for assistance. Otherwise, please send questions regarding the LOI process to letterofintent@cbp.dhs.gov.

The LOI should be submitted to letterofintent@cbp.dhs.gov on company letterhead from the requesting participant and include the following information:

1. Type of Trade Participant: Importer, Broker, Carrier, Software Vendor/Service Center or other.
2. Company Name
3. Business Address
4. Business Contact in the U.S. (name, phone number, and email address)
5. Technical Contact in the U.S. (if different from Business Contact)
6. List any other CBP automated systems (including the ACE Portal) in which your company is currently operational or testing. For each system, provide your company's account identifier (SCAC, ICAO, ABI filer code, ACE ID, etc.) and the name of your assigned Client Representative.
7. Software Vendor/Service Center/Port Authority information
 - a. Name of company and filer code or other CBP identifier
 - b. Contact name, phone number, and email address
 - c. OR Indicate self-programming if applicable
8. Data Communications method (for service center or VAN, provide name and contact information).
 - a. VPN/MQ over public internet
 - b. MPLS VPN
 - c. Service Center
 - d. VAN
9. Provide the additional details listed in the section below pertaining to the specific CBP system for which you are requesting access.

AES Clients: Complete online letter of intent found at this webpage: <http://www.cbp.gov/trade/aes>

Note: While the process to be able to submit data to our production system could take anywhere from a few days to well over six months, depending on each client's needs and circumstances, we highly suggest planning for approximately one month for minor changes or additions to the system and a minimum of three months for new participants to complete testing. Weekend and off-hour changes are generally not accommodated.

Interconnection Security Agreement

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Information Systems Security Policy requires all participants that transmit electronic data directly to CBP's automated systems to file a signed Interconnection Security Agreement (ISA). If you are using a connection already established through a Service Center or VAN, an ISA may not be required. For additional information and required forms see

<http://www.cbp.gov/trade/automated/getting-started/transmitting-data-cbp-electronic-data-interchange-edi>

Automated Broker Interface (ABI)

The Automated Broker Interface (ABI) permits qualified participants to electronically file required import data with CBP.

Please select the appropriate trade participant type and provide the listed information:

Importers

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that you are an “importer” and include one, all, or any combination from the below applications for which you will participate.
 - o Entry/Entry Summary
 - o Drawback
 - o In-bond
 - o Importer Security Filing (ISF)
 - o Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) – Also see FTZ Operator section below for additional requirements.
- If you intend to file entries, you must include your filer code on the LOI. A filer code must be obtained through the local CBP port office. They will guide you through the necessary steps to obtain a filer code.
- If you are not filing entries, and do not already have a filer code assigned, a Client Representative will assign one to you.

Brokers

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that your company is a “broker”
- The LOI must include your filer code. This is obtained through the local CBP port’s Broker Management Office. They will guide you through the necessary steps to obtain a filer code.

Surety

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that your company is a “surety”
- Please provide your filer code, if applicable. If a filer code is not already assigned to your company, a Client Representative will assign one.

Importer Security Filing (ISF) Filers (for those filing only ISF)

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that your company is an “ISF-only filer”
- Please provide your filer code, if applicable. If a filer code is not already assigned to your company, a Client Representative will assign one.

In-bond Filers (for those filing only In-bond entries and arrivals, aka QP)

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that your company is an “In-bond-only filer”
- Please provide your filer code, if applicable. If a filer code is not already assigned to your company, a Client Representative will assign one.

Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) Operator

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that your company is a “FTZ Operator”
- Include your filer code if one has been issued to your company.
- Include the following FTZ information
 - o FTZ Board Approval Date
 - o GPZ ID and subzone site or GP site ID
 - o CBP Activation Date
 - o Type 4 FTZ Bond Number
 - o Facility Type 2 (FTZ) FIRMS Code
- The local CBP port office must have completed the inspection of the FTZ.
- Verify with the local CBP port office that your FTZ information has been activated in ACE and your Type 4 bond is associated to the FIRMS Code
- All background checks must be completed.
- Indicate if you will transmit QP/WP, QX/WX, or any type 06 FTZ Entry Summaries
- If you intend to file entries, you must include your filer code on the LOI. A filer code must be obtained through the local CBP port office. They will guide you through the necessary steps to obtain a filer code.
- If you are not filing entries, and do not already have a filer code assigned, a Client Representative will assign one to you.

Software Vendor/Service Center

- State that you wish to participate in “ABI”
- Indicate that your company is “developing new software” and will participate as a “Software Vendor” and/or as a “Service Center”
- If you do not already have a filer code assigned, a Client Representative will assign one to you.

Other

- If you intend to participate in ABI for other than the above mentioned options, please contact us at letterofintent@cbp.dhs.gov.

ACE eManifest Rail and Sea

ACE eManifest: Rail and Sea capability enables rail and ocean carriers to submit electronic manifests to CBP prior to a train arrival at a United States border crossing or a vessel arrival at a United States seaport. Port authorities and service centers can file and receive both manifest and cargo data for multiple carriers calling at multiple ports.

To obtain a Type 3 International Carrier Bond, you must contact an approved surety that writes customs bonds on CBP Form 301. You can obtain a list of approved sureties on Treasury's Financial Management Service's website – the list is identified as Circular 570. Contact (202) 874-6850 for further information. Only one bond is required and will cover operations at all ports of entry. Once obtained, the bond can be filed with CBP at the following email address: cbp.bondquestions@dhs.gov.

Please select the appropriate trade participant type and provide the listed information:

Master Vessel Operating Common Carrier (MVOCC)

- State that you wish to participate in "Ocean Manifest"
- Indicate that your company is a "MVOCC"
- Provide your Type 3 International Carrier bond number
- Provide your 4-letter SCAC. Ocean carriers transporting commercial cargo subject to electronic manifest requirements are required to maintain a Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) issued by the National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA). See the NMFTA website at <https://secure.nmfta.org/New/Introduction.aspx>.
- Indicate if you will participate in the Paperless Master In-Bond Program. If you plan to participate, provide your Type 2 Custodial bond number.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Non Vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC)

- State that you wish to participate in "Ocean Manifest"
- Indicate that your company is a "NVOCC"
- Provide your Type 3 International Carrier bond number
- Provide your Federal Maritime Commission bond number
- Provide your 4-letter SCAC. Ocean carriers transporting commercial cargo subject to electronic manifest requirements are required to maintain a Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) issued by the National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA). See the NMFTA website at <https://secure.nmfta.org/New/Introduction.aspx>.
- Indicate if you will participate in the Paperless Master In-Bond Program. If you plan to participate, provide your Type 2 Custodial bond number.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Secondary Notify Party (SNP)

- State that you wish to participate in “Ocean Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is a “Secondary Notify Party”
- Your LOI must contain either a SCAC or FIRMS code.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Port Authority

- State that you wish to participate in “Ocean Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is a “Port Authority”
- Request in your LOI that a 4 character code be assigned by CBP for test purposes.
- Your LOI must contain the port name(s) and port code(s) which are within the jurisdiction of the Port Authority.
- A Port Authority must submit a letter of intent to CBP from each client for which they plan to transmit or receive manifest data. The letter of intent to participate must be written on the client’s letterhead.
Note – A LOI submitted by an agent on behalf of a carrier is not acceptable.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Service Center

- State that you wish to participate in “Ocean Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is “developing new software” and will participate as a “Service Center”
- Request in your LOI that a 4 character code be assigned by CBP for test purposes.
- A Service Center must submit a letter of intent to CBP from each client for which they plan to transmit and receive manifest data. The letter of intent to participate must be written on the client’s letterhead.
Note – A LOI submitted by an agent on behalf of a carrier is not acceptable.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Software Vendor

- State that you wish to participate in “Ocean Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is “developing new software” and will participate as a “Software Vendor”
- Request in your LOI that a 4 character code be assigned by CBP for test purposes.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Terminal Operator

- State that you wish to participate in “Ocean Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is a “Terminal Operator”
- Request in your LOI that a 4 character code be assigned by CBP for test purposes.
- Your company must be an active (within the past year) U.S. Marine or Port Terminal Operator with an active Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) Marine Terminal Operator (MTO) number and you must have a business office staffed in the United States.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal

Rail Carrier

- State that you wish to participate in “Rail Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is a “Rail Carrier”
- Provide your Type 3 International Carrier bond number
- Provide your 4-letter SCAC. Rail carriers transporting commercial cargo subject to electronic manifest requirements are required to maintain a Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) issued by the National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA). See the NMFTA website at <https://secure.nmfta.org/New/Introduction.aspx> .
- Indicate if you will participate in the Paperless Master In-Bond Program. If you plan to participate, provide your Type 2 Custodial bond number.

Importer Security Filing (ISF) Filers (for those filing only ISF)

- State that you wish to participate in “Ocean Manifest”
- Indicate that your company is an “ISF-only filer”
- Provide your SCAC or request that a 4 character code be assigned by CBP for test purposes.
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 or
 - o CAMIR Intermodal
- *NOTE: If you intend to file only ISF transactions, doing so via ABI may be a better option for your company. To discuss this option, please contact us at letterofintent@cbp.dhs.gov.*

Other

- If you intend to participate in eManifest: Rail and Ocean for other than the above mentioned options, please contact us at letterofintent@cbp.dhs.gov.

Air Manifest

The Air Automated Manifest System (AMS) permits qualified participants to electronically file air manifest data with CBP.

To obtain a Type 3 International Carrier Bond, you must contact an approved surety that writes customs bonds on CBP Form 301. Only one bond is required and will cover operations at all ports of entry. Once obtained, the bond can be filed with CBP at the following email address: bondquestions@cbp.dhs.gov.

Note: CBP Air AMS application does not support Secondary Notify Party. Deconsolidator/Container Freight Station Operators and ABI filer-forwarder participants must have the required CBP Bond whether or not they provide consolidated air shipment information to CBP Air AMS.

Please select the appropriate trade participant type and provide the listed information:

Air Carrier

- State that you wish to participate in “Air AMS”
- Indicate that your company is an “Air Carrier”
- Provide your Type 3 International Carrier bond number
- Provide your International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) 3-letter designator code
 - o To obtain an ICAO code, contact the government transport authority in the air carrier country of registry.
- Provide the International Air Transport Association (IATA) 2-character airline designator and IATA 3-numeric cargo prefix (Air Waybill document issuer code). If the air carrier does not meet IATA requirements for issuance of a numeric cargo prefix code, please provide a copy of the IATA notification to ofo-manifestbranch@cbp.dhs.gov. For reporting of required air cargo information, the 3-letter ICAO airline designator will be used as AWB Prefix in lieu of numeric IATA cargo prefix.
- List all U.S. airports (name and IATA 3-alpha airport code), located within a CBP Port of Entry, of flights landing with foreign cargo. (Includes: Air cargo arriving from and departing for a foreign country on the same through flight and cargo that is unladen from the arriving aircraft and entered, in bond, for exportation, or for transportation and exportation are subject to the advance electronic information filing requirement).

Deconsolidator/Container Freight Station (CFS) Operator

- State that you wish to participate in “Air AMS”
- Indicate that your company is a “Deconsolidator” or a “Container Freight Station (CFS) Operator”
- Provide your Type 2 Custodial bond number
- All CFS operators must obtain a Type 3 International Carrier Bond to participate in ACE Air Manifest
- Provide the CBP facility FIRMS code.

Freight Forwarder

- Only a Customs Broker actively filing entries (identified by its ABI filer code, may provide advance consolidated (house) air shipment information.
- State that you wish to participate in “Air AMS”
- Indicate that your company is a “Freight Forwarder”
- Provide your Type 1 Importer bond number
- An Air AMS freight forwarder may be nominated by an Air AMS participant to transmit data for a specific waybill.

Communications Network/Van

- State that you wish to participate in “Air AMS”
- Indicate that your company is a “VAN”
- The SITA or ARINC network users must provide the station address designated to originate and receive Air AMS message traffic between their cargo system and CBP.
- Air carrier, Deconsolidator, or ABI filer-forwarder clients of a Communications Network/VAN will be assigned a unique originating address for each Communications Network/VAN to which they are associated, other than ARINC or SITA.

Software Vendor/Service Center

- State that you wish to participate in “Air AMS”
- Indicate that your company is “developing new software” and will participate as a “Software Vendor” and/or as a “Service Center”
- Air carrier, Deconsolidator, or ABI-filer-forwarder clients of a Software Vendor/Service Center will be assigned a unique originating address for each Software Vendor/Service Center to which they are associated, other than ARINC or SITA.
- Each client of a Software Vendor or Service Center must submit their own LOI indicating participation in Air AMS, according to the type of participant (Air Carrier, Deconsolidator/CFS Operator, or Freight Forwarder) filing air shipment information, as described under each participant type.
- A Service Center by itself cannot designate that their company is authorized to transmit/receive Air AMS shipment information.

Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS)

The Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) program requires the submission of advanced air cargo information on shipments arriving in the United States from a foreign location. Any cargo requiring the creation of an AWB destined to the United States mandates an ACAS filing. As part of the program, participating carriers submit a subset of required pre-arrival air cargo data to CBP at the earliest point practicable and prior to loading the cargo onto aircraft. **Air Carriers are required to file**, but others are eligible as well. This includes Indirect Air Carriers (Freight Forwarders), ABI Filers (Importers and Brokers), Container Freight Stations (CFS)/De-consolidators and Express Consignment Carrier Facility. **ACAS is separate CBP program that is independent of ACE Air Manifest.** Therefore, a separate ACAS LOI is required.

Air Carrier

- State that you wish to participate in “ACAS”
- Indicate that your company is an “Air Carrier”
- Provide your type 3 International Carrier bond number or Importer of Record (IOR) number associated with your bond.
- Indicate your Communication method: Service Center, a VAN like SITA or ARINC, or your own MQ connection.

- If it is a Service Center - provide the name, technical contact information (telephone and email) and have them request your connection.
 - If it is SITA or ARINC – provide the name of the software, technical contact information (telephone and email) and simply state which one.
 - If it is your own MQ Connection – provide the technical contact information (telephone and email) and your queue information.
- State the Originator codes you plan to use in Certification (CERT) and Production (PROD) environments.
- If using a Service Center – coordinate with them.
 - If using SITA or ARINC – ACAS specific codes should be created, however some carriers use their AIR AMS Originator code.*
 - If using your own MQ Connection – ACAS specific codes should be created, however some carriers use their AIR AMS Originator code.*
 - *Note – the same originator code can be used for both CERT and PROD, however, your system will need to parse the transactional data upon return from CBP to determine its original source. For new Originator Codes, follow the CBP guidelines set forth the by Client Representative Division.
- Provide a 24 X 7 point of contact as defined within the ACAS documentation. This is the party that will work with our NTC staff to resolve holds and that has physical access to the cargo. Contact Information includes Name, Telephone number and Email Address. **(As per 19 CFR 122.48b(c)(3)(iv))**

Other Entities *(Indirect Air Carriers (Freight Forwarders), ABI Filers (Importers and Brokers), Container Freight Stations (CFS)/De-consolidators and Express Consignment Carrier Facilities, etc., Foreign Indirect Air Carriers. For purposes of this section, “foreign indirect air carrier” (FIAC) is defined as any person, not a citizen of the United States, who undertakes indirectly to engage in the air transportation of property. A FIAC may volunteer to be an ACAS filer and accept responsibility for the submission of accurate and timely ACAS filings, as well as for taking the necessary action to address any referrals and Do-Not-Load (DNL) instructions when applicable.*

Same as above, except...

- Provide your type 1, 2 or 3 US Customs bond number or Importer of Record (IOR) number associated with your bond.

ACE eManifest Truck

The ACE e-Manifest: Truck capability enables carriers to submit electronic truck manifests to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) prior to a truck's arrival at a United States land border crossing.

Please select the appropriate trade participant type and provide the listed information:

Motor Carrier

- State that you wish to participate in “ACE e-Manifest: Truck”
- State that your company is a “motor carrier”
- Provide your 4-letter SCAC. Motor carriers transporting commercial cargo subject to electronic manifest requirements are required to maintain a Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) issued by the National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA). See the NMFTA website at <https://secure.nmfta.org/New/Introduction.aspx> .
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 (preferred) or
 - o EDIFACT (also indicate whether you will require MEDPID account update capability in addition to standard manifest transactions.)

Software Vendor / Service Center

- State that you wish to participate in “ACE e-Manifest: Truck”
- State that your company is “developing new software” and will participate as a “Software Vendor” and/or as a “Service Center”
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 (preferred) or
 - o EDIFACT (also indicate whether you will require MEDPID account update capability in addition to standard manifest transactions.)

EDI Manifest Filing Service

- State that you wish to participate in “ACE e-Manifest: Truck”
- State that your company is using software developed by a third party to participate as an “EDI Manifest Filing Service”
- Indicate the EDI data syntax you will use:
 - o ANSI X.12 (preferred) or
 - o EDIFACT (also indicate whether you will require MEDPID account update capability in addition to standard manifest transactions.)