

Advanced Qualified Unlading Approval Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Advanced Qualified Unlading Approval?

A: It allows low risk Sea Carriers in the C-TPAT program to formally unlade their cargo prior to CBP meeting the vessel. Please note that requests must be made for each arrival, there are no blanket approvals.

Note: Advance unlading will not be approved for vessels and cargo that endanger the national security and/or national economic security of the United States. If a vessel is considered to be high-risk for agricultural quarantine issues, advanced unlading privileges will not be granted. Examples of high risk agricultural quarantine issues include, but are not limited to: vessels arriving from a high risk country during high risk season for Asian gypsy moth (AGM) - if AGM inspection is required, fumigation required upon arrival for Khapra beetle infestation, garbage violation vessels, etc.

Q: Who can participate in the advanced unlading expansion?

A: Sea carriers who are in the C-TPAT program who have been validated and are in good standing at the time of unlading.

Q: Which ports participated in the pilot?

A: The following ports participated in the pilot: Port Everglades, FL, New Orleans, Baltimore and Oakland.

Q: Will other ports allow advanced unlading?

A: Yes. On September 15, 2016, the ports of Miami, FL, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Newark (which includes the Port of New York/New Jersey), Savannah and Seattle/Tacoma will participate; and then on December 15, 2016, the following additional ports will be added: Charleston, Houston, Jacksonville, Honolulu, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Wilmington (DE), Wilmington (NC), Boston, Philadelphia and San Juan.

Q: What are the procedures an arriving vessel must follow to request advanced unlading privileges from CBP in the U.S. port of arrival?

A: The following procedures must be followed to request advanced unlading:

1. To request advanced unlading, vessel agents must complete and submit an Application-Permit-Special-License-Unlading-Overtime Services (CBP Form 3171) with the Notice of Arrival for every unlading 24 hours prior to arrival.
2. Section 9, Box "5" must state "Advanced Qualified Unlading Approval requested"
3. CBP will review the request and provide notification back to the Vessel Agent letting them know if their request for advanced unlading have been approved or denied.

Q: Must the Terminal Operator be in C-TPAT to receive this benefit?

A: Yes. The Terminal Operator and the Sea Carrier must both be validated and in good standing to receive advanced unloading benefits. Additionally, containers must be delivered directly to a terminal operator.

Q: Why should C-TPAT sea carriers participate in the advanced unloading process?

A: It is a voluntary clearance for C-TPAT sea carriers who can potentially save time and money by taking part in the advanced unloading process. It allows CBP to lessen the congestion of seaport facilities making it easier to align CBP resources towards high risk threats and facilitate low risk carriers.

Q: What are the benefits of participating in the Advanced Qualified Unloading Approval?

A: The main benefit is that the vessel can commence cargo operations immediately upon arrival rather than having to wait for the vessel to be boarded and cleared by CBP officers. This reduces the amount of time the vessel is in standby after arriving at berth and expedites the cargo-unloading process to help ensure that shipments are delivered on time to their final destinations.

Q: If I am suspended from the C-TPAT program will I still be able to unlade in advance under the new benefit?

A: No. A company MUST be in good standing in the C-TPAT program at the time of arrival/unloading to participate and receive approval.