

# **Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC)**

## **Government Issue Paper: Trade Modernization Subcommittee E-Commerce Working Group**

August 2017



**U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection**

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**Background:**

- In early 2017, the Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) formed an E-Commerce Working Group (ECOM) under the Trade Modernization Subcommittee. The working group consists of companies representing various industries, sectors, and small business interests.
- The goal of the group is to identify operational challenges centered on changing business models, the increased volume of small packages, complexities for small businesses, and evolving enforcement issues and to find workable solutions to these issues, creating a streamlined path forward for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), businesses, consumers, and the public to educate and aid in the facilitation of international trade.
- In March 2017, a section 321 team was put together under the e-commerce working group in order to identify key section 321 challenges. The group met for a roundtable March 21-22, 2017, and is currently working on a series of recommendations to be presented during a public COAC meeting later in the year.
- In September, 2016, the Office of Trade formed the E-Commerce & Small Business Branch within the IPR & E-Commerce Division.
- The E-Commerce and Small Business Branch drafted an e-commerce strategic plan that outlines education, engagement, and enforcement steps to take to coordinate and collaborate with international colleagues, partner government agencies, the trade community, and the public.
- The E-Commerce and Small Business Branch participates in eight working groups on e-commerce and leads a safety & security e-commerce sub-working group at the World Customs Organization.
- The Office of Trade E-Commerce and Small Business Branch completed its work to implement Executive Order 13785, which instructs CBP to, within 90 days, develop and implement a strategy and plan for enabling interdiction and disposal, including through methods other than seizure, of inadmissible goods.

**Current Status:**

- The E-Commerce and Small Business Branch, in coordination with the executive order implementation team, has developed an E-Commerce strategic plan. CBP's is looking to make a version available to the public which outlines coordination, education and collaboration efforts with the trade community and the public regarding e-commerce.
- CBP is working to update its E-Commerce webpage on CBP.GOV.
- CBP continues to be committed to working with the COAC, small businesses, stakeholders, and private industry to better identify and comprehend challenges that CBP, consumers, and businesses face. CBP continues to be engaged with stakeholders, private industry, small businesses, and the public to better understand key e-commerce challenges.
- CBP is also actively engaged at the World Customs Organization (WCO) on the topic of e-commerce. The U.S. is actively participating in WCO working groups focused on e-commerce. CBP co-chairs the safety & security working group along with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FIATA).
  - Since March, the WCO e-commerce working groups developed a recommendations paper, with assistance from the U.S. and other customs administrations, and identified co-leads for the Policy Commission meeting that met in July 2017. The paper outlines various next steps, challenges, possible projects to complete over the next 12 months.
  - The U.S. has participated in various meetings at the WCO since March, including the Policy Commission and The Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) meetings, and led an e-commerce workshop discussion during PTC meetings.

**Next Steps:**

- The COAC is working toward developing and presenting a series of recommendations on e-commerce and section 321 challenges at a COAC meeting later in the year.
- CBP is working to finalize the E-Commerce Strategic Plan.
- CBP is working to develop a public toolkit for new importers.

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