

CUSTOMS DIRECTIVE

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CUSTOMS DIRECTIVE NO. 3550-058

OLD NUMBER: 3550-058

DATE: SEPTEMBER 10, 1991

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS ENTRY NUMBERING

1. **PURPOSE**

To revise Customs entry numbering procedure.

2. **BACKGROUND**

On October 1, 1986 a new entry numbering procedure was implemented by Customs Directive 3500-10 to provide maximum flexibility to brokers and importers in assigning and controlling their own entry numbers. Key to the new procedure was the assignment of a 3 character national filer code to all brokers and significant volume importers. The filer code, in conjunction with a seven digit entry number and a check digit, allowed importations to be uniquely identified. An entry number was not to be used more than once nationally.

In order to ensure uniqueness of entry numbers and provide a mechanism for Customs to periodically move older entries out of active files, entry numbers were initially restricted to begin with either a 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. The restriction was to be in effect for five years at which point filers would change to using starting digits of 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9. The concept was that during any five year period entry numbers would begin either with 0 through 4 or with 5 through 9, thus providing nearly 5 million entry numbers for each filer in the 5-year period. After each ten year period, entries over five years old would be moved to inactive files and the applicable entry numbers would be recycled. It has been nearly five years since the new entry number procedure was implemented and Customs has analyzed the impact of switching from the 0-4 entry number series to the 5-9 series. Major efforts would be required both for Customs and for entry filers in order to proceed with such a transition. The vast majority of filers have used only a small portion of their available 5 million entry numbers. Such a switch would be an unnecessary burden for most entry filers. The few filers who have nearly or completely depleted their initial 5 million numbers in the first five years would likely not have sufficient numbers in the next five year period even if we went forward with the original plan to restrict the leading digit of entry numbers. Finally, the removal from Customs active files after five years and recycling of the entry numbers may not be possible for entries subject to drawback, court action, penalties, antidumping, etc. Adherence to the original restrictions presents problems both to Customs and the trade.

3. ACTION

- a. Effective October 1, 1991, entry numbers may be assigned starting with any digit from 0 through 9. Responsibility for uniqueness will remain with the filers. No entry number may be duplicated.
- b. Should a filer deplete their available entry numbers, they may apply to the Director of the Office of Automated Commercial Systems for a new filer code. Customs will expect filers to be prudent in their entry number assignments and will require evidence of the need for an additional filer code. A request for an additional filer code should explain why the new filer code is needed, how entry number assignments are being controlled and what unusual circumstances, if any, contributed to the depletion of the available ten million entry numbers.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all Regional Commissioners, District, Area, and Port Directors to assure compliance with this Directive.

5. EFFECTIVE DATE

These instructions are effective October 1, 1991. The Directive will continue to be in effect until revoked.

6. SUPERSEDED

Customs Directive 3500-10 dated June 19, 1986 is hereby superseded.

Assistant Commissioner
Information Management

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- R-01 Regional Commissioners
- F-01 District/Area Directors
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