

## Clarification on ACE System Outages

This communication is being issued in response to comments received from trade community member pointing to a perceived increase in recent Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) system outages.

*For purposes of this communication, “system outage” is defined as any period where a specific ACE environment is unavailable to the trade community. This includes both planned weekly maintenance outages and unscheduled outages. There are two ACE environments available to the trade – Production and Certification (CERT). Outages to the ACE Certification environment ONLY impact parties testing software.*

### **Data Review**

Based on CBP’s system availability measurements, there were fewer hours of unscheduled outages in 2012 as compared to 2011. In addition, a comparison of the data between January–February 2013 and January–February 2012 shows a significant decline in the number of outages for these first two months of 2013 compared to 2012.

CBP is constantly working to collect meaningful performance data. In order to help improve ACE’s availability, CBP requests that the Trade user community report any specific ACE system performance issues and concerns to [ACE.Support@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:ACE.Support@cbp.dhs.gov) or 1-866-530-4172.

### **Process Review**

CBP conducts two regularly scheduled system outages and communicates each of these to the trade community via the Cargo Systems Messaging Service (CSMS):

- To maximize capabilities for users, CBP performs weekly upgrades to the ACE Production environment. In order to do these upgrades, the system is taken off-line for a limited time on Saturday evenings when usage is historically low.
- CBP conducts weekly upgrades to the ACE Certification (CERT) data environment on Wednesday mornings beginning at 6:00 a.m. Again, these upgrades ONLY impact trade software developers who use the environment to test their software, and do NOT impact users transmitting data to the ACE Production environment.

CSMS messages related to outages are issued for various reasons. For planned outages (regular weekly maintenance and certification outages), CBP includes information on items that are being deployed when applicable and any known information on extended outage times. In the event of an unscheduled outage, CBP places the highest priority on resolution and also communicates the issue, impact, duration and resolution via CSMS. When applicable, this message will also include a notification to use down time procedures.

### **Communication Going Forward**

As stated above, CBP conducts CERT upgrades on Wednesday mornings. Previously, these upgrades were performed on weekends. CBP also began sending CSMS messages to alert trade users of all scheduled outages. This practice may be creating the impression that more system outages are occurring than in the past. Therefore, CBP has changed the subject line of CSMS messages announcing planned outages to reinforce the fact that the outages are routine, planned events and not unplanned system downtime.