

# Import Specialist

U.S. Customs and Border Protection



Top Photo: Import Specialist and CBP Officer inspecting imported cargo. Bottom Photo: Import Specialist verifying tariff classification.

## Protecting Our Commerce

The mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) requires attracting men and women of good character, integrity and high motivation. Serving our country as an Import Specialist means combining specialized commercial and legal expertise with the discipline of working in a fast paced law enforcement environment. The primary mission includes detecting and preventing violations of U.S. customs laws and import/export regulations, and curtailing the entry of illegal drugs and other prohibited goods. Other specific missions are to help prevent terrorists, terrorist weapons and weapon components from entering into the United States. *Not everyone can do this job.* Our team of highly trained professionals enjoys one of the highest reputations in federal law enforcement.

## A Day on the Job

The profession of Import Specialist has a great deal of variety in a typical work day. You may be checking cargo manifests on your computer in the morning and at noon be checking physical cargo samples at dockside or in a terminal warehouse. That afternoon you may be meeting with or talking by telephone to shippers and freight forwarders. You could be offering advice to a U.S. business person who wants to export goods, or explaining to a foreign shipper why his goods have been seized. The next day you may be testifying in court as an expert witness. All these activities require a sharp mind and up-to-date knowledge.

As an Import Specialist, you could interact with a wide range of professions: international shippers and freight forwarders, domestic and foreign manufacturers, ship captains, corporate lawyers, small business owners and law enforcement personnel from CBP and other U.S. Federal agencies. Often, your contacts may be at a very senior level. Occasionally, you may be given short-term assignments overseas as part of a multi-agency team. Responsibilities could include investigating foreign manufacturing facilities for violations involving child labor, product safety or other areas of concern to the U.S.

CBP Import Specialists perform their mission at more than 300 ports of entry located at airports, seaports and land borders throughout the United States and along the Canadian and Mexican borders.

Activities include:

- Mastering a particular commodity of import/export goods, such as textiles, industrial machinery or pharmaceuticals
- Joining a team of other Import Specialists in your particular field who track and inspect goods going in and out of the country at a land border crossing, seaport or airport
- Inspecting cargo manifests and documents in an office and also making physical inspections in cargo holds and terminal facilities
- Maintaining your discipline by constantly updating your knowledge, both in your commodity area and in changing U.S. import/export laws and regulations
- Working side by side with law enforcement officers and legal professionals
- Having the authority to issue penalties and fines, to seize prohibited or suspect cargo and to participate in negotiations and legal prosecution



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

### An Uncommon Job, Uncommon Characteristics

You must meet these minimum qualifications to successfully maintain consideration for employment:

- U.S. Citizen – with residency requirement
- Possess a bachelor's degree in an appropriate area, such as economics, business or accounting; three years of general work experience which exhibits your ability to meet and deal with people and to apply a body of facts; or a combination of education and experience
- Work equally well in independent situations and as part of a team
- Able to successfully complete a thorough background investigation and drug test

### A Rewarding Career Protecting America's Border

Generous benefits and pay include the following:

- U.S. Federal health insurance, retirement and 401(k) (Thrift Savings Plan)
- Life insurance – Long term care insurance – Extensive leave days
- Non-competitive promotion potential to GS-11

**U.S. Customs and Border Protection is an Equal Opportunity Employer**



Top Photo: Import Specialists reviewing shipping documents. Bottom Photo: Historic Customhouse in Charleston, South Carolina.

