Pre Arrival Processing System (PAPS)

The Pre-Arrival Processing System (**PAPS**) is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) border cargo release mechanism that utilizes barcode technology to expedite the release of commercial shipments while still processing each shipment through the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), the Automated Commercial Shipment (ACS), and the Automated Targeting System (ATS).

Each PAPS shipment requires a unique barcode label, which the carrier attaches to the invoice and the truck manifest. The barcode consists of the U.S. Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) and Pro-Bill number. This information is then faxed/emailed ahead to the Customs broker in the U.S., who prepares an entry in ACS. Upon arrival at the border, the CBP Officer processes the barcode, which automatically retrieves the entry information from ACS. If no examination is required, the Officer then releases the truck from the primary booth, reducing the carrier's wait time and easing congestion at the U.S. border.

PAPS is managed on a port-by-port basis and is available through most U.S. ports of entry. The carrier must be approved by CBP to participate in PAPS. The process begins when the designated carrier or importer/exporter requests a PAPS release by forwarding the required documentation in advance of the physical arrival of the goods. A specially formatted pro-bill bar code (as seen below) must be attached to this documentation.
It is important to note that PAPS does not relieve importers or carriers of any obligations imposed on them by CBP. Failure to supply any required customs information may negate the benefits offered by this system.
Shipments subject to other government agencies like Food and Drug Administration, transportation bond (T&E), immediate transportation, Sec.321 ($200 or less), Instruments of International Traffic, and shipments participating in Line Release cannot be released under PAPS.

- Under the CBP advanced notification requirements, **prior notice** of all shipments will be required before the carrier's arrival at the border.
- **PAPS** is an alternative release process to line release.
- **PAPS** allows the broker time to review documents to assist in accuracy and compliance.
- **PAPS** allows importers to be prepared for advance notification requirements.
- **PAPS** is a means to transmit shipment information prior to the carrier's arrival at the border.

This program does not diminish the obligation of the importer and carrier to provide accurate, complete and timely information to their customs broker in advance of arrival of the cargo.

How to use **PAPS**

Creating a **PAPS** barcode: Some carriers develop their own and others use commercial printers. Remember, the SCAC, Number, and Check Digit should be continuous without spaces or dashes.

Bar Code Label Design

2 7/8" wide by 1 1/4" high

SCAC and PRO must be less than 16 characters

Medium density code 3 of 9

To ensure barcode compatibility with Customs technology, a sample of your **PAPS** designated barcode must be tested at the ports of entry where **PAPS** entries will be processed. This action must be completed prior to the processing of **PAPS** transactions.

Inform your Customs Broker of your intent to use **PAPS** and acquire their broker/filer code. Also, establish fax procedures to transmit entry information, which will includes, invoice, SCAC, and pro bill number and an agreement on the amount of advanced notice needed for submitting ABI entry information.

Important Note: PAPS is for U.S. bound commercial vehicles and is NOT INTERCHANGEABLE with the Canadian PARS System which is designed for Canadian bound commercial traffic.
For additional information regarding PAPS, please send an email to elmer.johnson@dhs.gov.