

# Centers of Excellence and Expertise

The Centers of Excellence and Expertise (Centers) operate as organizational structures for post-release trade activities. Centers process all post-release trade functions in a virtual environment and from a national perspective within an industry sector. Such trade functions and activities include, but are not limited to, decisions and determinations in the following areas:

- Entry/Entry Summary processing and other special entry procedures.
- Decisions and activities regarding packing, stamping, country of origin marking, rules of origin, trademarks, copyrights, bonds, classification, appraisalment, and the sampling of merchandise.
- Processing of liquidations, protests, petitions, recordkeeping, and some financial matters.

Center employees consist of CBP trade staff located across the nation at the Ports of Entry and are responsible for coordinating the facilitation of legitimate trade while serving as an industry focused resource for the entire trade community.

## CBP has 10 Centers strategically managed out of the following Field Offices:

- Agriculture and Prepared Products; Miami
- Apparel, Footwear and Textiles; San Francisco
- Automotive & Aerospace; Detroit
- Base Metals; Chicago
- Consumer Products and Mass Merchandising; Atlanta
- Electronics; Los Angeles
- Industrial and Manufacturing Materials; Buffalo
- Machinery; Laredo
- Petroleum, Natural Gas & Minerals; Houston
- Pharmaceuticals, Health & Chemicals; New York



By focusing on industry-specific issues, CBP is able to efficiently facilitate trade, reduce transaction costs, increase compliance with applicable import laws, improve enforcement efforts, and increase uniformity of treatment at the Ports of Entry.

### Agriculture & Prepared Products

Agriculture, aquaculture, live animals, animal products, vegetable products, animal/vegetable fats & oils, prepared foods, beverages, spirits, tobacco

### Apparel, Footwear, and Textiles

Textiles, wearing apparel, textile mill products, headwear, footwear

### Automotive & Aerospace

Automotive, aerospace, trains, ships, vessels, tractors (incl. for agriculture use), transportation equipment

### Base Metals

Steel, steel mill products, base metals, ferrous and non-ferrous metals

### Consumer Products and Mass Merchandising

Soaps, cosmetics, luggage, handbags, household items, tableware, jewelry, watches, musical instruments, sporting goods, furniture, mattresses, toys, festive articles, arms, optical & photography equipment, art & antiques

### Electronics

Integrated circuits, information technology, computers, consumer electronics

### Industrial & Manufacturing Materials

Leather, wood, paper, stone, plasters, cement, plastics, polymers, rubber, precious stones, precious metals

### Machinery

Tools, production equipment, machine tools, electrical machinery

### Pharmaceuticals, Health & Chemicals

Pharmaceuticals, medical & surgical devices & related equipment, chemicals

### Petroleum, Natural Gas & Minerals

Minerals, petroleum, petroleum products

# What are the benefits of Center processing?

- ❖ **Centers help eliminate duplicative work from compliant importers.**
  - ✓ Fewer cargo delays
  - ✓ Reduced costs
  - ✓ Greater predictability
- ❖ **Centers serve as a centralized source for trade inquiries.**
  - ✓ A streamlined inquiry process for resolving issues
  - ✓ Greater uniformity and transparency for the trade
- ❖ **Centers serve as experts in their field, collaborating with key industry sectors.**
  - ✓ An industry-focused resource for both the trade and CBP
  - ✓ Greater understanding of industry issues
  - ✓ Proactive learning about new products and business processes

## Will shipments be processed differently?

You will not need to change where you import because the Centers operate in a virtual environment, while also providing support at the Ports of Entry. The process flow for entry and entry summary will not change. CBP processing for post-release aspects of shipments will simply be redirected from the Ports of Entry to the appropriate industry Center.



For example, prior to Centers, providing uniform decisions required a tremendous level of coordination among the Ports of Entry. An importer that brings in cargo through 10 ports of entry would have to submit 10 protests if they discovered an issue. There was no guarantee that the importer would receive 10 identical decisions.

By centralizing the process, one protest can cover all the transactions and be processed by the Center, thereby the importer receives one response.

## Which Center(s) will process my imports?

Generally, placement in a Center is based on the importer's associated business practices within an industry and the Center associated with the HTSUS tariff classification of the predominant number of goods imported.

While the Centers are industry focused, they are also account based. This means that once an importer has been placed in a Center, the assigned Center will process the post-release trade activity for all imports regardless of the tariff classification of the merchandise imported.

**For more information** on the Centers, please visit the Centers of Excellence and Expertise information page on CBP.gov at <http://www.cbp.gov/trade/centers-excellence-and-expertise-information>.



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection