



**MARITIME EXCHANGE**  
for the Delaware River and Bay

**ALERT**

**March 20, 2020**

TO: Maritime Exchange Members

The CBO Office of Field Operations, Office of Trade, and Trade Support leadership hosted a second conference call on March 19, 2020 to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on seaport operations. Discussion items pertinent to Delaware River ports included the following:

- The most important message to convey is that CBP is not placing any new restrictions on cargo or undertaking any additional cargo screenings. Social media is rampant with false information, and even some mainstream press are reporting incorrectly. The best source for information is [cbp.gov](http://cbp.gov).
- New restrictions for non-essential travel across the U.S.-Canada border will go into effect this weekend. This does not include cargo movements; truck drivers and rail crew will be allowed entry to both countries. Northern border passenger traffic is already down significantly; truck movements have remained relatively constant.
- CBP has instructed field offices to be flexible and not be overly proscriptive. However, they are also given authority to use their discretion.
  - Maritime Exchange note: In at least one northern-border port, it appears CBP officers have denied access to truck traffic. CBP encourages stakeholders to report incidences of extraordinary scrutiny, but only if it appears systemic. That is, if one officer wants additional cargo screening or denies entry, try to resolve it at the local level before escalating to headquarters, which is standard procedure in our port already. As always, members are welcome to contact the Exchange to report anomalies, and we will canvass other members to determine the scope before initiating contact with CBP. When reporting, CBP needs specifics (e.g., date, place, officer name, description of activity) to effectively research the situation.
- We can expect similar travel restrictions at the southern border in the near future.
- The March 20, 2020 Federal Register should include a notice defining travel that is considered essential. [Note: Today's issue did not include such notice.]
- CBP operations remain status quo at all land and sea border ports; no reductions in service hours at this time.
- CBP is starting to see an uptick in its employees testing positive for COVID-19,

though the numbers are still low. Some of the contact tracing has led to the need to quarantine additional employees. But CBP is not yet at the point where it needs to look at scaling back or redeploying personnel.

- CBP does not conduct crew health screenings, whether for a driver at the border or ships' crews.
- CBP does not involve itself in local or port-specific decisions. The example raised by a caller cited movement of seafarers and port workers where "shelter-in-place" orders are in effect.
- There is no plan to expand the number of airports designated to handle passengers arriving from outside the U.S. CBP did not answer when asked whether the number would be decreased.
- CBP appreciates receiving recommendations from the trade community outlining ways to streamline processing and asks for additional suggestions.
  - While CBP is allowing delay of duty payment on a case-by case basis, it continues to research how it might apply this on a more comprehensive basis.

The Exchange received the following notice regarding bond extensions separately:

Due to the operational impacts that COVID-19 is having on the Trade community, CBP is granting a 10-day extension for the termination and replacement of bonds found to be insufficient and for which notices were issued with a due date of March 21, 2020. The insufficient bond should be scheduled for termination by March 31, 2020, with a termination date no later than April 15, 2020.

CBP is operating under normal procedures and is able to complete processing and reviews timely. As a result, the April bond sufficiency reviews and notices will not be postponed at this time.

CBP will continue to monitor the situation daily and make additional extensions if deemed necessary.

If you have questions regarding this notice or bond policy, please contact the Office of Trade, Commercial Operations, Revenue and Entry (CORE) Division at [otentrysummary@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:otentrysummary@cbp.dhs.gov).

If you have concerns about your ability to comply by the March 31, 2020 deadline and require assistance, please reach out directly to the Office of Finance, Revenue Division at [bondquestions@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:bondquestions@cbp.dhs.gov).

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