

## **Customs and Tariff Bureau - Japan**

**19 May 2020**

### **Introduction of On-line induction training by the Customs Training Institute (CTI) – WCO Regional Training Centre (RTC)**

The Japan Customs conducts on-line induction training for new recruits.

The Japan Customs has three main missions: namely, realizing a safe and secure society; collecting duties and taxes appropriately and in a fair manner; and further facilitating legitimate trade and travel. Besides, we are responsible for a wide range of undertakings. As our missions and responsibilities are intertwined and they are getting more complicated than ever, the Japan Customs provides various kinds of training programs, which are layered and designed according to the level of the personal skills, including the induction training for newly recruited Customs officials. Thanks to the broadly recognized Customs functions and its responsibilities in addressing such prominent national challenges as proper clearance of rapidly increasing in-bound passengers and counter-terrorism, as well as high-level political buy-in thereof, the number of newly recruited Customs officials has been increasing accordingly in recent years. There is an imperative needs for these new recruits to study the functions undertaken by the Customs and the powers granted in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, as well as theories and techniques relating to its missions. In this regard, the Japan Customs Training Institute (CTI), develops a comprehensive curriculums including practicum to be provided by the CTI lecturers, as well as academic classes provided by other experts.

The Japan Customs planned to commence the afore-mentioned induction training for the new recruits in April 2020 at the CTI in Kashiwa, Japan. However, due to the spread of the COVID-19 infection in the country, the CTI has altered its way of training from conventional classroom format at the CTI to the small group on-the-job training (OJT) at the respective workplaces, which were combined with home-based online training through the delivery of a series of recorded lectures with a view to assuring health of both trainees and lecturers by following the government's "stay home" guidance. For this purpose, the subjects of the on-line lectures were selected only to the fundamental ones and the period of home-based training was reduced to minimal but sufficient.

Given that the conduct of home-based on-line induction training is the first attempt in Japan Customs, the CTI has made various detailed arrangements and coordination with the Customs and Tariff Bureau (CTB) of the Ministry of Finance and the respective regional customs, especially in order to make sure that these new recruits are familiarized with the on-line training programs and its modality. A mechanism for taking care of their questions on the delivered lectures was also established. The home-based on-line training was arranged in the following manner, among other things:

- The CTI prepared a detailed handbook for home-based on-line training, such as the step-by-step log-in method, the training schedule and the information security instructions, and distributed it to all trainees;
- Trainees are supposed to read through the textbooks distributed beforehand, and view the recorded lectures on their own PCs, tablets, or smartphones in accordance with the designated training schedule;
- At the beginning of the on-line training, the CTI circulated guidance which reminds trainees of the high value and importance of this induction training for the respective trainees prior to the assignment to the frontline posts;
- The program consists of essential subjects for the Customs officials, including the National Public Service Act, Tax Laws, the Customs Laws and operational procedures related to basic customs procedures such as Customs clearance, surveillance and control, commodity classification, rules of origin, and so on;
- Syllabus for the respective on-line training were circulated with a view to assuring that the trainees duly understands the aims and purpose of the respective subjects;
- Notices and additional information, such as changes to the schedule, are properly communicated to all trainees for smooth operation;
- The CTI monitors viewing status of all trainees through the system and in case of no-viewing, the CTI contacts the trainees in question and follows them up as appropriate;
- Each trainee are required to submit a daily report through the system at the end of the daily program;
- Trainees are free to ask the questions to the lecturers by email at any given time;
- Lecturers conducts mini-tests at the last of each lecture as appropriate to assure if they understands the topics of the day accordingly; and
- Wrap-up examinations are conducted after the delivery of the whole recorded lectures on the respective subjects as well.

Regardless of the above, the CTI has encountered some challenges in the course of

arranging the home-based on-line training. For example, while almost all trainees have own smartphones, they do not necessarily have own PCs or tablets which are the most appropriate for the on-line training purpose. In addition, the data transmission capacity depends on the individual trainees' contracts and varies from one to another. The CTI called for the trainees to make necessary technical solutions for this critical and limited time of the training. CTI lectures managed to minimize the data size of the recorded lectures as well.

While we are not still at the stage to evaluate the effect of the on-line induction training or compare it with that of the conventional group training at classrooms, the CTI will make every effort to manage the current unprecedented challenges and continue to meet various needs and expectations from the CTB of the Ministry of Finance and each regional customs to complete indispensable induction training and raise knowledgeable Customs officials.

Please feel free to contact us at [cti@mof.go.jp](mailto:cti@mof.go.jp) if you have any questions/comments.