

Road Cargo System (ROCARS) (Hong Kong China)

1. Description of initiative

Background

In order to keep abreast with global, regional and national developments in moving towards electronic customs clearance and enable the industry stakeholders to submit electronic advance cargo information to Customs, Hong Kong Customs (HKC), with support from the government, developed a system, namely, "Road Cargo System" (ROCARS), for customs clearance of road cargoes at all LBCPs. The ROCARS was officially launched on 17 May 2010 and became mandatory on 17 November 2011.

Objectives

The ROCARS aims to provide a seamless system for the movement and customs clearance of road cargoes for the purposes of trade facilitation and adequate risk profiling of the cargo consignment based on electronic advance cargo information.

Legal Requirements

Under the Import and Export (Electronic Cargo Information) Regulation, Chapter 60L of the Hong Kong Laws, a shipper or freight forwarder is required to provide a pre-defined set of cargo information to HKC electronically through ROCARS before the cargo consignment enters or leaves Hong Kong, China in a truck. All users of ROCARS must register with HKC before they can submit the relevant cargo information in ROCARS.

Description of the Practice

A shipper or a freight forwarder acting as a shipper is obliged to submit a pre-defined set of cargo information to HKC through ROCARS 14 days in advance or at least 30 minutes before the cargo consignment being imported from or exported to China by truck. As an acknowledgement after successful submission of cargo information, ROCARS returns a "Customs Cargo Reference Number" (CCRN) for the cargo consignment to the shipper who should then pass it together with the cargo description to the relevant truck driver. No less than 30 minutes before the truck arriving at a LBCP, the truck driver should do the "bundling" through ROCARS (via the Internet or by phone) by providing the CCRN and his vehicle's registration number to HKC. The ROCARS will then direct a time slot for the truck driver to cross the boundary.

Under ROCARS, officials of HKC can conduct risk profiling on every cargo consignment in advance for determining whether a truck needs to be attended for inspection. When the cross-boundary trucks arrive at the LBCPs, they are only required to stop at one kiosk for immigration and customs clearance. With the introduction of one-stop clearance process, the clearance time is significantly reduced from 60 seconds to 20 seconds. All cross-boundary trucks¹, except those selected for inspection, enjoy seamless customs and immigration clearance at the land boundary under the ROCARS.

¹ The average daily flow of goods vehicle at LBCPs in 2012 is 27,458.

Customs-Business Partnerships

HKC has established a Joint Liaison Group with the representatives of shippers, freight forwarders and truck drivers for exchanging operational views and comments on the ROCARS. Moreover, HKC has also launched an extensive publicity programme and established outreach teams to assist the industry stakeholders to get used to the ROCARS. A website (www.rocars.gov.hk) has also been established to help the public to better understand the arrangement and benefits of the new system.

2. Impact of initiative

Benefits

- Allow Customs officers to conduct risk assessment on land cargo consignments based on the electronic advance cargo information
- Provide seamless single kiosk clearance at the land boundary to speedup cross-boundary road traffic
- Facilitate the introduction of one-stop customs clearance for inter-modal transshipment cargoes (for instance, land-to-air transshipment cargoes may normally be subject to customs clearance at either the land border control point (LBCP) or the airport, instead of having to be inspected at both control points.)
- Reuse the cargo information submitted to ROCARS for import/export customs declaration which can enhance data accuracy and save users' effort and time of inputting the common data in the trade declaration submission

3. Relevant government agencies

- Immigration

4. Relevant private sector parties and industry groups

Logistics Industry, e.g. shippers/freight forwarders, truck drivers, agents, etc

5. Actions included in the initiatives/practices

- Enforcement coordination