

Customs and Tariff Bureau - Japan
30 March 2020

Customs clearance procedures relating to countermeasures to the COVID-19

1. Customs clearance procedures on relief goods, etc.

Customs clearance has been prioritized for relief goods relating to countermeasures to the COVID-19 and for goods such as water and fuel that require an urgent clearance to maintain the lifeline.

Customs duties and consumption taxes are exempted for the importation of abovementioned goods with the submission of simplified declaration form that enables declarants not to submit the certificate for duty exemption for donated goods, etc. (The form can be found at https://www.customs.go.jp/news/news/form_kyuen.pdf)

Relief goods relating to countermeasures to the COVID-19 can be exported with a simplified declaration format.

2. Flexibility in customs procedures

Since it is expected that importers/exporters and Customs brokers telework as a countermeasure to the COVID-19, flexible measures for import/export procedures have been adopted as follows:

(1) Customs declaration at convenient Customs offices

If it is difficult to lodge Customs declaration to designated Customs office due to the COVID-19, importers/exporters and Customs brokers can lodge import/export declarations to Customs offices which are more convenient to them, based on a prior consultation with Customs.

(2) Relaxation of the requirement of seal

With regard to certain documents on which seals by importers/exporters and Customs brokers are required for import/export declarations or for the submission of such documents to Customs after import/export permission, if it is difficult to seal such documents due to the COVID-19, the requirement of seal is exempted.

(3) Relaxation of the requirement of original copies

With regard to certain documents whose original copies are required to be submitted to Customs at the time of import/export declaration, if it is difficult to submit them due to the COVID-19, the original copies can be submitted by electric means. (N.B. The original copies need to be submitted to Customs by the date designated by Customs. Customs designates the date by taking into account situations of importers/exporters.)

With regard to certain documents whose original copies are required to be submitted to Customs within three days from the day of import/export permission, if it is difficult to submit them due to the COVID-19, the original copies can be submitted to Customs by the date designated by Customs. Customs designates the date by taking into account situations of importers/exporters.

(4) Teleworking of Customs brokers

Offer (consultation) to Customs brokers to start teleworking has been flexibly accepted. Japan Customs permit teleworking to customs brokers flexibly.

(5) Others

- Flexibility in the term for the submission of certificate of origin, etc.
- Flexibility in the lodgment of financial security to extend the term for duty payment.

Web-link to relevant information

- Japan Customs (Japanese only)
https://www.customs.go.jp/news/news/20200304_index.htm
- The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage_00032.html