

## ***“...Protecting America’s vital interests is a never ending mission”***

Since European explores first set foot on what is now American soil, foreign infectious diseases and dangerous agricultural threats have silently crept into our homeland, invading our communities and causing incalculable devastation and destruction.

Case in point, in the past eight years over forty million ash trees have been destroyed across our northern states, primarily in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The culprit? A ½ inch long exotic beetle known as the Emerald Ash Borer. This tiny, yet lethal insect, a native of Russia, entered the U.S. through Detroit, Mi in stocks of ash wood used for securing cargo in ships. The estimated cost of treating, removing and replacing the ash tree is expected to exceed 10 billion dollars.

Other, more perceptible threats endanger our livelihoods every day. For example, in 2009, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents seized more than 1.4 million pounds of narcotics, and 36,400 weapons, while United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials confiscated 1.5 million prohibited meat, plants and agricultural pests at U.S. ports of entry.

As a reader, I’m sure you find these statistics alarming, but you may also be wondering, “What does this have to do with the United States Transportation Command?” Answer is, USTRANSCOM is the DoD Executive Agent for U.S. Customs and Border Protection Programs and we’re entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring DoD passengers, baggage, cargo and government sponsored personal property re-entering the U.S. from abroad are free of prohibited pests, infestations and unlawful contraband.



USTRANSCOM implements these responsibilities through a wide variety of programs, initiatives, programs and written guidance.

### **DoD Customs and Agriculture Pre-Clearance Program**

TCJ5/4-P coordinates with geographical combatant commanders to establish “pre-clearance” operations in overseas areas. Pre-Clearance simply means DoD cargo, passengers and baggage have been inspected and certified for U.S. entry prior to departing the overseas location. This is possible because U.S. military personnel, trained and certified by CBP and USDA officers to serve as “Customs and Border Clearance Agents” are inspecting and certifying that passengers and materials meet all entry requirements. This precept is a “win-win” as it expedites the re-entry of troops and cargo transported by USTRANSCOM aircraft and vessels while reducing backlogs from occurring at U.S. ports of entry.

### **ISF “10+2”**

Importer Security Filing (ISF “10+2”) is a CBP initiative designed to prevent the entry of terrorist weapons into the United States. Importers, i.e., USTRANSCOM/DOD shippers, and commercial vessel operators are required to provide additional advance

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shipment data to CBP on cargo shipments entering the United States. The DoD is a major importer and we’re required to comply with all ISF “10+2” requirements when DoD cargo or DoD sponsored household goods shipments are imported aboard commercial sealift vessels.

### **Wood Packaging Material (WPM) Program**

Without question the single greatest threat to the world’s national forests is the spread of harmful pests attributed to the shipment and storage of infested wood products. The risk is so substantial that 149 countries have signed a multilateral treaty strictly regulating WPM heat treatment and fumigation standards for non-manufactured wood products (i.e., pallets, lumber, dunnage, etc).

Wood and lumber products are critical components used when packaging and shipping DoD cargo on USTRANSCOM assets. As a major importer, the DoD must comply with U.S. and International laws pertaining to WPM. Simply stated, all imported WPM must be heat-treated (or fumigated) and bear an official ISPM certification stamp. In rare instances, when heat-treated wood is unavailable, trained DoD examiners may inspect, certify, and affix a “DoD Pest-Free” stamp to WPM. Through compliance with WPM guidelines, the Defense Department is contributing to the international effort to reduce the transfer of dangerous pests and agricultural diseases.

As you can see, USTRANSCOM is actively engaged in protecting America’s most precious resources by ensuring DoD cargo, passengers and baggage meet USDA and U.S. Customs entry requirements.



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