In an effort to assist in ensuring the integrity of the overall supply chain for importers, Customs and Border Protection has developed Container and Seal inspection procedures to be utilized prior to and upon the completion of the loading of a container.

The purpose of these procedures is to assist not only importers but all members of the supply chain to recognize containers and seals that have been compromised.

The methods and information provided are not intended to supersede or replace internal company policies regarding workplace security. Instead, these methods are intended to supplement existing policies and procedures in an effort to make internal company policies and procedures more effective.

The processes and methodologies addressed by Customs are as follows:

* Seal Affixing Process
* Seal Verification and Inspection Process
* 7 – Point Container Inspection Process
* 17 – Point Truck and Trailer Inspection Process

“All containers, tractors and trailers arriving at a facility should have:

* Documentation verified
* Seal number verified and inspected for tampering
* A 7 – Point container inspection conducted
* A 17 – Point tractor and trailer inspection conducted

Inspection processes should be implemented at all foreign and domestic locations:

* Manufacturers
* Suppliers
* Vendors
* Sea Carriers
* Logistical Service Providers
* Distribution Centers
* Container Storage Depots
* Warehouses

The more locations these processes are implemented, the higher level of security your shipments will have”.

**\*\*\*\*\*If at any time, tampering with a container or container seal is suspected or if suspicious cargo and/or contraband is detected, immediately notify the proper authorities and customs and border protection @ 1-800-Be-Alert\*\*\*\*\***

**Container and Trailer, Seals**

To further insure the integrity of the supply chain, it is critical that security procedures are developed regarding the container seal affixing, verification and inspection processes formed by overseas business partners at the point of stuffing.

Procedures regarding the sealing of a container must be in place to maintain a high level of security and accountability in guaranteeing the overall integrity of a container shipment.

Customs & Border Protection has developed several processes designed to assist in facilitating container seal security at the point of origin. Following is an overview of these processes which are not intended to supersede internal company policies and procedures. Instead, they are intended to facilitate a more secure supply chain by helping business partners recognize container seals that have been tampered with or compromised.

Proper container sealing and manifesting procedures is a critical step in ensuring the integrity of your container shipment. well established and implemented container, tractor and trailer inspection processes are easily nullified as the result of poor container seal affixing, verification and inspection processes.

**Seal Affixing Process**

Written procedures must stipulate how seals are to be controlled and affixed to loaded containers including procedures for recognizing and reporting compromised seals and/or containers to customs and border protection or the appropriate foreign authority.

1. Only designated, authorized employees must distribute and affix container seals for integrity purposes. the fewer people who have access to seal(s) the better:
   * Unauthorized employees must NEVER handle container seals
2. At the point of stuffing, procedures must be in place to properly seal and maintain the integrity of shipping containers:
   * Procedures should be documented
3. All seals used for U.S.-bound containers must meet or exceed the current PAS / ISO 17712 standards for high security seals:
   * detailed info on PAS / ISO 17712 seals can be located on the Intl Seal Manufacturers Assoc. website at: [**https://www.megafortris.com/iso-17712-seal-standards.html**](https://www.megafortris.com/iso-17712-seal-standards.html)
4. Seals should be affixed to the right door of the container on the hasp that has the welded rivet:
   * This practice will raise the level of security for your shipment
5. After the seal is affixed to the container, an authorized employee should make sure the seal is secure by pulling down on it:

***\*\*\*\*\*If tampering with a container or container seal is suspected or if suspicious cargo and/or contraband is detected, immediately notify the proper authorities and Customs and Border Protection @ 1-800-BE-ALERT\*\*\*\*\****

**Seal Verification and Inspection Process**

It is strongly recommended that a seal inspection process be implemented throughout the supply chain to insure sound procedures regarding this vital step in the security process.

Customs & Border Protection cites the “V.V.T.T.” seal inspection process as a good example of the seal verification and inspection process.

1. **“V” view seal and container locking mechanisms:**
   * Excessive damage to the seal or locking mechanisms must be reported to a supervisor before opening a container
   * Check for different brands of seals being attached together
   * Look for a loose bolt and hasp
2. **“V” verify seal number for accuracy:**
3. Compare with shipping documents and look for alterations to the seal numbers
4. Insure the seal number manifested is correct
5. Insure the seal brand is correct to insure security and continuity
6. Verify that the seals number is legible and not tampered with
7. **“T” tug on the seal to make sure it is affixed properly:**
8. Seals that come apart must be reported to a supervisor before opening the container as this could be due to human error or tampering.
9. A bent seal stem will cause the seal to not lock properly and can be a sign of tampering
10. Look for glue inside the locking mechanism as it also indicates tampering as the seal will not lock properly
11. **“T” twist and turn the seal to make sure it does not come off:**
    1. Seals are threaded, so they can be unscrewed. Altered seals are reusable throughout the supply chain for multiple attacks.
    2. Twist counter-clockwise to unscrew and test the secureness of the seal

It is important to note that the container seal affixing, verification and inspection processes detailed above are intended to supplement already existing business policies and procedures. The information contained herein should be reviewed and evaluated to further enhance security in your supply chain by identifying areas where security challenges have been noted by Customs and Border Protection in the past.

*On all shipments - import and/or export, the shipper/supplier should proactively share the container no. and seal no. immediately upon completion of loading. Such information sharing enables parties in the supply chain to readily identify potential lapses in security and shipment integrity.*

***Education and communication are the keys to success! Share this information with your overseas business partners at the point of stuffing to ensure the integrity of your cargo and the security of your supply chain.***