



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

Press Release

September 14, 2005

Contact: CBP Media Services

(202) 344-1780

www.cbp.gov

CBP PLANS WILL PHASE-IN COMPLIANCE OF THE WOOD PACKAGING MATERIAL REGULATION

Washington, D.C. – On September 16, 2005, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will implement a plan to enforce the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) import regulation for wood packaging material (WPM). The CBP enforcement plan will be in three phases to allow the international trade and transportation community additional time to comply with the rule.

The rule requires WPM, such as pallets, crates, and boxes, used in international trade to support or brace cargo, to be treated to prevent the introduction of harmful insects to U.S. agriculture and to natural, cultivated, and urban forests resources. The approved treatments are 1) heat treatment to a minimum wood core temperature of 56°C for a minimum of 30 minutes or 2) fumigation with methyl bromide. To certify treatment, the WPM must be marked with the approved International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) logo. Unmarked WPM will be considered untreated and non-compliant.

"I am pleased with the attention the trade community has paid to this requirement and their understanding of the need to enforce it. While CBP has discretionary authority, it is imperative that companies comply with this rule. Noncompliant wood packaging materials pose a dangerous threat to the welfare of our agricultural industry," said CBP Director Michael C. Mullen, Office of Trade Relations.

CBP will perform the following phased-in compliance enforcement plan.

Phase I, beginning September 16, 2005, will be an informed compliance period, with no stoppage of shipments for non-compliant WPM. During this phase, all visual exams of cargo performed by CBP will include a WPM component.

Phase II, beginning February 1, 2006, will continue informed compliance measures on all regulated WPM except pallets and crates. CBP will begin full enforcement of the ban on violative pallets and crates. Beginning with Phase II, immediate export of all shipments containing violative pallets or crates will be ordered if the Port Director determines that it is not feasible to separate merchandise from the violative WPM.

Phase III, beginning July 5, 2006, will represent full enforcement of the WPM ban regulated by 7 CFR § 319. CBP will no longer conduct informed compliance at the shipment level. In Phase III, immediate export of all shipments containing violative WPM will be ordered if the Port Director determines that it is not feasible to separate merchandise from the violative WPM.

All expenses incurred for the services of CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists involved in the separation of cargo will be billed to the importer or other party of interest. WPM and associated merchandise will be exported at the expense of the importer or other party of interest.

The U.S. regulation for WPM does not allow for treatment at the ports. It does not allow for any alternative disposal methods. It only allows for the immediate export of the non-compliant WPM.

More information on the wood packaging material regulation, exemptions, and enforcement, may be found at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/commercial_enforcement/wpm/.

###

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control, and protection of our Nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.