CTPAT
Advanced Qualified Unlading Approval (AQUA) Lane

Last Updated: Jan. 7, 2022

The Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism's (CTPAT) Advanced Qualified Unlading Approval (AQUA) Lane is a benefit available to low risk sea carriers in the CTPAT program. AQUA Lane allows sea carriers that are in good standing to unlade their cargo prior to being cleared by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). If approved, the vessel can commence unlading cargo upon arrival at certain U.S. seaports.

The sea carrier community has informed CTPAT that being allowed to unlade immediately upon arrival saves them valuable time and money. Reducing or eliminating the time needed for CBP's arrival and vessel clearance process allows sea carriers to accurately schedule port workers to commence cargo unlading and may also shorten the time ships spend dockside.

AQUA Lane is currently available at the following 21 seaports:



How to Request AQUA Lane

I. Meeting CTPAT Requirements:

Prior to being granted CBP approval to unlade cargo, sea carriers must meet the following CTPAT requirements:

- Validated CTPAT sea carrier in good standing;
- Compliant with importer security filing (ISF) requirements;
- Compliant with agriculture requirements, to include all required certificates;
- Crew members must remain onboard until formal CBP processing is completed; and
- All containers/cargo must be delivered directly to a CTPAT validated Marine Port Terminal Operator (MPTO) in good standing.

II. Vessel Arrival Notification:

At least 24 hours in advance of arrival, Vessel Agents must submit an electronic arrival notification for every voyage, to include the following elements:

- Arrival date and time;
- Carrier name;
- Vessel name and International Maritime Organization (IMO) Number;
- Voyage number;
- Vessel Agency name and point of contact information;
- Last foreign port;
- Berth of arrival;
- Requested unlading time;
- Request for garbage offload; and
- Number of passengers/crew aboard the vessel.

III. Requesting AQUA Lane:

- Vessel Agents must complete and submit an *Application-Permit-Special-License-Unlading-Overtime Services (CBP Form 3171)* with the *Notice of Arrival* for every unlading at each seaport;
- In section 9, number 5 add the statement, "AQUA Lane requested";
- Requests can be emailed or made in person depending on the port; and
- CBP will respond with approval/denial of the request via the email address supplied.

Example of form 3171

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

OMB APPROVAL NO. 1651-0005
EXPIRES: 11-30-2022

APPLICATION-PERMIT-SPECIAL LICENSE UNLADING-LADING-OVERTIME SERVICES

19 CFR 4.10, 4.30, 4.37, 4.39, 4.91, 10.60, 24.16, 122.29, 122.38, 123.8, 146.32, 146.34

1. Name of Vessel, Vehicle or Aircraft	2. Port	3. Flag
G Rudy Go Vessels	ABC	123

4. Name and Nationality of Owner/Operator	5. Name/Phone No. of Agent Day Phone: Night Phone:

6. Arriving from (Port Name and Country)	7. Date/Time of Arrival	8. Locations (Dock/Terminal)*

9. Application is made for a permit for the operations indicated:

- ☐ (1) To unlade merchandise (intended to be unladen at this port, as shown by the manifest), baggage or passengers. To discharge ballast, and to land "in bond" merchandise. (Sec. 551, Tariff Act of 1930).
- ☐ (2) To land supplies, ship's stores, sea stores, or equipment not to be reladen, subject, however, to free or duty-paid entry (Sec. 446, Tariff Act of 1930).
- ☐ (3) To lade merchandise or baggage requiring CBP supervision.
- ☐ (4) To land and release for repair, adjustment, or refilling and to relade under CBP supervision articles of carrier's equipment. (Articles to be listed reverse side hereof showing date and hour of unlading and relading.) The undersigned certifies the articles listed on the reverse hereof for release under this term is to be landed only for the purpose mentioned in this item and will be reladen on this carrier.
- ☒ (5) Other AQUA Lane Requested

10. Itinerary of Vessel/Aircraft (show port country and departure dates for entire voyage including U.S. itinerary)*

AQUA Lane Miscellaneous Information

AQUA Lane approval means the vessel may only unlade cargo at the port, which allows the vessel to move on to the next port; thus, the vessel spends less time docked and incurring costs.

I. What AQUA Lane Does Not Include:

- AQUA Lane approval does not grant vessel CBP clearance — the vessel can only unlade cargo;
- Crew members may not leave the vessel; CBP must clear all personnel on the vessel; and
- Cargo is not released to leave the port, as some cargo may have CBP, or other agency, holds on them.

II. Reasons for Common AQUA Lane Denials:

- Not providing a stow plan;
- Not in CTPAT (either the carrier, the MPTO, or both);
- Current disposition in the program (e.g., suspended/removed/conditionally reinstated from or within the CTPAT program;
- High-risk vessel/agriculture issues. See the link below:
  https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2018-Feb/AGM_Outreach_2016_ver2.pdf;
- Request not made 24 hours in advance of arrival; and
- Not having proper inspection/fumigations such as the following:
  - Required Asian Gypsy Moth (AGM) inspections;
  - Fumigation required upon arrival for Khapra beetle infestation; and
  - Garbage violations, etc.

III. Common Factors – Keys to Obtaining Approvals:

- Carrier and MPTO are both CTPAT members in good standing;
- Vessels are pre-inspected for Asian Gypsy moth (AGM) prior to departure from foreign ports;
- Prior to arrival, scrape off, collect, and properly destroy all AGM egg masses; and
- As warranted, secure inspection certification from Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Far East Russian ports.

DISCLAIMER: This information has been prepared for your convenience by CBP. This material is intended to provide guidance. Reliance solely on this information alone may not be considered reasonable care.

CTPAT Program

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