



Cargo Vessel Manifest

Manifest requirements and resources for importers and carriers utilizing sea transportation are listed below to avoid delays and potential enforcement action.

Please note: Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs) who self-file House Bills are held to the same standard as Major Vessel Operating (MVO) carriers and are expected to screen data for compliance.



Manifest Overview

- The electronic **Cargo Declaration** is the information submitted to CBP traditionally provided on a carrier's bill of lading.
- The Cargo Declaration must **list all foreign cargo** on board the vessel regardless of the port of discharge and completed per instructions in [19 CFR 4.7a](#).
- Carriers must **transmit data to CBP 24 hours** before the cargo is loaded aboard the vessel at a foreign port except for cargo types noted in [19 CFR 4.7b\(4\)](#).
*Bulk and exempt break bulk cargo data is required 24 hours before arrival.



General Requirements

- Carriers must transmit data listing **quantity of the smallest external packaging unit** (Containers and pallets are not acceptable manifested quantities).
- Carrier must provide a **precise description** or include the **Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS)** numbers to the 6-digit level under which the cargo is classified.
- Carriers must issue a **separate bill of lading** for each shipper-consignee relationship.
- Simple and House bills must list the shipper as the **foreign vendor, supplier, manufacturer** or similar party (see [HQ 20115944](#) ruling).
*3rd Party Logistics providers (3PLs) are not acceptable.

Data Elements (see [19 CFR 4.7a\(4\)](#) for more) - - - - -



- Last Foreign Port** – before ship departs for U.S.
- Date of Arrival** – when cargo will be arriving at first U.S. port of entry
- First Foreign Port** – where carrier takes possession of cargo
- Shipper Name and Address** – individual or business name and a valid foreign address with city/province, country, and postal code
- Consignee Name and Address** – individual or business name and a valid address with city/province, country, and postal code
- Cargo Description** – precise description of the cargo or 6-digit HTS codes
- Total Quantity** – based on the smallest external packaging unit (2 pallets containing 50 pieces each would be considered as 100, not 2)
- Date of Departure** – when cargo departs from foreign port

Filing Errors to Avoid - - - - -



- Cargo information **does not contain sufficient description** of merchandise or applies generic terms such as “FAK”, “general cargo”, “STC”, “equipment”, and “parts”.
- Manifest **contains invalid shipper/consignee names** or identifies the shipper as “various”, or the consignee as “unknown”.
- Consolidated cargo is not properly manifested**, meaning the quantity of the smallest external packaging unit is not declared. Counting only visible packaging is not acceptable.

Manifest violations, including failure to file a manifest, incorrect manifest information, overages, and shortages may result in **enforcement action**, including penalties and liquidated damages, Do Not Load Holds, holds for examination, or seizure.