

Commercial procedures during scheduled and unscheduled outages

System Outage Contingency Plan

June 2022

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1. Introduction

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) System Outage Contingency Plan sets out the procedures for the importation and exportation of commercial goods in all modes of transportation during a CBSA systems outage.

An outage is defined as a "temporary suspension of operations to the electronic systems". Please refer to [Section 4.0: Appendix A](#) for a description of various types of outages and scopes/impacts.

It is important to note that the procedures outlined in Section 2 apply only in the case of CBSA outages.

For ease of navigation, we identified which sections pertain to importation and those that pertain to exportation:

Importation and exportation sections

Section	Importation	Exportation
1.0 Introduction	yes	yes
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1.2 Communications protocol during outages	yes	yes
1.3 External client outages	yes	yes
2.1 Key principles	yes	yes
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2.3 Carrier pre-arrival and import reporting procedures	yes	no
2.3.1 Inland movement	yes	no
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2.3.4 Air	yes	no
2.3.5 Marine	yes	no
2.4 Export reporting procedures	no	yes
2.4.1 All modes	no	yes
2.5 Import deconsolidation	yes	no
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2.6.1 Highway FPOA release	yes	no
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3.0 Post-outage procedures	yes	yes
3.1 Post-outage message transmission	yes	no
3.2 Late accounting penalties	yes	no
4.0 Appendixes	yes	yes
4.1 Types of outages	yes	yes
4.2 Multiple shipment release query form	yes	no
4.2.1 Directives: Multiple Import Shipment Release Query	yes	no

1.1 Invocation and revocation of contingency plans

The CBSA alone will invoke and revoke the contingency procedures for the eManifest Portal, Canadian Export Reporting System (CERS) Portal, Single Window Initiative (SWI) and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) through the issuance of bulletins by email. Contingency messages for scheduled outages may also be published under the Bulletins tab in both Portals.

E-mail bulletins are issued in advance of scheduled outages and to communicate system statuses during unscheduled outages. System status updates will be provided with the following frequency until resolved:

Unscheduled System Outage:

- Business hours (08:00-17:00, Mon - Fri) - every 2 hours
- After hours - Every 4 hours until 22:00

Unscheduled System Delay:

- Business hours (08:00-17:00, Mon - Fri) - every 4 hours

- After hours - every 4 hours until 22:00

External clients should assume that the outage is still ongoing unless a "resolved" message has been provided.

The Technical Commercial Client Unit (TCCU) of the CBSA sends these bulletins via e-mail to external clients. Subscribe at the following link: https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/eservices/menu-eng.html#tab6_2.

The CBSA regional operations will continue to receive information about system outages through email notifications and other methods, as required.

1.2 Communications protocol during outages

The CBSA provides a "hotline" to assist external clients with technical issues or problems relating to the exchange of data with the CBSA. The telephone number for the hotline is **1-888-957-7224** from within Canada and the United States and +1-613-946-0762 from overseas.

The hotline provides a recorded message for external clients describing the status of CBSA systems. If there is an outage, the CBSA ensures that the hotline is updated immediately after a systems outage and/or backlog has been reported and is regularly updated throughout the outage period.

Hotline messages will revert to "all systems are functioning normally" as soon as CBSA's technical support teams are notified that the outage has been resolved. Until that message is posted to the hotline, external clients should assume that the outage is still ongoing.

Live support is provided during regular business hours (8:00 to 17:00 Eastern Time), to clients currently using or seeking to use EDI, the eManifest portal or the CERS portal. After hours emergency support is available through a call back service from 17:00 to 8:00 Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, weekends and on holidays.

A table outlining the services provided by TCCU during business hours and after business hours on an emergency basis can be found at the following link: <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/eservices/services-eng.html>.

1.3 External client outages

External clients will inform TCCU by telephone (refer to section 1.2) of unscheduled outages of their systems as soon as possible once they are made aware of an unscheduled outage and advise once resolved.

External clients will inform TCCU of scheduled outages at least 24 hours in advance.

In case of an outage, full paper documentation must be presented. See D3 series Memoranda for paper Cargo Control Documents (CCDs) requirements and D17 series

Memoranda for paper release requests. Some paper requests may be submitted by email at offices that offer the [Electronic Longroom](#) service. Consult the [CBSA website](#) and [CBSA Directory](#) for more information.

Note: The CBSA does not issue bulletins related to external outages. Regional operations will accept paper submissions with an EDI Lead Sheet that indicates a systems outage, per D17-1-4.

2. Procedures during CBSA outages

2.1 Key principles

1. External clients are required to electronically transmit all trade documents, processed via the contingency plan, once the outage is resolved, **thus the recommendation to continue transmission of electronic data for queuing and expediting the recovery process.**
2. External clients unable or that have opted not to transmit their trade documents via an alternate method of electronic communication **will transmit their trade documents within 24 hours** of the system functionality being restored; trade documents include cargo, conveyance, house bills and export declarations and will be reported using the actual date and time of release for imports or the date and time of departure from the export reporting office closest to the place of exit of the goods for exports.
3. Once the system outage is resolved, the CBSA will provide **a buffer time of 2 hours** before resuming normal activities.
4. After the outage, once the EDI documentation including release requests have been processed by the CBSA, external clients using this transmission method will receive an electronic message and/or release notification.
5. External clients must transmit data to the CBSA **at least 2 hours prior to the start time of any scheduled outage** to ensure that pre-arrival transmission timelines are met for shipments expected to arrive at the border during the outage.
6. No monetary penalties will be issued to external clients for failure to transmit required data during a scheduled or an unscheduled outage and for the 2 hours following system resumption.
7. External clients will submit 2 copies, for both import and export declarations, of the completed paper documentation required before receiving an authorization to move or release for importations or proceeding with an exportation.

1. For goods destined for import:
CBSA will stamp both copies of the paper documentation, returning 1 copy and retaining the other copy for post-resumption validation:
 1. Where the goods are released, the border services officer (BSO) stamps each copy of the documentation.
 2. Where goods have been authorized to move in-bond, the BSO stamps the reverse side of the CCD.
2. For goods destined for export:
A BSO at the export reporting office, will stamp each copy of the *Exporter Contingency* form.
8. BSOs may request more information and/or refer any shipment to the secondary inspection area.
9. The stamped copy of the carrier documentation serves as proof of report that:
 1. the requirements of section 12(1) of the *Customs Act* have been satisfied;
 2. the authority for the carrier to deliver goods;
 3. the indication that the responsibility is now with the customs broker/importer to provide interim release data.
10. A stamped copy of the Exporter Contingency Form indicates that a carrier is permitted to export the associated goods. However, the reporting requirements related to section 95 (1) of the *Customs Act* have not been met and responsibility remains with the exporter to report their goods to the CBSA once the system outage is resolved.
11. External clients will retain all stamped paper documents presented during the outage as proof that all goods have been either reported by the importer or exporter and released, moved in-bond or exported.
12. Regardless of the outage condition, Other Government Departments' (OGDs) requirements must be met either prior to release or prior to export.
13. The Agency does not consider the presentation of the 14-digit transaction number to be proof that Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) or OGD requirements have been met.

2.2 CBSA outage procedures overview

Pre-outage

Import

eManifest Portal:

- Submit electronic data 2 hours prior to scheduled outages.

Electronic data interchange (EDI):

- Submit electronic data 2 hours prior to scheduled outages.

Export

Canadian Export Reporting System (CERS) Portal:

- Submit electronic data 2 hours prior to scheduled outages.

G7 EDI:

- Submit electronic data 2 hours prior to scheduled outages.

During an outage

Import

eManifest Portal:

1. If the Portal allows it, submit your electronic data during an outage.
2. Complete the applicable contingency paper forms and print 2 copies.
3. If applicable, ensure to complete documentation required by other government departments (OGDs).
4. Present the contingency forms at the Port of Report:
 - If released, the Border Services Officer will stamp both copies
 - If moving in-bond, the BSO will stamp the reverse sides
5. Upon paper form presentation, more information or a referral to secondary may be requested

Note: Retain the copies of your stamped contingency forms.

EDI:

1. If EDI allows it, submit your electronic data during an outage
2. Complete the applicable contingency paper forms and print 2 copies
3. If applicable, ensure to complete documentation required by other government departments (OGDs)
4. Present the contingency forms at the Port of Report:
 - If released, the BSO will stamp both copies
 - If moving in-bond, the BSO will stamp the reverse sides
5. Upon paper form presentation, more information or a referral to secondary may be requested

Note: Retain the copies of your stamped Contingency forms.

Export

CERS Portal:

1. If the Portal allows it, submit your electronic data during an outage
2. Complete the Exporter Contingency form and print 2 copies
3. If applicable, ensure to complete documentation required by other government departments (OGDs)
4. Present the contingency forms at the Export Reporting Office:
 - If the export can proceed, the BSO will stamp both copies
5. Upon paper form presentation, more information or a referral to secondary may be requested

Note: Retain the copies of your stamped Contingency forms.

G7 EDI:

1. If EDI allows it, submit your electronic data during an outage
2. Complete the Exporter Contingency form and print 2 copies
3. If applicable, ensure to complete documentation required by other government departments (OGDs)
4. Present the contingency forms at the Export Reporting Office:
 - If the export can proceed, the BSO will stamp both copies
5. Upon paper form presentation, more information or a referral to secondary may be requested

Note: Retain the copies of your stamped Contingency forms.

Post-outage

Import

eManifest Portal:

1. Paper contingency forms will be accepted up until 2 hours following a system outage.
2. If no electronic information was submitted before or during an outage, users have 24 hours, starting when the Portal is available again, to submit their electronic declarations.

EDI:

1. Paper contingency forms will be accepted up until 2 hours following a system outage.
2. If no electronic information was submitted before or during an outage, users have 24 hours, starting when EDI is available again, to submit their electronic declarations.

3. Any electronic declarations submitted during an outage will receive an electronic message and/or release notification once the documentation and release request have been processed.

Export

CERS Portal:

1. Paper contingency forms will be accepted up until 2 hours following a system outage.
2. If no electronic information was submitted before or during an outage, users have 24 hours, starting when the Portal is available again, to submit their electronic declarations.

G7 EDI:

1. Paper contingency forms will be accepted up until 2 hours following a system outage.
2. If no electronic information was submitted before or during an outage, users have 24 hours, starting when G7 EDI is available again, to submit their electronic declarations.
3. Any electronic declarations submitted during an outage will receive an electronic message and/or release notification once the documentation and release request have been processed.

[CBSA Outage Procedures Overview table \(Word, 16 KB\)](#)

2.3 Carrier pre-arrival and import reporting procedures

Carriers will need to provide a paper copy of the CCD to the importer or their agent for release purposes or to the warehouse operator for inland movement.

For further information on pre-arrival and reporting procedural requirements for import, in bond, in-transit and Freight Remaining on Board cargo, refer to the [Memoranda D3 Transportation series](#) relating to the particular mode of transportation. These include:

1. [Memorandum D3-2-1, Air Pre-arrival and Reporting Requirements](#)
2. [Memorandum D3-4-2, Highway Pre-arrival and Reporting Requirements](#)
3. [Memorandum D3-5-1, Marine Pre-load/Pre-arrival and Reporting Requirements](#)
4. [Memorandum D3-6-6, Rail Pre-arrival and Reporting Requirements](#)

2.3.1 Inland movement

Bonded carriers may make arrangements with the CBSA to have the goods transported in-bond to an inland sufferance warehouse. The BSO first determines if goods are admissible prior to authorizing any shipment to move in-bond. It is the carrier's responsibility to notify the customs broker/importer of the change to the release office and sub-location code where the goods are to be moved.

2.3.2 Highway

During an outage, carriers must fulfill their legislative obligation to report goods to the CBSA by presenting 2 copies of a CCD, or equivalent (stack manifest, PARS bar codes, print out of ACI EDI cargo transmittal), to the applicable CBSA office.

Customs Self-Assessment (CSA) highway carriers submit a lead sheet with the CSA service option, the carrier code and the importer business number. The driver must also present a valid driver's Commercial Driver Registration Program (CDRP)/Free and Secure Trade (FAST) card.

- For CSA clearances, carriers follow current procedures using the 3 barcodes on a lead sheet and should indicate "CBSA System Down at Time of Report"
- For non-CSA clearances, the driver must produce the supporting documentation for each shipment (for example, bill of lading, contract of carriage) upon request. Where release is requested at the First Point of Arrival (FPOA) each copy of the supporting documentation must include a 14-digit transaction number.

The BSO reviews the documentation and makes a 'release', 'authorize to move', or 'authorize to deliver' decision for each shipment.

2.3.3 Rail

Rail carriers are to submit a *Form A1 Train Report Inward* to the nearest FPOA to where the train crosses, ensuring that there is a Cargo Control Number (CCN) indicated for each shipment.

All unreleased rail cargo moves inland (refer to section 2.3.1) and is held until notification from the CBSA.

2.3.4 Air

Air carriers are to present the flight number or Conveyance Reference Number (CRN) on paper for proof of report/arrival for conveyances.

CSA air carriers to present a print out of air CSA data elements (Service Option 521) to CBSA for stamping as proof of report and authorization to deliver.

2.3.5 Marine

Carrier to submit 2 copies of the *Form A6 General Declaration* and the *Form A6A Freight/Cargo Manifest* to the CBSA office at the FPOA.

2.4 Export reporting procedures

In the event of an outage of the CERS Portal or G7 EDI reporting method, exporters and customs service providers (CSPs) who need to report to the CBSA must use a paper method.

For further information on reporting procedural requirements for exports refer to:

1. [Memorandum D20-1-1, Exporter Reporting](#)
2. [Memorandum D3-1-8, Cargo: Export Movements](#)

2.4.1 All modes

During a CERS Portal or G7 EDI systems outage, exporters or CSPs must fulfill their legislative obligation to report, to the CBSA, goods destined for export by presenting 2 identical copies of the [Exporter contingency](#) form, to the export reporting office that is closest to the place of exit of the goods. The BSO will assess the documentation and stamp both copies using a date/time stamp if no examination is required.

After submitting an [Exporter contingency](#) form, the exporter must provide the generic code: "ECD" to the exporting carrier. If the exporting carrier has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the CBSA they must enter this generic code: "ECD" on the associated waybill submission or in the Associated Transport Document Number field on the associated electronic cargo control document (for marine mode).

For procedures to follow once the system functionalities resume, refer to [Section 3: Post-outage procedures](#).

2.5 Import deconsolidation

During outage periods Freight Forwarders may perform deconsolidation by presenting paper house bills at the CBSA office where the goods are located. Email may be used to submit at offices that offer the [Electronic Longroom](#) service.

2.6 Import release

Customs brokers/importers may obtain release during outages by presenting paper release requests in person at the CBSA office where the goods are located **except for highway release at FPOA (refer to 2.7)**.

As outlined in D17-1-4, paper release requests will be presented with an EDI Exception lead sheet with the "System Outage" box selected. Email may be used to submit at offices that offer the [Electronic Longroom](#) service.

2.6.1 Highway FPOA release

To avoid significant border wait times at highway entry points as a result of CBSA systems outages, a streamlined release process is available for highway

shipments clearing at the FPOA. This process is available only for highway clearances at the FPOA during CBSA systems outages.

For release of highway shipments at the FPOA the carrier will present 2 copies of the CCD, or equivalent (in other words, stack manifest (if approved), PARS bar codes, print out of ACI EDI cargo transmittal), and lead sheet indicating "System Outage" plus any OGD permits, as required.

A 14-digit transaction number is required for each shipment that is being cleared at the border. This number is obtained from the customs broker/importer. It is preferable that the transaction number be barcoded, however during a system outage, the CBSA will accept handwritten transaction numbers.

Presentation of a transaction number for the purposes of obtaining release of the goods during a CBSA system outage is a commitment from the customs broker /importer to provide interim accounting or final accounting documentation after the system is restored and within the timeframes set out in *Memorandum D17-1-5: Registration, Accounting and Payment for Commercial Goods*.

2.6.2 Determining release status during an EDI outage

The Accelerated Commercial Release Operations Support System (ACROSS) must be operational for the options below to be used and release requests must already be transmitted to the CBSA for processing prior to the system outage.

Option 1: Cargo control document

The client will present the paper CCD for the shipment, with a CBSA machine readable barcoded CCN or Transaction Number, at a CBSA office and indicate that they would like to know the release status. The BSO will verify the status in ACROSS. In the event it is released, the BSO will release-stamp the CCD and return it to the client as proof of release.

Option 2: Multiple Shipment Release Query form

To streamline the querying of multiple shipments, the Multiple Shipment Release Query form (refer to section 4.2) may be used. The form may be modified by clients if the barcoded data remains CBSA machine readable.

This form is to be submitted to the CBSA office of release. The original CBSA stamped copy will be returned to the client. Email may be used to submit at offices that offer the [Electronic Longroom](#) service.

2.6.3 Acceptable proof of release during an outage

Acceptable proof of release includes a CBSA release-stamped CCD, Multiple Shipment Release Query form, or printed and stamped Release Notification System (RNS)

message. Proof of release is acceptable in original or digital form if the CBSA stamp is clearly visible.

2.7 Import warehouses

During outages licensed warehouses will ensure paper record keeping is used to record goods taken into and released from warehouses.

The warehouse operator will receive the paper CCD or equivalent from carrier to place goods in the warehouse.

Upon receiving acceptable proof of release (refer to 2.6.3) the warehouse operator releases the shipment from their warehouse.

If the warehouse operator receives a "referred for exam" notice for a shipment that was previously manually released, the CBSA requests that, if the shipment is still in their warehouse, the warehouse operator holds the shipment for examination.

3. Post-outage procedures

Upon system resumption, all import and export clients must electronically submit (within 24 business hours) all trade documents and notifications for shipments processed during the contingency period and correct any electronic messaging errors or rejects.

Important note: Delays or omitting to submit electronic trade documents past the 24-hour timeframe following a systems outage may result in monetary penalties for both imports and exports.

Import shipments that were released on paper during an outage, customs brokers may use a Pre-Arrival Release System (PARS) service option when transmitting the release data when the system is functioning again.

3.1 Post-outage message transmission for importations

Import clients must ensure all messages transmitted to the CBSA after an outage are submitted in the order listed below, to avoid receiving error or reject messages.

Post-outage message transmission for importations

	Highway	Rail	Air	Marine
Cargo	Must be transmitted/captured in CBSA system before the		No specific order in which cargo and conveyance must be transmitted/captured.	

	conveyance is transmitted/captured.	
Conveyance	Must be transmitted once all related cargo is captured in CBSA system. Must be transmitted/captured in CBSA system before close message is transmitted/captured.	No specific order in which cargo and conveyance must be transmitted/captured. Must be transmitted/captured in CBSA system before close message is transmitted/captured.
House bills	Must be transmitted/captured in our system before close message is transmitted/captured. It will not reject if transmitted/captured before primary cargo is transmitted/captured.	
Close	Must be transmitted/captured after all related house bills are transmitted/captured. It will not reject if transmitted/captured before primary cargo is transmitted/captured.	
Releases	There is no order for releases to be transmitted, it can be transmitted/captured before or after cargo and conveyance.	
Conveyance arrival	There is no EDI highway arrival.	EDI conveyance arrival must be transmitted once all related cargo and releases have been transmitted/captured.
Cargo arrival	For inland cargo, the arrival should be transmitted last.	

3.2 Late accounting penalties

Importers may be assessed late accounting penalties if accounting documents are not received within prescribed time limits. Relief may be granted in relation to delays caused by system outages, with the type and length of the outage determining how the relief will be processed:

For all outages **under 24 hours**, customs brokers and importers are required to submit applications for waiver/cancellation to the Recourse Directorate (email: cbsa.external.appeals-appels_externes.asfc@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca).

For CBSA outages **over 24 hours**, CBSA will extend the accounting time limit from 5 days to a period which includes the length of the outage. The late accounting penalty will not be assessed.

Customs brokers/importers should submit a waiver application immediately after a prospective penalty is identified on the Daily Notice, rather than waiting until the Monthly Statement of Account is generated. This will ensure, whenever possible, that the

penalty will not be assessed on the Monthly Statement of Account if it is eligible to be waived.

4. Appendixes

4.1 Types of outages

An unscheduled outage means that a problem has created a situation that was not expected and has caused some type of outage or delay. As it was unexpected, research and analysis must be conducted to locate and resolve the problem. There will be no estimated time of resolution until the research and analysis is completed and the problem has been identified.

A scheduled CBSA system outage is a scheduled outage that occurs for maintenance or a systems release of new functionality or problem fixes. A time period for the outage is established and published for the trade community in advance of the outage. This information is provided to allow our clients time to plan around the outage. Scheduled outages are scheduled to take place in the early mornings on weekends which coincides with the lowest volume of transaction processing. This is done to minimize the impact of the outage on clients.

Full CBSA system outage means that all CBSA systems; EDI, eManifest portal, Canadian Export Reporting System (CERS) portal and CBSA internal systems are not functioning. For EDI and eManifest Portal users, this outage type does not impact their ability to transmit data to CBSA, the data can be received and queued until the systems are back. For CERS Portal users, they may only transmit data once the CBSA systems resume their functions.

Delays in processing: EDI means that the CBSA has a backlog of electronic messages through EDI for processing. Delays in processing is considered an outage anytime the CBSA is running over 60 minutes behind in processing incoming/outgoing messages.

Delays in processing: eManifest portal means that the CBSA has a backlog of electronic messages coming through the portal for processing. A delay in processing is considered an outage anytime the CBSA is running 60 minutes behind in processing incoming/outgoing messages.

Full EDI system outage means that the CBSA is not able to process any of the electronic messages being received or sent through EDI. However, it does not include the ability to transmit the data to CBSA, where it is received and queued until such time the EDI processing of the data is back online.

EDI inbound system outage means that CBSA is not able to receive any new inbound EDI messages from clients.

EDI outbound system outage means that the CBSA is not able to send messages to clients through EDI.

Full eManifest portal outage (inbound and/or outbound) means that the eManifest portal is not operational. An **inbound** portal outage means that the CBSA is not receiving information submitted through the eManifest portal. An **outbound** portal outage means that the CBSA is not able to post responses in the eManifest portal.

Full CERS portal outage (inbound and/or outbound) means that the CERS portal is not operational and unavailable for use. An **inbound** portal outage means that users are not able to submit trade documents to the CBSA through the CERS portal.

An **outbound** portal outage means that the CBSA is not able to retrieve data submitted within the CERS portal.

4.2 Multiple Import Shipment Release Query form

[Multiple Import Shipment Release Query form \(PDF, 61 KB\)](#)

[\[Help with PDF files\]](#)

Release office: 453

Client name: Compliance Brokerage

Client ID: 12345

Client contact: John Doe 519-253-4584

Multiple Import Shipment Release Query form

Transaction number or cargo control number	Barcoded cargo control number OR transaction number Must be CBSA machine readable	For CBSA use only R = Released NR = Not released
12345001495785		
12345001495786		
12345001495787		

12345001495788		
12345001495789		

CBSA stamp and BSO badge number

4.2.1 Directives: Multiple Import Shipment Release Query form

This form was introduced with the deployment of the CBSA Systems Outage Contingency.

The purpose of the form is to reduce the paper burden and streamline the querying of release statuses during outages that impact RNS notices. This form may be used when EDI linkages are down and ACROSS is operational. Note, the CBSA is unable to provide the status of release when ACROSS is not functional.

Usage of the form

Clients

- Clients will obtain this form from the CBSA Systems Outage Contingency document published on the CBSA website
- The form may be modified by clients as long as the barcoded data remains CBSA machine readable
- This form is to be submitted to the CBSA office of release. Email may be used to submit at offices that offer the [Electronic Longroom](#) service

CBSA

- Navigate to the RSTAT screen in ACROSS
- Scan the barcoded CCN or transaction number provided by the client
- If released write "R", if not-released write "NR". If the number is not on file write "N/A".
- If the barcode is not machine-readable return the form to client for correction
- The original CBSA stamped copy will be returned to the client

When completed and stamped by the CBSA this form provides proof of release for only those transactions indicated as released per the above.

This form may be accepted by carriers and warehouse operators as proof of release to allow the movement of shipments during contingency periods. When systems resume, release notices will be transmitted.