



International Events & Convention Services Program
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Self-clearing Convention materials into Canada

Canada Border Services Agency has designed a special unit on a national basis to partner with the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Industry. It is called the “International Events & Convention Services Program”. The function of the unit is to provide information and facilitation to the Foreign and Canadian business communities regarding bringing people and goods into Canada for a specific purpose like a meeting, conference or convention. **The goal is to provide clear guidelines that will help bring your event to Canada with minimal difficulties, delays and costs.**

The purpose of this self-clearing information is to give you enough knowledge of the process to confidently bring your goods into Canada without requiring the services of a Customs broker. A Customs broker is a for profit company who charges for certain services provided and there may be times when you will need to use them. Educate yourself so you know what to do . That way you will not be taken advantage of for your lack of knowledge.

Self-clearing requires you as the importer to take the initiative to gather and prepare your own documents along with contacting those who need to be notified of what is required. This information will take you step by step through the process giving you insight of some of the things you may encounter along the way.

The process begins with having an event recognition letter from the show organizers. This letter show that the conference is officially recognized with Canada Border Services Agency – Convention Services Program.

This letter must be included with all shipping documents, or carried with you personally transporting your exhibit materials, as that is your authority to import goods into Canada for that specific event.

* Organizers, Exhibitors and Speakers need to be identified as belonging to the event so **proof of participation** can be a copy of the CBSA Letter of Event Recognition.

Important!! Make sure that the venue is aware of your shipments coming to their property. Communicate with the conference contact to find out when the earliest your boxes can start to arrive.

Customs is aware of the Convention program but still requires a document declaring what the goods are being imported for. The **Inventory Control Sheet** shows your company name and address, name of the event, quantity, description, value, country of



origin of goods and any statements of intent. Combine the CBSA letter with the Inventory Control Sheet

[Sample of the Inventory Control sheet attached]

Separate document into two parts: Display use and Other than Display Use (Goods you intend to sell or give-away).

Use this sample statement if it applies.

Goods imported for a foreign event are intended to be sold or given-away will ultimately be exported as hand carry baggage by the non-resident attendees or in the same manner they were imported.

1. Understand that you are shipping goods to yourself to be used at the event only. Temporary importation goods are treated differently than goods that are staying in Canada or sold to a Canadian company.

Important! Use this sample statement

“The goods are for event use only and will not be sold or left behind in Canada but exported at the end of the event.”

2. Label all boxes and shipping document with the following and any additional information required by the receiver of your shipment:

Name of Event
c/o Venue name and address
Contact name with phone number

Important!! Save time and \$\$\$ by not splitting your shipments up into multiple parcels. Keep them together as much as possible. Ship the goods early enough to avoid delays and Customs clearance. Factor in weekends and holidays. Same day delivery is only to the warehouse of the courier not the venue. Goods still have to clear Customs. When tracking your freight, the message the Courier gives when goods are not released by Customs yet is “Goods held by Customs”. Customs do not have a warehouse and they don’t hold goods. It’s the courier who is holding the freight and unable to get a Customs release. If the paperwork and information is correct then Customs will release the freight. Many couriers will blame Customs when in fact they are the one’s responsible for the delay in Customs clearance.

Using a Courier Service to ship your goods.



5. If shipping using a courier like UPS, Fed Ex or DHL, attach a copy of the CBSA event recognition letter, Inventory Control sheet, with the courier shipping documents.
6. Use them as a shipper only unless the goods will be sold or left behind in Canada. Make sure you pay all shipping charges. Your shipping dept. must attach the above documents with the shipments.
7. If goods are staying in Canada, (Cdn event or market) you have the option of either giving the courier power of attorney to brokerage the goods into Canada for you. They will charge you for both the shipping and any Customs taxes and a brokerage charge for doing the entry for you. Instruct them to fax the freight information to the Conventions Unit of Customs for them to decide how they want to release the goods.
8. If the goods are returning to the States the same way they came into Canada, you need to make arrangements with the courier to pick-up the freight at a certain time and place after the event is over. This will involve you talking with the material handlers at the event so your goods will not get lost or left behind. They are for profit so they will charge you if they have to move your goods around.
9. If goods are coming directly to the event site from a hired supplier, make sure they have a copy of the Customs Recognition letter and that all boxes are labeled with the name of the event c/o the venue location with a contact name. If they ship any other way, the goods may be delayed, taxed and refused entry into Canada.

Exporting Goods out of the U.S.

10. The Dept. of Homeland Security (US Customs) needs to know of your intentions if you are exporting goods for temporary use at an event in Canada.
Please be respectful and courteous when presenting information to U.S. Customs.
You need to satisfy U.S. Customs that the described goods valued at more than \$2000.00 USD (regardless if made in a NAFTA country) are going to be returned to the U.S. in the same condition they left. You can do this by showing your id, business card, inventory control sheet, proof of participation at the event, copy of the CBSA letter of Event recognition.

If you are carrying or driving the goods across the border yourself, you can use the supporting information (Letter from Organizer, Inventory Control Sheet, Letter of Event Recognition from Canada Customs- Conventions Unit) to ensure US Customs will validate the U.S. Form 4455.

<https://forms.customs.gov/customsrf/getformharness.asp?formName=cf-4455-form.xft>

Complete the top portion only and **stop and present** it to U.S. Customs at the port of exit for verification and stamping. It is very important that you have the equipment with you when requesting Customs to validate the document.



Note: If using a courier service, you will not be able to report in this way. Use the couriers original export control documents and include them with all shipping documents going back.

Once the U.S. Form 4455 is validated, keep it in a safe place, as you will need to present this document to U.S. Customs when you seek re-admission into the U.S. This process will only cost you \$5.00 US re-entry fee for commercial goods.

Exporting goods from outside North America

Check with the Customs of the country of export before shipping goods to Canada to determine how these goods will be treated on their re-entry.

Documentation

11. Canada Customs will ask to see your paperwork to determine if the goods qualify for temporary use and if they want to request further documentation.

This could involve having to pay import taxes and/or post a security deposit to ensure the goods will be exported after the event closes. To minimize the risk of having to pay any taxes, only bring in display samples [labeled as “Samples for display use only” using your cost values for both display samples and any give-aways. Keep the display quantity to 1 of a kind, and give-aways to a realistic amount based on the number of the attendees at the event.

If Canada Customs requires you to pay taxes for goods you intend to sell, you will require a business number. Call the business window number at 1-204-983-1848.
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Checklist:

- Know the I.D. requirements to enter Canada. [A passport is now required for re-entry into the U.S. for all air and marine travel. Soon will be required for land and rail in Jan 2008.]

Canada Border Services Agency main website.

<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html>

Dept. of State Travel website. Regarding passports for U.S. Citizens.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html

- If anyone was convicted of a criminal offence, check out the Canadian Immigration website about Inadmissibility.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/conviction.asp>

Website to frequently asked questions about inadmissibility.



<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/faq-inadmissibility.asp>

- Find out what your airline carrier requires as far as identification. [Some airlines will not allow you to board their plane if you don't possess a passport.] It is their policy.
- Have a copy of the **Customs Recognition letter** validating the event in case asked for by officials. (The organizer of the event is responsible in getting the letter out to anyone bringing goods into Canada for the event.)
- Organizers and exhibitors should have a copy of the “ **Inventory Control Sheet** ” showing those goods being imported into Canada. (Sample attached)
- If driving into Canada, remember to **stop and report** to US Customs showing your partially completed form 4455.
(Download a copy off the website and complete the top part)
<https://forms.customs.gov/customsrf/getformharness.asp?formName=cf-4455-form.xft>
- Visitors to Canada will want to check out this website as they can find ways to save money by claiming the GST back on purchases.
<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/nonresidents/visitors/qa-e.html>
- Foreign Organizers, exhibitors can save on the Goods and Services Tax on certain services. Organizers can find out if their event can qualify as a foreign convention with the GST Tax Interpretation office and further reduce event costs.

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/gp/rc4160/rc4160-07e.pdf>



SAMPLE DOCUMENT ON YOUR COMPANY LETTERHEAD

INVENTORY CONTROL SHEET

Name & Address of Sender

Date

Name of Event (Bold & Underlined) **Don't just put the Hotel name!**

Hotel or Venue name and address

Contact Name & Number

List of display goods:

Quantity \$ Value

(Please provide reference numbers (serial) & Country of Origin if possible)

List of Other than display goods:

Quantity \$ Value

Eg. Printed materials, t-shirts, mugs, hats, etc.

- If you have goods that you intend to give-away to Canadians, provide a separate line on this document that shows what goods you intend to give-away with country of origin and value.
- Values for give-aways can be at cost, only items being sold at the event must be at selling price. Customs may require a formal accounting package if taxes are high. Consider only bringing in samples to avoid: entry and taxes and marking regulations.

Important to have this statement in the document

Statement: The following goods are for event use only and will not be sold or disposed of in Canada but will be exported from Canada at the end of the event. **Optional sentence.** Any give-aways will be distributed to non-residents of Canada and returned to the United States as hand carry baggage.

Note: If goods are being given away to Canadian residents, adjust your statement to read: **The following items will not be sold but given-away to attendees at the event only.**



Canada Border
Services Agency

Agence des services
frontaliers du Canada