

§19.12 Inventory control and recordkeeping system.

(a) *Systems capability.* The proprietor of a class 11 general order warehouse as described in §19.1 must have an automated inventory control and recordkeeping system. Proprietors of existing class 3, 4, or 5 warehouses as described in §19.1 certified before December 9, 2002, to receive general order merchandise must have automated inventory control and recordkeeping systems in place with respect to general order merchandise after a period of 2 years from December 9, 2002. All other warehouse proprietors have a choice of maintaining manual or automated inventory control and recordkeeping systems or a combination of manual and automated systems. All inventory control and recordkeeping systems must be capable of:

(1) Accounting for all merchandise transported, deposited, stored, manipulated, manufactured, smelted, refined, destroyed in or removed from the bonded warehouse and all merchandise collected by a proprietor or his agent for transport to his warehouse. The records shall provide an audit trail from deposit through manipulation, manufacture, destruction, and withdrawal from the bonded warehouse either by specific identification or other Customs authorized inventory method. The records to be maintained are those which a prudent businessman in the same type of business can be expected to maintain. The records are to be kept in sufficient detail to permit effective and efficient determination by Customs of the proprietor's compliance with these regulations and correctness of his annual submission or reconciliation;

(2) Producing accurate and timely reports and documents as required by this part; and

(3) Identifying shortages and overages of merchandise in sufficient detail to determine the quantity, description, tariff classification and value of the missing or excess merchandise so that appropriate reports can be filed with Customs on a timely basis.

(b) *Procedures manual.* (1) The proprietor shall have available at the warehouse an English language copy of its written inventory control and recordkeeping systems procedures manual in accordance with the requirements of this part.

(2) The proprietor shall keep current its procedures manual and shall submit to the port director a new certification at the time any change in the system is implemented.

(c) *Entry of merchandise into a warehouse—(1) Identification.* All merchandise collected by a proprietor or his agent for transport to his warehouse shall be receipted. In addition, all merchandise entered in a warehouse will be recorded in a receiving report or document using a Customs entry number or unique identifier if an alternate inventory control method has been approved. All merchandise will be traceable to a Customs entry and supporting documentation.

(2) *Quantity verification.* Quantities received will be reconciled to a receiving report or document such as an invoice with any discrepancy reported to the port director as provided in §19.6(a).

(3) *Recordation.* Merchandise received will be accurately recorded in the accounting and inventory system records from the receiving report or document

using the Customs entry number or unique identifier if an alternative inventory control method has been approved.

(d) *Accountability for merchandise in a warehouse*—(1) *Identification of merchandise*. The Customs entry number or unique identifier, as applicable under §19.4(b)(8), will be used to identify and trace merchandise.

(2) *Inventory records*. The inventory records will specify by Customs entry number or unique identifier if an alternative inventory control method is approved:

(i) The location of the merchandise within the warehouse;

(ii) Except for merchandise in general order, the cost or value of the merchandise, unless the proprietor's financial records maintain cost or value and the records are made available for Customs review; and

(iii) The beginning balance, cumulative receipts and withdrawals, adjustments, destructions, and current balance on hand by date and quantity.

(3) *Theft, shortage, overage or damage*. Any theft or suspected theft or overage or any extraordinary shortage or damage (equal to one percent or more of the value of the merchandise in an entry or covered by a unique identifier; or if the missing merchandise is subject to duties and taxes in excess of \$100) shall be immediately brought to the attention of the port director, and confirmed in writing within five business days after the shortage, overage, or damage has been brought to the attention of the port director. An entry for warehouse must be filed for all overages by the person with the right to make entry within five business days of the date of discovery. The applicable duties, taxes and interest on thefts and shortages so reported shall be paid by the responsible party to Customs within 20 calendar days following the end of the calendar month in which the shortage is discovered. The port director may allow the consolidation of duties and taxes applicable to multiple shortages into one payment; however, the amount applicable to each warehouse entry is to be listed on the submission and shall specify the applicable duty, tax and interest. These same requirements shall apply when cumulative thefts, shortages or overages under a specific entry or unique identifier total one percent or more of the value of the merchandise or if the duties and taxes owed exceed \$100. Upon identification, the proprietor shall record all shortages and overages in its inventory control and recordkeeping system, whether or not they are required to be reported to the port director at the time. The proprietor must also record all shortages and overages as required in the Customs Form 300 or annual reconciliation report under paragraphs (g) or (h) of this section, as appropriate. Duties and taxes applicable to any non-extraordinary shortage or damage and not required to be paid earlier must be reported and submitted to the port director no later than the date the certification of preparation of Customs Form 300 is due or at the time the certification of preparation of the annual reconciliation report is due, as prescribed in paragraphs (g) or (h) of this section. Discrepancies found in a Class 9 warehouse with integrated locations as set forth in §19.35(c) will be the net discrepancies for a unique identifier (see §19.4(b)(8)(ii) of this part) such that overages within one sales location will be offset against shortages in another location that is within the integrated location. A Class 9 proprietor who transfers merchandise between facilities in different ports without being required to file a rewarehouse entry in

accordance with §144.34 of this chapter may offset overages and shortages within the same unique identifier for merchandise located in stores in different ports (see §19.4(b)(8)(ii) of this part).

(4) *Permit file folders*—(i) *Maintenance*. Permit file folders shall be maintained and kept up to date by filing all receipts, damage or shortage reports, manipulation requests, withdrawals, removals and blanket permit summaries within five business days after the event occurs. The permit file folders shall be kept in a secure area and shall be made available for inspection by Customs at all reasonable hours.

(ii) *Review*. When the final withdrawal of merchandise relating to a specific warehouse entry, general order or seizure occurs, the warehouse proprietor shall: review the permit file folder to ensure that all necessary documentation is in the file folder accounting for the merchandise covered by the entry; notify Customs of any merchandise covered by the warehouse entry, general order or seizure which has not been withdrawn or removed; and file the permit file folder with Customs within 30 calendar days after final withdrawal, except as allowed by paragraph (b)(4)(iv) of this section. The permit file folder for merchandise not withdrawn during the general order period shall be submitted to the port director upon receipt from Customs of the Customs Form 6043.

(iii) *Exemption to maintenance requirement*. Maintenance of permit file folders will not be required, if the proprietor has an automated system capable of: satisfactorily summarizing all actions by Customs warehouse entry; providing upon demand by Customs an entry activity summary report which lists all individual receipts, withdrawals, destructions, manipulations and adjustments by warehouse entry and is cross-referenced to the source documents for each transaction; and maintaining source documents so that the documents can be readily retrieved upon request. Failure to provide the entry activity summary report or documentation supporting the entry activity summary report upon demand by the port director or the field director of regulatory audit could result in reinstatement by the port director of the requirement to maintain the permit file folder for all warehouse entries. When final withdrawal is made, the proprietor must submit the entry activity summary report to Customs. Prior to submission, the proprietor must ensure the accuracy of the summary report and assure that all supporting documentation is on file and available for review if requested by Customs.

(iv) *Exemption to submission requirement*. At the discretion of the port director, a proprietor may be allowed to furnish formal notification of final withdrawal in lieu of the requirement to submit the permit file folder or entry activity summary within 30 calendar days of each final withdrawal. If approved to use this procedure the proprietor could be required by the port director to submit permit file folders or entry activity summaries on a selective basis. Failure to promptly provide the permit file folder or entry activity summary upon request by the port director or the field director of regulatory audit could result in withdrawal of this privilege.

(5) *Physical inventory*. The proprietor shall take at least an annual physical inventory of all merchandise in the warehouse, or periodic cycle counts of selected categories of merchandise such that each category is counted at least

once during the year, with prior notification of the date(s) given to Customs so that Customs personnel may observe or participate in the inventory if deemed necessary. If the proprietor of a Class 2 or Class 9 warehouse has merchandise covered by one warehouse entry, but stored in multiple warehouse facilities as provided for under §144.34 of this chapter, the facility where the original entry was filed must reconcile the on-hand balances at all locations with the record balance for those entries with merchandise in multiple locations. The proprietor shall notify the port director of any discrepancies, record appropriate adjustments in the inventory control and recordkeeping system, and make required payments and entries to Customs, in accordance with paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(e) *Withdrawal of merchandise from a warehouse.* All bonded merchandise withdrawn from a warehouse will be accurately recorded within the inventory control and recordkeeping system. The inventory control and recordkeeping system must have the capability to trace all withdrawals back to a Customs entry and to ultimate disposition of the merchandise by the proprietor.

(f) *Special provisions for use of FIFO inventory procedures—(1) Notification.* A proprietor who wishes to use FIFO procedures for all or part of the merchandise in a bonded warehouse shall provide the port director a written certification that: The proprietor has read and understands Customs FIFO procedures set forth in this section; the proprietor's procedures are in accordance with Customs FIFO procedures, and the proprietor agrees to abide by those procedures; and the proprietor of a public warehouse will obtain the written consent of any importer using the warehouse before applying FIFO procedures to their merchandise.

(2) *Qualifying merchandise.* FIFO inventory procedures may be used only for fungible merchandise. For purposes of this section, “fungible merchandise” means merchandise which is identical and interchangeable for all commercial purposes. While commercial interchangeability is usually decided between buyer and seller or between proprietor and importer, Customs is the final arbiter of fungibility in bonded warehouses. The criteria for determining whether merchandise is fungible include, but are not limited to, Governmental and recognized industrial standards, part numbers, tariff classification, value, brand name, unit of quantity (such as barrels, gallons, pounds, pieces), model number, style and same kind and quality. Fungible textile and textile products which are withdrawn from a Class 9 warehouse may be accounted for using FIFO inventory procedures, inasmuch as such articles would be exempt from textile quotas.

(3) *Merchandise specifically excluded.* FIFO procedures cannot be applied to the following merchandise, as well as any other merchandise which does not comply with the requirements of paragraph (f)(2) of this section:

(i) Merchandise subject to quota, visa or export restrictions chargeable to different countries of origin;

(ii) Textile and textile products of different quota categories;

(iii) Merchandise with different tariff classifications or rates of duty, except where the difference is within the merchandise itself (such as kits, merchandise in unusual containers) or where the tariff classification or dutiability is determined only by conditions upon withdrawal (for example, withdrawal for vessel supplies, bonded wool transactions);

(iv) Merchandise with different legal requirements for marking, labeling or stamping;

(v) Merchandise with different trademarks;

(vi) Merchandise of different grades or qualities;

(vii) Merchandise with different importers of record;

(viii) Damaged or deteriorated merchandise;

(ix) Restricted merchandise; or

(x) General order, abandoned or seized merchandise.

(4) *Maintenance of FIFO.* FIFO procedures used for merchandise in any inventory category, must be used consistently throughout the warehouse storage and recordkeeping practices and procedures for the merchandise. For example, merchandise may not be added to inventory by FIFO but withdrawn by bypassing certain inventory layers to reach a specific warehouse entry other than the oldest one. However, this does not preclude the use of specific identification for some merchandise in a warehouse entry and FIFO for other merchandise, so long as they are segregated in physical storage and clearly distinguished in the inventory and accounting records.

(5) *FIFO recordkeeping.* In the inventory and accounting records, the proprietor shall establish an inventory layer for each warehouse entry represented in each inventory category. The layers shall be established in the order of time of acceptance of the entry or by the date of importation of merchandise covered by each applicable warehouse entry. There shall be no mixing of layering both by time of acceptance and date of importation in the same warehouse. Records for each layer shall, as a minimum, show the warehouse entry number, date of acceptance, date of importation, quantity and unit of quantity. They shall also show for each entry the type of warehouse withdrawal number or other specific removal event charged against the entry, by date and quantity. Each addition to or deduction from the inventory category shall be posted in the appropriate inventory category within 2 business days after the event occurs. All FIFO records and documentation shall consistently use the same unit of quantity within each inventory category.

(6) *Entry requirements.* Warehouse entries covering any merchandise to be accounted for under FIFO must be prominently marked "FIFO" on the face of the entry document. The entry document or an attachment thereto shall show the unique identifier of each inventory category to be accounted for under FIFO, the quantity in each inventory category and the unit of quantity.

(7) *Receipts.* Any shortages, overages, or damage found upon receipt shall be attributed to the entry under which the merchandise was received. FIFO procedures will not take effect until the merchandise is physically placed in the storage location for the inventory category represented in the entry.

(8) *Manipulation.* When manipulation results in a product with a different unique identifier, the inventory and accounting records shall show the quantities of merchandise in each inventory category appearing in the product covered by the new unique identifier. The withdrawal shall show the unique identifiers of both the materials used in the manipulation and the product as manipulated. The

quantities of the original unique identifiers will be deducted from their respective warehouse entries on a FIFO basis when the resultant product is withdrawn.

(9) *Discontinuance of FIFO.* A proprietor may voluntarily discontinue the use of FIFO procedures for all or part of the merchandise currently under FIFO by providing written notification to the port director. The notification shall clearly describe the merchandise, by commercial names and unique identifiers, to be removed from FIFO. Following notification, the merchandise shall be segregated in both the recordkeeping system and the physical location by warehouse entry number and the quantities so removed shall be deducted from the appropriate FIFO inventory category balances. Merchandise so removed shall be maintained under the specific identification inventory method. FIFO procedures which were voluntarily discontinued may be reinstated, but not for merchandise covered by any warehouse entry for which FIFO was discontinued.

(g) *Warehouse proprietor submission.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (h) of this section or §19.19(b) of this part, the warehouse proprietor must prepare a Warehouse Proprietor's Submission on Customs Form (CF) 300 within 45 calendar days from the end of the business year and maintain the Submission on file for 5 years from the end of the business year covered by the Submission. The proprietor must submit to the port director, within 10 business days after preparation of the CF 300, a letter signed by the proprietor certifying that the CF 300 has been prepared, is available for Customs review, and is accurate. If the proprietor of a Class 2 or Class 9 warehouse has merchandise covered by one warehouse entry, but stored in multiple warehouse facilities as provided for under §144.34 of this chapter, the CF 300 shall cover all locations and warehouses of the proprietor. An alternative format may be used for providing the information required on the CF 300.

(h) *Annual reconciliation—(1) Report.* Instead of preparing Customs Form 300 as required under paragraph (g) of this section, the proprietor of a class 2, importers' private bonded warehouse, and proprietors of classes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 warehouses if the warehouse proprietor and the importer are the same party, must prepare a reconciliation report within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year unless the port director authorizes an extension for reasonable cause. The proprietor shall retain the annual reconciliation report for 5 years from the end of the fiscal year covered by the report. The report must be available for a spot check or audit by Customs, but need not be furnished to Customs unless requested. There is no form specified for the preparation of the report.

(2) *Information required.* The report must contain the company name; address of the warehouse; class of warehouse; date of inventory or information on cycle counts; a description of merchandise for each entry or unique identifier, quantity on hand at the beginning of the year, cumulative receipts and transfers (by unit), quantity on hand at the end of the year, and cumulative positive and negative adjustments (by unit) made during the year. If the proprietor of a Class 2 or Class 9 warehouse has merchandise covered by one warehouse entry, but stored in multiple warehouse facilities as provided for under §144.34 of this chapter, the reconciliation shall cover all locations and warehouses of the proprietor at the same port. If the annual reconciliation includes entries for which merchandise

was transferred to a warehouse without filing a rewarehouse entry, as allowed under §144.34, the annual reconciliation must contain sufficient detail to show all required information by location where the merchandise is stored. For example, if merchandise covered by a single entry is stored in warehouses located in 3 different ports, the annual reconciliation should specify individually the beginning and ending inventory balances, cumulative receipts, transfers, and positive and negative adjustments for each location.

(3) *Certification.* The proprietor must submit to the port director within 10 business days after preparation of the annual reconciliation report, a letter signed by the proprietor certifying that the annual reconciliation has been prepared, is available for Customs review, and is accurate. The certification letter must contain the proprietor's IRS number; date of fiscal year end; the name and street address of the warehouse; the name, title, and telephone number of the person having custody of the records; and the address where the records are stored. Reporting of shortages and overages based on the annual reconciliation will be made in accordance with paragraph (d)(3) of this section. Any previously unreported shortages and overages should be reported to the port director and any unpaid duties, taxes and fees should be paid at this time.

(i) *System review.* The proprietor shall perform an annual internal review of the inventory control and recordkeeping system and shall prepare and maintain on file a report identifying any deficiency discovered and corrective action taken, to ensure that the system meets the requirements of this part.

(j) *Special requirements.* A warehouse proprietor submission (CF 300) or annual reconciliation must be prepared for each facility or location as defined in §§19.2(a) and 19.35(c) of this part. When merchandise is transferred from one facility or location to another without filing a rewarehouse entry, as provided for in §144.34(c) of this chapter, the submission/reconciliation for the warehouse where the entry was originally filed should account for all merchandise under the warehouse entry, indicating the quantity in each location.

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