

SECURITY

Enhancement Plans

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland, the Port of Wilmington initiated several measures to protect both cargo and people. One of the more significant initiatives involves the protection of food products – a potential life saving effort impacting 30 percent of the U.S. population as well as consumers in Canada.

Among other cargoes, the Port of Wilmington, Delaware serves as the major port of entry for meat, fruit and juice concentrate products. These food products have destinations in the U.S. and can conceivably be on grocery shelves everywhere east of the Mississippi and throughout Eastern Canada within 24 hours after discharge.

Acting on the warnings issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for harm by food contamination or other bio-terrorist threats, the Port of Wilmington's Security Department developed a safety initiative to protect all food products leaving the Port.

“The new Truck/Trailer Seal Program is offered free to our customers as a safety measure for all food cargoes departing our Port,” Security Manager Bill Boles reported. The program provides a tamper resistant, numbered, plastic seal on the doors of all truck trailers leaving the Port of Wilmington carrying a food product. The seal number is placed on the bills of lading and is checked by the security officers at the main gate when the trucks leave the Port. No truck trailer can leave the Port delivering a food product without a seal.

“If the seal on the container is broken or does not match the number on the bill of lading, the receiver will know that the trailer may have been tampered with after leaving our Port,” Boles explained.

With a 20 percent increase in security workforce, the Port has also beefed up its warehouse patrol “to further protect our precious cargo while in storage in our warehouses,” Boles said. He added that the lighting installed on the new Auto & RoRo berth road has significantly increased security at the Port's southern perimeter.

In addition, the Port of Wilmington has initiated a 24-hour, controlled, electronic access system with a color coordinated bar code ID card for all Port employees and employees of Port tenants representing over 60 companies. Prior to September 11, controlled access was only in affect from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Another major activity that has kept Bill Boles and the Security Department busy over the last several months is the opportunity for the Port of Wilmington to participate in piloting a Homeland Security initiative.

As a result of efforts spearheaded by the Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River & Bay, the Federal Transportation Security Administration has expressed interest in having the Port of Wilmington be the first port nationwide to install and implement the Transportation Worker Identification Card (TWIC). Additionally, the Port of Wilmington has been meeting with other regional ports to discuss security and other information processing needs on a bi-monthly basis.

Bill Boles reported that the information technologies that are used to track



The Port of Wilmington is taking extra security measures to protect food cargo by initiating a Truck/Trailer Seal Program. Security officers carefully inspect reefer truck trailers to ensure that the seal and of bill of lading numbers match as trucks leave the Port.



personnel and cargo entering the Port today represent the largest database in the Delaware River and Bay community. He credits this fact with being chosen as a candidate to pilot this Homeland Security initiative.

“The Port’s bar code information technology system designed by DSPC’s technology division, First State Innovation, has been providing our Port with cargo tracking information and is now being expanded to support the TWIC pilot program,” Boles said. “As a part of the TWIC Pathfinder Project, the Port of Wilmington is currently working with federal officials to implement this program on the Delaware River and eventually nationwide.”

Boles explained that long before September 11, the United States Customs Service initiated a modernization effort to improve customs trade enforcement and administrative operations. The scope of this effort is vast as the entire program will span 15 years and reaches across the entire U.S. Customs Service and into the trade community as well as interacting with other government agencies.

In the last decade, trade has grown 132 percent and by 2004, it is estimated that Customs will be processing more than 30 million commercial entries a year, up from 12.3 million in 1994. Increasing demands on security and tighter boarder regulations have further added to the need for improved tracking and processing systems.

With these advanced tracking systems in place, the government will serve as a data collection and distribution facility – a “single window” system through which information necessary to trade transactions can flow efficiently from traders to agencies. For example, this information can include the legal

admissibility of imported merchandise, the duty applicable to imported merchandise, the safe or unsafe condition of a truck intended to be used on U.S. highways, or whether food products are safe for consumption.

“The benefits of this extensive data base project are obvious not only as an efficiency

improvement but also because of the intrinsic security and safety enhancements,” Boles said.

The Port of Wilmington looks forward to the opportunity to be a part of these major international trade system enhancements. “We are excited about being selected to pilot this project as it has far reaching systems that protect and strengthen America’s borders as well as improve efficiencies for the entire trade community,” said DSPC Executive Director Adam McBride.

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