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All Traders and Declaring Agents



FORMATION OF SINGAPORE CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY

The Government has announced that with effect from 1 April 2003, two departments – ‘Singapore Customs’ (SC) and ‘Immigration & Checkpoints Authority’ (ICA) – would be formed.

2 SC will bring together the revenue enforcement and trade documentation functions of CED, Trade Facilitation Division (TFD) and Statistics Audit Unit (SAU) of IE Singapore (IE), to focus on trade facilitation and revenue enforcement, to provide businesses with a single point of contact by having an integrated customs and trade enforcement function.

3 ICA will bring together the checkpoint clearance function of the current Customs and Excise Department (CED) with the immigration control function of the current Singapore Immigration and Registration (SIR) as a single command, responsible for the security of Singapore's borders against the entry of undesirable persons and cargo through our land, air and sea checkpoints. This is to ensure a closely coordinated, quick and effective response against any security threats or crises.

Permit Declarations

4 All existing permit conditions and types of permits for clearance of cargo at the checkpoints will remain come 1 April 2003. From this date, the approving authority will be SC instead of IE and CED. In the longer term, the entire trade documentation and facilitation process will be further simplified and streamlined.

Supervision of stuffing and unstuffing operations

5 The role of the supervision of stuffing and unstuffing operations will still be undertaken by SC without any change in supervision fees, application and payment processes.

The Way of Excellence in Public Service

Cargo Clearance

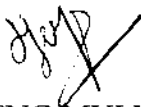
6 SC officers will be stationed at the majority of the checkpoints. However, clearance of cargo will be carried out by ICA officers. When infringements are detected, ICA officers will refer those with revenue implications to the SC officers for further investigation. At checkpoints without SC officers (e.g Ports), the cargo will be released under a letter of undertaking and cases will be referred subsequently to SC for follow up investigation. Cargo clearance processes will remain simple and convenient.

Public Enquiries

7 Traders can continue to liaise with TFD and SAU officers at the Bugis Junction Office and contact officers at the existing phone or fax numbers as they will remain unchanged. This interim arrangement will continue until 5 May 2003 after which the officers will be re-located to the Revenue House Office. The SC general enquiry line will remain at 6355 2000. Traders who require more information or are interested in further updates can also log on to the revamped SC website (<http://www.customs.gov.sg>) or (<http://www.tradenet.gov.sg>) for trade procedures.

8 Similarly, traders can direct their enquiries on cargo clearance procedures to the ICA general enquiry line at 6391 6100 or email to ica_feedback@ica.gov.sg. For further information on ICA, traders can access the ICA website at <http://www.ica.gov.sg>.

9 All efforts have been taken to ensure a smooth transition so that there will be minimal disruptions to businesses' transactions with the government come 1 April 2003.



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HEAD CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
for DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CUSTOMS & EXCISE