

# Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the C-TPAT Program: Part II

by Michelle Kelley - Friday, September 28, 2007

According to the results of survey released last month by the University of Virginia, U.S. importers are reaping the rewards of C-TPAT membership. Conducted on behalf of U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP), the survey queried more than 1,700 C-TPAT certified companies to assess the costs and benefits of C-TPAT participation.

## Survey Findings

- 1/3 of importers reported that C-TPAT participation has decreased their number of U.S. Customs inspections by more than 50%.
- Nearly 25% of importers reported that C-TPAT participation has increased their ability to predict lead time.
- Importers reported cost savings from merely implementing C-TPAT measures. For example, “testing the integrity of supply chain security” generated an average cost savings of \$56,690.

Given the release of this report, we figured that there was no better time to publish Part II in our series, *Everything you ever wanted to know about the C-TPAT program*.

## Part II: What C-TPAT can do for you

### Become a partner instead of a target

C-TPAT is all about partnership. In order for Customs to achieve its ultimate goal (a secure border), it must enlist the help of those that comprise the international supply chain. Agree to join the cause, and suddenly Customs sees your enterprise in a much more favorable light. That is to say, becoming a C-TPAT member raises your company’s standing in the eyes of Customs, confirming your commitment to securing the supply chain. As a result, you become more of a partner and less of a target to Customs.

### Importer Self Assessments

As a member of C-TPAT and an importer, you may be eligible to apply for CBP’s Import Self Assessment (ISA) program. Though there are some additional requirements—your company must be a C-TPAT certified, U.S. resident importer, with two years of importing experience—if approved, your company becomes exempt from Customs compliance audits. In short, you become responsible for your own audit. See the [ISA page on Customs’s website](#) for more information.

## Breaks on container exams

When it comes to container inspections, C-TPAT membership certainly has its advantages. Not only do members experience fewer container exams, but should any of your freight be slated for secondary inspection by Customs, it will receive first priority by being moved to the front of the processing line. C-TPAT members also receive special treatment when it comes to cargo release. You are probably aware that when importing a shipment with multiple containers, U.S. Customs requires that all containers must be held until released. If Customs flags one of those containers for examination, that container and all other containers listed on the entry must be held at the port until Customs completes inspection of the flagged container. As a result, instead of having just one of your containers delayed, your whole shipment is in fact delayed. Moreover, depending on how long the inspection takes, if you exceed the number of free days allowed by the port operator, you may be charged demurrage (a storage surcharge) for the entire shipment. Not so for C-TPAT members, who may access a shipment's remaining (non-flagged) containers right away, avoiding delays and demurrage.

## Your very own C-TPAT supply chain security specialist

Every C-TPAT member company is assigned their own Customs Supply Chain Security Specialist. Formerly only available to large enterprises, this specialist serves as your company's CBP liaison, working with you to validate and enhance security procedures and training. Imagine having a direct lifeline to Customs, someone who is familiar with your company and is there to help you fortify your security practices. *Stay tuned for the November issue of Global View for the third and final installment of our series: The ins and outs of C-TPAT validation. [Part I: The Origins of C-TPAT](#) **Related Resources** [C-TPAT Cost/Benefit Survey](#) [752kb PDF] [Importer Self Assessment Program \(U.S. Customs\)](#)*



<http://mohawkglobal.com/global-news/everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-the-c-tpat-program-part-ii/>