



157 Tradeport Drive
Atlanta, GA 30354

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

INFORMATION BULLETIN

September 15, 2025

TO: Importers, Customs Brokers, Freight Forwarders, Exporters, Carriers, Bonded Warehouse Proprietors, Container Freight Station Operators, Centralized Examination Station Operators, Terminal Operators, and Other Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Centralized Examination Station (CES) Solicitation for the Port of Atlanta, GA.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to announce to the local importing community that the selection process for applications to operate a Centralized Examination Station (CES) for the Port of Atlanta, Georgia opened to solicit applicants and to provide guidelines for the application process. The solicitation period commences **September 15, 2025**, and expires on **November 14, 2025**. The initial phase of the selection process will consist of a 60-day application period. Pursuant to 19 CFR 118.2, public comments are invited and must be received within 30 calendar days from the date of the notice. The Area Port Director is required to issue this Information Bulletin pursuant to 19 CFR 118.2.

DEADLINES

- Applications to operate a CES must be received by **November 14, 2025** (60 calendar days from the date of this Information Bulletin). Applications received after this date and time will not be considered. Applications found to be incomplete may not be considered.
- Public comments pursuant to 19 CFR 118.2 must be received by **October 15, 2025** (30 calendar days from the date of this Information Bulletin)

SCOPE

This solicitation is for applicants within the geographic area of consideration for potential CES locations are within the Port of Atlanta port limits as described in 19 C.F.R. 101.3 **and** within a 9-mile radius of the CBP Port Office, 157 Tradeport Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30354. The length of the CES agreement will be five (5) years from the date of the written CES Agreement.

The Area Port Director has determined one (1) CES is required in the jurisdiction to best meet the examination requirements of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), facilitate the movement of cargo in the port, and provide competitive service to the trade community.

BACKGROUND

On January 22, 1993, a final rule was published in the Federal Register amending the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) enacting 19 CFR 118 (Appendix E), Centralized Examination Stations, effective February 22, 1993. Implementing procedures are contained in CBP Directive 3270-007A, dated May 6, 2012, a copy of which can be obtained at the following: <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3270-007A.pdf>.

The regulations were implemented to improve effectiveness and increase efficiency and service by centralizing and focusing resources and minimizing travel time required in performing cargo examinations at multiple facilities within a port's jurisdiction.

A CES is a non-government owned and operated facility at which import/export merchandise designated by CBP for physical examination is made available for examination. Since the first selection period for the CES program in 1994, CBP has increased efforts to concentrate on higher-risk shipments by relying more on information technology and non-intrusive examination procedures to examine shipments entering or exiting the United States that pose more of a threat and have an associated identified risk. As a result, the number of physical examinations required has decreased, while the quality of those examinations is more thorough.

Applicants should be aware that while utilization of information technology and high-tech equipment enables CBP to be more selective in selecting cargo for examination, the number of physical inspections may fluctuate. CES applicants should recognize that minimum numbers of examinations cannot be established.

CES OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants tentatively selected to operate a CES must sign a written agreement with CBP before commencing operations (19 CFR 118.3). Failure to execute a written agreement with CBP in a timely manner will result in the revocation of that applicant's tentative selection and may result in tentative selection of another applicant or republication of the notice soliciting applications.

The applicant selected to operate a CES in the Port of Atlanta as outlined in 19 CFR 118.4, agrees by signing of agreement to accept responsibility for the following:

- a) The applicant must comply fully with the requirements of Executive Order 12989, dated February 13, 1996, **as amended by Executive Order 13465 of June 6, 2008**, particularly with Sections 1 (a) and (b), which pertain to the unlawful employment of aliens and to the anti-discrimination requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act and of any other applicable law.
- b) Maintain the facility designated as the CES in conformity especially with the security standards as outlined in the approved application, "Physical Security Standards for CBP Bonded Facilities" (Appendix D) dated February 1, 2016;
- c) Provide adequate personnel and equipment to ensure reliable and expeditious service for the opening, presentation for inspection and closing of all types of

- cargo designated for examination by CBP. CES Operators shall grant Front of the Line (FOL) privileges to Tier 3 Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) members for the examination of cargo consistent with 6 USC 966(c)(3) except where granting such privileges may result in damage to other merchandise, such as perishable goods, waiting for CBP examination. Service to other importers and carriers must be provided on a "first come-first served" basis;
- d) Assess service fees as outlined in the fee schedule (Appendix B) included in the approved application or as changed according to 19 CFR 118.5 and bill users directly for services rendered;
 - e) Assume responsibility for any charges or expenses incurred in connection with the operation of the CES;
 - f) Maintain, at his/her own expense, adequate liability insurance with respect to the property within his/her control and persons having access to the CES;
 - g) Keep current a list of names, dates of birth, social security numbers (social security numbers are voluntary, but failure to provide may hinder investigation) of all employees, to include full-time, part-time, casual and temporary employees, filed with the Area Port Director pursuant to 118.11. Submit additions to or deletions from the list in writing to the Area Port Director within ten (10) calendar days of the commencement or termination of an employee's employment;
 - h) Maintain a CBP Form 301, Custodial Bond of \$100,000 set by the Area Port Director. Receive and keep safe all merchandise delivered to the CES for examination. The bond shall include liability for transporting merchandise to the CES from within the district boundaries (see definition of district in 19 CFR 112). The CES operator assumes such liability when he/she picks up merchandise for transportation to his/her facility. The operator also agrees to increase the amount of the bond if deemed appropriate by the Area Port Director;
 - i) Maintain and make available for CBP examination all records connected with the operation of the CES upon request and retain those records for not less than five (5) years from the date of transaction or examination conducted pursuant to the agreement to operate the CES;
 - j) Submit, if requested by CBP, the fingerprints of all employees, to include full-time, part-time, casual and temporary employees, involved in the CES operation;
 - k) Provide parking spaces, appropriate sanitary facilities and potable water to CBP personnel at no charge or at a charge of \$1 per year.
 - l) Perform in accordance with any other reasonable requirements imposed by the Area Port Director;
 - m) Provide transportation for merchandise to the CES from within the district boundaries (see definition of "district" 19 CFR 112.1) when requested by CBP. In these situations, CES operator shall receipt for the merchandise when he picks it up and assume liability for the merchandise at that time.

- n) Provide written notification, to the Area Port Director within ten (10) calendar days of learning that the proposed CES operator, or any officer, managing official or a person that the Area Port Director determines is exercising substantial ownership or control over such operator or officer, is indicted for, convicted of, or has committed acts which would constitute a felony, or a misdemeanor involving theft or a theft-connected crime.
- o) Ensure that the CES facility complies with all applicable Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requirements;
- p) Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances and/or regulations, as they would apply to the fulfillment of the responsibilities and service provisions as a designated CES operator;
- q) The CES operator will comply fully with the McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act, 41 U.S.C. § 351, *et seq.*, applicable regulations promulgated by the Department of Labor, and the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) found at FAR 52.222-1, 52.222-41 through 52.222-43 (Appendix F)
- r) Execute and comply with a Memorandum of Agreement to Reimburse CBP, which outlines the agreement between CBP and the CES operator regarding the operator's responsibility to reimburse CBP for costs related to providing information technology services at the CES location.

APPLICATION PROCESS

All interested parties must meet the minimum standards identified in (Appendix A) and must submit the attached CES Application Form and Fee Schedule (Appendix B) to the Area Port Director, Atlanta, Georgia

Applicants are requested to provide an Authorization for Release of Information Form (Appendix C) for all people who have direct or indirect financial interest in the proposed CES operation and are officers and/or managing officials of the proposed facility. The submission of this release is voluntary; however, failure to provide the authorization may hinder the investigation process.

The application must include a detailed list of equipment showing that the applicant can make a diverse variety of cargo available for examination in an efficient and timely manner. The equipment list must be submitted on the company letterhead.

All applicants must also submit a corporate resolution authorizing the signatory to act on behalf of the corporation. Any false statements on the application may result in applicant disqualification and possible prosecution under the provisions of 18 USC 1001.

All applicants are strongly urged to review 19 CFR 118 to obtain a full understanding of CBP's expectations of a Centralized Examination Station applicant and operator.

Applications must be received by the Area Port Director on or before **November 14, 2025**, which is sixty (60) calendar days from the date of issuance of this Information Bulletin. Applications received after the closing date/time will not be considered. Applications found

to be incomplete may not be considered. During the first thirty (30) days of this period, the public may submit written comments pursuant to 19 C.F.R. 118.2 to the Area Port Director.

All applications and comments should be addressed to:

Zachary Thomas, Area Port Director
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
157 Tradeport Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30354

SELECTION PROCESS

At the end of the sixty (60) day application submission period, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will publish a list of applications, including names, facility addresses, fee schedules, equipment and numbers of employees to be involved in the CES operation. At that time, the public will again be provided thirty (30) calendar days in which to submit written comments to the Area Port Director. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the Area Port Director, based upon a review of all applications under criteria set forth in 19 CFR 118.11 and any public comments submitted under 19 CFR 118.2 or 118.12, shall determine whether a CES operator should be selected.

The applicant selected to operate a CES will be notified in writing by the Area Port Director of his/her tentative selection. The selection shall become final upon execution of the written agreement between CBP and the applicant under 19 CFR 118.3, and the Area Port Director will advise the public of the final selection and of the tentative date on which the CES will commence operations under the agreement in accordance with the notice procedures set forth in 19 CFR 118.2.

Applicants should be aware that their designation of CES status covers only the facility described in their application. If any successful applicant changes the location of the facility during the time frame of the agreement, his/her status as a CES is terminated and CBP may initiate a new selection for a replacement CES facility.

Any questions concerning the application process may be directed to Zachary Thomas, Area Port Director, Brad Stroud, Assistant Port Director or Parris Hawkins, Deputy Assistant Port Director at zachary.c.thomas@cbp.dhs.gov; michael.b.stroud@cbp.dhs.gov; parris.n.hawkins@cbp.dhs.gov.

Zachary Thomas
Area Port Director

DISCLAIMER: This forum is provided for your convenience, and the material is intended to provide overall guidance. Reliance solely on this material and information may not be considered reasonable. Importers should review Treasury Decision 97-96, published in the Federal Register of December 4, 1997 and in the Customs Bulletin of December 17, 1997 for a discussion of the reasonable care concept.

Attachments

Appendix A- CES Application, including Minimum Standards, Attachment 1&2

Appendix B- Fee Schedule

Appendix C- Authorization for Release of Information

Appendix D- Physical Security Standards for CBP Bonded Facilities

Appendix E- CES Regulations (19 CFR 118)

Appendix F- FAR 22 & Wage determination