

Southern Currents



Notice to the Area Port of New Orleans Trade Community

Date: August 9, 2023

No: 23-022

SUBJECT: Vessel Entrance and Clearance System [VECS] Rollout in CBP Louisiana Seaports {New Orleans, Gramercy, Baton Rouge, Morgan City and Lake Charles}

From CBP Field Operations Headquarters:

CBP has begun to roll out the [Vessel Entrance and Clearance System \(VECS\)](#) pilot program which is a complete digitization and automation of the vessel Entrance and Clearance process. VECS will allow vessel masters, operators, and agents to submit certain vessel entry and clearance data and requests to CBP electronically, instead of submitting paper forms, as currently required by CBP regulations. Specifically, this VECS will allow participants to submit the data required on CBP Forms 26, 226, 1300, 1302, 1303, 1304, and 3171 electronically through VECS prior to arrival or departure from designated ports.

System/Account Requirements:

- VECS operates within the Automated Cargo Environment (ACE) under a new Vessel Agency Account type. **We cannot emphasize enough the importance of needing this account.** We have seen for some it is not an easy process to setup, and each agent who will use VECS will need their own User Accounts (Top Account > Vessel Agency Sub Account > User Account).

My ask is that you please start with finding your Top Account Owner and having them follow the guides to create a Vessel Agency Account and User Accounts. If a Top Account does not exist, then please follow the instructions for having the person who would be the Top Account owner apply for account creation. A step-by-step guide is outlined on our [VECS website](#). Click the link. **Then let us know if you were successful or if you need additional assistance with locating or creating the correct account types.**

Note: If your company offers services such as manifest filing, or entry/in-bond filing OR if your agency is in another port where VECS has been rolled out a Top Account may already be established and may simply be in another office you aren't familiar with. Please check with your leadership and coordinate within your office or across offices if your company operates in various regions. Using an already established account is always the easiest. Creating a new Top Account is what takes the most time. **In some cases, it could be up to 2-3 weeks,** or more in extreme cases, meaning it is important to get started now.

For any questions or issues, you can contact OFO-MANIFESTBRANCH@cbp.dhs.gov.

From CBP Area Port of New Orleans:

- I anticipate implementing the VECS Pilot in Louisiana seaports within 90-120 days, so time is getting short to have automated ACE accounts established.
- Please note that once the VECS Pilot is implemented in Louisiana, vessel agents will have two (2) options to conduct vessel entrance and clearances to include the presentation of all pertinent CBP forms (26, 226, 1300, 1302, 1303, 1304, and 3171):
 - Via the national, CBP automated process (VECS).
 - Via in person appointments at the Customs Offices Mondays – Fridays, in person presenting paper documents.
- ***** Submitting vessel entrance and clearance documents via email will be discontinued when the VECS pilot starts in Louisiana *****
- Additional information, to include training, will be disseminated closer to the pilot rollout in Louisiana.
- Now is the time to ensure that your company has the appropriate ACE accounts established to start using VECS in Louisiana – very soon.
- For questions or issue establishing your ACE accounts or the VECS program please contact OFO-MANIFESTBRANCH@cbp.dhs.gov.
- For local questions or concerns please contact Assistant Port Director Mark Choina via email at mark.s.choina@cbp.dhs.gov or the appropriate Gramercy, Baton Rouge, Morgan City or Lake Charles Port Director.

Mark S. Choina
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