

Southern Currents



Notice to the Area Port of New Orleans Trade Community

Date: October 19, 2023

No: 24-005

SUBJECT: Updated ***AUTOMATED*** Procedures for Vessel Delay in Departure notifications, Vessel Clearance Cancellations, and Bridge Letter Submissions to CBP via VECS

This trade notice is to inform vessel agents of updated and automated procedures for vessel delay in departures, clearance cancellations and the submission of bridge letters.

Delay in Departures

- As stated in 19 CFR §4.60 (d), once a clearance is approved, a vessel has 48 hours to depart the CBP New Orleans Tri-Port. If there is a delay in this departure it must be reported to the CBP New Orleans Tri-Port within 72 hours after clearance. **The Vessel Entrance and Clearance System (VECS) allows for delays to be requested by the agent and approved by CBP. Once approved, there is no timeframe for when the vessel must depart the Tri-port.**
- Note: A delay in departure does not provide additional time for filing complete outbound manifests and export declarations. Complete manifests and export declarations must be filed with CBP within 4 days of clearance (19CFR 4.75b). As a reminder, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays do not count when calculating the timeframe for filing manifests.

Clearance Cancellations

- In the rare circumstances that a clearance needs to be cancelled, the agent must provide an email with an attached memo on company letterhead requesting the cancellation and stating the reason for cancellation.
- To ‘re-clear’ the vessel, a paper clearance will need to be submitted in-person to CBP for approval as VECS does not allow for clearance cancellations at this time.

Bridge Letters

- When submitting a COFR in the Document Imaging System (DIS) the bridge letter, if required, should be added as a 2nd page to the document.
- If you have any additional questions, please contact Port Director James Welch at 225-268-9454 or at JAMES.J.WELCH@cbp.dhs.gov.

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Port of New Orleans
U.S. Customs and Border Protection