



NEWS IN BRIEF

CBP Refund Checks Being Issued

During the partial government shutdown, refund checks from U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) were not issued. CBP refund checks are issued by the U.S. Treasury Department and the Treasury Department was closed during partial Government shutdown. We have been concerned about how long it would take for the Treasury Department to get back up to speed and start issuing checks. Now that the shutdown is over, we are glad to report that we received two refund checks yesterday, indicating that the checks have started to go out.

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More Information on Importing Composite Wood Products

Full enforcement of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) toxic formaldehyde emissions standards under the EPA's Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) will still go into effect on March 22, 2019.

These standards apply to three types of composite wood products:

1. Hardwood Plywood
2. MDF (medium density fiberboard)
3. Particleboard

These woods all fall under these regulations whether the wood is imported in unfinished panels or incorporated into component parts or finished goods.

The regulations require that the foreign producer have the products tested and certified for compliance by an approved third-party certifier. Importers of these products will be responsible to certify that the wood product is compliant with TSCA or certify that the product is not in compliance. The certification must include the name, telephone number, and email address of the individual who is signing the certification.

Importers will be responsible for recordkeeping for three years, as required by TSCA. The records to be kept include an invoice and bill of lading (or comparable document) proving that the product is TSCA compliant. Also, upon request by EPA importers must be able to provide records identifying the panel producer, the date produced, the supplier, and the date the product was purchased, within 30 days of the request. These records requested by the EPA are not required to be kept by the importer, but the importer will be required to obtain them from the supplier and/or producer.

The EPA has published a very helpful compliance guide with clear instructions, which can be found by [clicking here](#).

USMCA Needs Legislative Changes

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) sent Congress an outline of the statutory changes it believes will be needed, as a requirement for Congress to consider for a fast-track review of the United States, Mexico, Canada Agreement (USMCA). Included in the six-page document are changes in duty drawback, a waiver of the merchandise processing fees and changes of some specific rules of origin.

To access a PDF copy of the document, [click here](#).

USITC Publishes 2019 HTSUS

The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) has finally published the language for the 2019 Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS). U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) had already programed the changes in its system before the government shutdown and the actual changes come up in in the Automated Broker Interface (ABI) for filing entry. However, with the shutdown the USITC was closed and the actual tariff schedule could not be published as it usually is at the beginning of the year. This included not knowing the statistical changes to several tariff numbers that replaced the blanket "x" for several classifications which now require reportable quantities.

The 2019 HTS can be found on the [USITC's website](#).

By **Todd Boice**, *President*