

Southern Currents



Notice to the Area Port of New Orleans Trade Community

Date August 4, 2003

No.: 03-031

SUBJECT: AT ANCHORAGE OR IN-STREAM VESSEL INSPECTIONS

On July 24, 2003, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) modified its national policy governing all at anchorage or in-stream boardings by CBP Inspectors. Under this revised policy, CBP Inspectors are still permitted to board vessels at anchorage or in-stream, but must first obtain approval for such boardings from the Director, Field Operations. Such approvals will be granted case by case, based on the totality of the circumstances involved, and the risk factors present.

All vessels must continue to file formal entrance using the CF 3171 with CBP. Once granted formal or preliminary entry, as annotated on the CF 3171, the vessel is then allowed to initiate cargo processing, bunkering activities, and conduct ship's business, to include allowing access onboard the vessel by grain inspectors, surveyors, gaugers, and similar activities.

Independent of the granting of official entrance and the approval to commence ship's business and cargo activities, all crew members must still be inspected by CBP personnel. If inspection of any at anchorage or in-stream vessel is not conducted upon arrival and deferred to a later time, and/or location, no crew members can be granted shore leave or leave the vessel until inspected by CBP.

In cases in which it is necessary to inspect the crew upon arrival of the vessel at anchorage or in-stream, such as vessels which will remain at buoys and do not go dockside, medical reasons, crew changes, etc., the vessel agent should contact the Supervisory Immigration Inspector and articulate the reasons necessitating an at anchorage or in-stream inspection. The Supervisory Immigration Inspector will then seek approval through the appropriate channels.

Due to these new procedures, any requests for at anchorage or in-stream inspection should be made as soon as the vessel agent is aware of the need for an inspection upon arrival. For service outside of regular duty hours (0800-1700), requests must be received by 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 2:00 p.m. on Fridays for any weekend arrivals. Inspection of at anchorage or in-stream vessels can not be guaranteed if such requests are not received timely by CBP.

Questions regarding this matter should be directed to Supervisory Immigration Inspector Ron Biagas at (504) 589-4855.

/s/

Todd C. Owen
Area Port Director
New Orleans, Louisiana