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5 steps to prepare for Canada's eManifest mandate

Glenn Palanacki, Descartes Systems Group | Jan 09, 2016 12:17PM EST

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Moving data is often as important as moving freight. The Canadian eManifest is an important step toward improving security by receiving cargo and conveyance information before a shipment arrives at the border. Starting Jan. 11, highway carriers and railroads that aren't compliant with Canada Border Safety Agency's eManifest requirements will for the first time face monetary penalties. Here are the top five steps that carriers, drivers and any company involved in US–Canada highway transport should take to comply with the regulation.

Educate. Ensure that drivers are knowledgeable on eManifest procedures and why it matters. Leading carriers are providing information to drivers that note that eManifest is enforceable at all [commercial ports](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/do-rb/menu-eng.html) (<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/do-rb/menu-eng.html>) across the country. They are reminding operators that the regulation has a direct impact on drivers since it could lead to delays that may affect performance. Carriers are also ensuring that drivers know that an advance, electronic filing is temporarily not required for empty loads or in-transit shipments, but that this will change in the future.

Partner. Many carriers know that on-boarding with a technology provider that has solid industry knowledge is required to avoid fines and delays. Some eManifest scenarios are still being refined as the regulation matures. As a result, carriers need to rely on the knowledge of leading technology providers to help minimize potential penalties and assist with recordkeeping requirements.

Enroll. Carriers must register with the [CBSA to receive a carrier portal account](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/manif/portal-portal-eng.html) (<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/manif/portal-portal-eng.html>). Enrolling is easy, but carriers still have many questions. In addition, carriers will require a carrier code as well as a CBSA "Shared Secret." Portions of these first two steps involve manual paperwork that is mailed via the postal service. Starting the process now, or providing additional information that was requested, cannot be delayed.

Establish Procedures. What to do and how to do it should not be determined as the one-hour filing window approaches. Technology can be an "experience aggregator" that incorporates the knowledge and shipment scenarios of others in a centralized framework. In addition, traditional flow-charts, phone/text/email trees can be invaluable and can improve communication. Process manuals should include multiple driver types such as a chapter for CSA-registered drivers. However, it is important that the information is provided in a digital, mobile-ready format.

Optimize. Carriers can achieve excellence by looking beyond a regulatory imperative toward long-term success. They know that data is valuable. Reusing information by streaming it into other systems can help improve overall efficiency, maximize productivity and lead to an enduring competitive advantage as well as increase compliance rates.

Glenn Palanacki is product manager for North American Customs at Descartes Systems Group. For more information on eManifest requirements, visit Descartes' online [Canadian ACI and eManifest Resource Centre](https://www.descartes.com/aci-emanifest-resource-centre) (<https://www.descartes.com/aci-emanifest-resource-centre>).

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