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Major ACE filing challenge ahead after second deadline cleared

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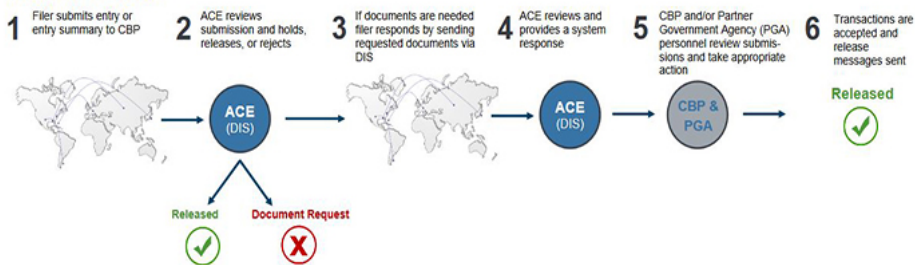
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What is DIS? U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is currently transitioning cargo release and entry summary processing to a paperless workflow in the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE). To support these transactions, filers can submit supporting documentation to the government during the import process and for export manifest through the Document Image System (DIS). Instead of providing a physical copy of a form, users should submit an electronic version of a document (i.e. PDF or JPEG). This process allows government personnel to receive and review documentation in a more timely manner than with paper counterparts.

For details on the process, please reference the steps below.

How it Works



WASHINGTON — The second filing deadline for [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#) (<http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/us-customs-regulations>)'s new electronic filing system came and went this past weekend without major issues.

Still, Saturday's deadline was only for a fraction of the total filers that will be required to onboard this year. The trade industry and Customs' eyes are now firmly fixed on the upcoming June 15 filing deadline for the Food and Drug Administration, the largest partner government agency involved and one that by many accounts has struggled the most with the transition.

It's been an ironic start for the Automated Commercial Environment, or ACE, designed with the intent of streamlining cross-border trade and allowing shippers to easily transmit documents with government agencies, saving time and money. The system — now three years behind schedule, [twice delayed](#) (http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/us-customs-regulations/us-customs-extends-ace-single-window-deadline_20150831.html) and more than \$1 billion over budget — has been notoriously plagued with issues.

Nevertheless, "the May 28th milestone passed successfully, filings rates this weekend remained consistent with prior weekends and processed normally," Customs spokesperson Katrina Skinner told JOC.com Tuesday.

As of Saturday, foreign trade zone, or FTZ, filers were officially required to file entries and entry summaries in ACE. Over the weekend, Customs reached a new daily high for ACE entry filings, which hit 84 percent of Customs' target for all ACE filers. The daily high for entry summary filings, however, has remained at 98 percent.

There were some initial concerns about rolling out the next phase of the system over the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Customs told industry insiders, however, that the "war room" it had set up over the weekend had only three calls over the weekend, with only some [minor edits and format issues](#) (http://apps.cbp.gov/csms/csms.asp?display_page=1) related to FTZ entries.

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It was a relief after the initial rollout of Customs' new Automated Commercial Environment, or ACE, was riddled with [system errors and glitches](http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/us-customs-regulations/us-customs%E2%80%99-ace-woes-%E2%80%98jeopardizing-shipments%E2%80%99-20160404.html) (<http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/us-customs-regulations/us-customs%E2%80%99-ace-woes-%E2%80%98jeopardizing-shipments%E2%80%99-20160404.html>) while [slowdowns](http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/us-customs-regulations/slowdowns-plague-ace-ahead-next-phase-weekend-20160526.html) (<http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/us-customs-regulations/slowdowns-plague-ace-ahead-next-phase-weekend-20160526.html>) continued to plague the system in the days preceding Saturday's rollout.

"Unlike some previous rollover dates, the transition went relatively seamlessly, with minimal errors," Fany Flores-Pastor, director of research development at global logistics software developer [Descartes Systems](http://www.joc.com/international-logistics/logistics-technology/descartes) (<http://www.joc.com/international-logistics/logistics-technology/descartes>), told JOC.com.

The process was more than likely made easier by the small size of the filers required to onboard over the weekend. FTZ users represent a much smaller portion of entry filers than those that came online in April, Flores-Pastor said.

Early April, when a deluge of system errors and glitches hit the system, also registered a roughly 50 to 100 percent increase in the number of filers transmitting data via ACE because those who file with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for the Lacey Act and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as well as those with no corresponding partner government agency, or PGA, were required to onboard.

After the relatively easy transition into the next phase of ACE this past weekend, Flores-Pastor said her sights are on the looming deadline for FDA filers.

"Our eyes are more closely fixed on what some may consider the more significant milestone on June 15," she said. "With FDA-flagged shipments some of the more complex to import, the June transition is more of a true test of the ACE system of record as it approaches maturity."

There has been some significant rescheduling to the ACE rollout in that regard.

The FDA was originally assigned a to-be-determined date sometime later this summer and May 28 was originally set to be the deadline for no fewer than a dozen PGAs.

The FDA, however, is now expected to meet a fast-approaching June 15 deadline, while those other PGAs will now be required to file and have their corresponding shippers file in the ACE portal later this summer on an as-yet-unspecified date, according to Customs. They include the Agriculture Marketing Service; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Centers for Disease Control; Consumer Product Safety Commission; Defense Contract Management Agency; Directorate of Defense Trade Controls; Drug Enforcement Administration; Enforcement and Compliance Commission; Environmental Protection Agency; Fish and Wildlife Service; Food Safety and Inspection Service; Foreign Agricultural Service; National Marine Fisheries Service; Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Office of Marine Conservation; Office of Textiles and Apparel; Alcohol and Tobacco, Tax and Trade Bureau; and United States Trade Representative.

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