



Maritime On-Line[®] TRACS[®]

Background

In 1985, the Maritime Exchange, together with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, conducted a year-long study to explore the feasibility of developing a community-based port-wide information system which would be designed to interface with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Automated Manifest System (AMS), then in the early stages of development.

The study found that not only was an automated cargo tracking and release system for Delaware River port facilities feasible, but also that ports without one would be at a severe competitive disadvantage. Due to its long and successful history on the Delaware River (established 1872), the Maritime Exchange was asked by the port community to undertake the development of a port automation system on behalf of the port community. As a result, the Maritime Exchange began to develop TRACS in early 1988.

The result was a system designed by a cross-section of port businesses, including steamship lines and agents, terminal operators, Customhouse brokers, freight forwarders, and trucking companies, as well as representatives of the local Customs office. The TRACS Technical committee has grown from an initial 11 members to a membership of over 150, and it continues to be the driving force behind TRACS development.

Today, TRACS is used to capture electronic manifest information for import waterborne cargoes destined for U.S. ports. The system includes many operational enhancements to help streamline the cargo clearance process, such as agent release to the terminal. It is in use by the steamship community to meet CBP automation regulations as well as by those members of the port community who have a need and a right to receive data from the system.

TRACS has been most recently updated to accommodate the carrier requirements of the CBP Importer Security Filing and Additional Carrier Requirements (10+2) rule. This includes the Security Filing and Stow Plan requirements.

Maritime On-Line (MOL) Features

The MOL system integrates TRACS, Ship Reporting, NOA/D, and AIS into a single web portal for user access. Through the same log-in account, subscribers can switch between each module allowing data input or review of the same vessel for all modules.

TRACS Features

TRACS is a community based cargo tracking and release system certified on the CBP's Automated Manifest System (AMS) since 1989. Since TRACS is first and foremost a manifest system, the primary beneficiaries are steamship lines and agents. Manifest data and cargo status are then made available to brokers, terminal operators, trucking companies, and warehouses.

Through TRACS, filers transmit ocean vessel manifest data to Customs electronically and receive cargo status (hold, do not load, release, examination, etc.) messages. This information can then be disseminated to those trading partners throughout the community on a "right-to-know" basis. Sharing this data electronically both facilitates imported cargo flow and saves time and money by eliminating redundant data entry.

TRACS includes functionality to allow carriers to meet basic manifesting rules, including the "24-hour Rule" and "10+2" requirements. Participants can enter and file ISF-5 information as part of the manifest and enter stow plan information for all containers included in the manifest to satisfy the CBP stow plan requirements.

TRACS includes functionality to automatically email critical status messages to TRACS participants as they are received from CBP. Participants determine which types of messages they wish to receive.

Benefits

- Enables timely manifest transmissions for compliance of the 24 Hour and 10+2 rules.
- Speeds up the clearance of imported goods.
- Improves the competitiveness of the port region – and of the businesses which utilize it.
- Replaces cumbersome and unnecessary document handling in international trade with electronic communications and computer technologies.
- Eliminates unnecessary paperwork and telephone calls, reduces the need for courier service, minimizes the occurrence of data entry errors while helping to improve overall customer service levels.
- Serves as a centralized system for all U.S. AMS transactions.
- Accessible through any internet connection via a web browser. Data can be entered directly into the portal or files can be uploaded into the system.
- Alerts customers of CBP actions through automatic critical status message emails
- Includes company specific storage of trading partner information, such as shippers and consignees, to reduce re-keying of repeat data.
- TRACS includes on-line help as well as availability of Exchange staff 24/7.
- TRACS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Transmission Capabilities

Send Transmission Capabilities

Manifest Transmissions
Stow Plan Transmissions
Security Filing Transmissions
VOC/Agent/NVOCC Notifications
Terminal Discharge Notifications

AMS In-bond (Conventional)
In-bond Arrival Function
Freight Releases
Manifest Amendments
Paperless Master In-Bond

Permit to Transfer
Secondary Notify Party
Vessel Arrival/Departure Function
Critical Status Emails

Receive Transmission Capabilities

Customs Status Notifications
Manifest and In-Bond Downloads
Shell Records

Other Government Agencies Interface
Second Notify Party Status Notifications

Reports

Manifest Print
Shell Records
In-bond Forms
Bill of Lading Status

Bill of Lading Summary
Data Counts
Vessel Activity
Data Record Count

Bill of Lading Quantity Exception
General Order
Second Notify Party