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Air Cargo Examination Requirements

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This fact sheet provides information for customers of Regulated Air Cargo Agents (RACAs) about the Australian Government's air cargo examination security requirements.

Introduction

The Government requires export and domestic air cargo to be security cleared before it can be loaded onto aircraft, similar to how passengers and baggage are screened before they can enter the sterile area of an airport. The air cargo examination requirements enhance the security of Australia's aviation sector, which is a vital sector of our economy.

Who can security clear air cargo?

Only a RACA or a Known Consignor (KC) can security clear air cargo. A RACA security clears air cargo by examining the cargo at the *piece-level*, whereas a KC security clears the air cargo that they originate. When security clearing air cargo, both RACAs and KCs are verifying that the contents of the cargo do not contain any unauthorised explosives.

What is 'piece-level'?

Piece-level refers to the lowest level of deconsolidation of packed cargo. This can be an individual box, carton or other container that the cargo is packed in.

Examining cargo at the piece-level makes it easier to detect unauthorised explosives in the cargo, as it reduces the area, and complexity, of examination.

Examination process

RACAs will often receive multiple pieces of cargo that are packed together on a pallet, stored in a container or by other means. To examine the individual pieces of cargo, RACAs must break the pallet or containers down to the individual pieces, that is, to piece-level. This includes removing any wrapping that holds the cargo in place. Once examination is complete and a security declaration issued for the cargo, the RACA will re-pack the cargo for loading onto the aircraft. This can include applying new wrapping around the re-packed cargo to hold it in place for the flight.

Why do I need to know this?

If you send cargo by air, you need to be aware of the piece-level examination requirements when you assemble your cargo. The way you provide your cargo to a RACA can present challenges for the RACA to perform piece-level examination.

Speak with your RACA about the best way to pack your type of cargo so that the RACA can examine it as quickly and easily as possible. This will help prevent delays in your cargo's transit.

Further information

For more information about air cargo security, please refer to the Department of Home Affairs [website](#).

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