

# inSYNC

singapore customs newsletter • issue 16 • january / february 2012

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## Singapore Customs Launches Academy for Customs Training

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## Enhanced GST Relief for Travellers

As announced in the 2012 Budget Statement, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) relief for new articles brought into Singapore by arriving travellers will be enhanced and simplified from 1 April 2012.

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# inSIGHT

## BORDERS DIVIDE, CUSTOMS CONNECT

The World Customs Organisation has designated 2012 as the Year of Connectivity, highlighting the importance of cooperation and the value of interconnectedness between Customs and its partners. Connectivity serves the general community by facilitating trade in an increasingly globalised world.

Singapore Customs has many pieces in place to enable this vision, ranging from the recently launched Customs Academy, which offers high quality training in Customs compliance and will be a centre of excellence for the sharing Customs knowledge with partners locally and internationally, to the update of Singapore's export control list for strategic goods, bringing it in line with international norms to facilitate legitimate trade.

The agency's implementation of vital projects such as the Advance Export Declaration is done in close consultation with other government agency partners and the business community, to ensure that companies have sufficient time and support to update their processes.

Businesses can also avail themselves to three new services on the TradeXchange platform, which allow them to connect with other supply chain partners to exchange data in a secure and timely manner. This is made possible through the use of information technology, a key enabler of Customs connectivity.

**PATRICIA BAY**  
Editor



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# Singapore Customs Launches Academy for Customs Training

*The Singapore Customs Academy was launched by Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister of State for Finance and Transport, at Singapore Customs' International Customs Day celebrations on 9 February 2012.*



*Minister of State for Finance and Transport, Mrs Josephine Teo, led a lively question and answer session with the trainer and participants of the inaugural class that was being conducted at the Singapore Customs Academy via a video conference link.*

As Singapore's first dedicated facility providing specialist customs training, the Singapore Customs Academy will serve as a centre of excellence in customs knowledge and competencies, reaching out to the local trading and logistics community to help them understand Customs requirements. It will also provide training for Singapore Customs' officers as well as foreign Customs officials.

International trade is vital to Singapore's economy, with total trade flow through Singapore reaching \$974 billion in 2011,

3.2 times the size of its gross domestic product.

"To cope with increasing trade volume and the challenge arising from the need to facilitate and secure the global supply chain, Singapore Customs has become very much a knowledge-based organisation," said Director-General Mr Fong Yong Kian. "The need to harness knowledge not only applies to staff of Singapore Customs, it also extends equally to the trading community," he added.





Director-General Mr Fong Yong Kian (left) and Senior Assistant Director-General (Trade) Mr Lim Teck Leong (centre) chatting with members of the business community.

Singapore Customs designs and implements schemes to facilitate trading activities as businesses innovate to take advantage of new markets and opportunities in today's globalised world. Hence it is essential for businesses to keep up-to-date with the latest Customs schemes, regulations and best practices, and be equipped with the relevant knowledge and capacity to comply with Customs regulatory requirements so as to enjoy the benefits of increased trade facilitation.

"The Academy is born out of Singapore Customs' belief that the majority of traders here want to comply with customs requirements. The higher their compliance capacity, the more Singapore Customs can facilitate their business operations, as well as their business growth, by adopting a 'light touch' towards regulation," explained Mrs Teo in her keynote address. "It is a win-win outcome that is very worth the effort of the entire community to work towards."

Guests at the International Customs Day celebrations were treated to a glimpse of the new Academy located at the second level in Revenue House via a video conference link when Mrs Teo chatted with the trainer and participants of the inaugural class that was being conducted at the Academy.

Beyond meeting the customs-related training needs of the trading community, the Academy's vision is to become a leading institution that advances thought leadership in Customs matters. To develop knowledge and expertise, the Academy will explore various partnerships, including:

- Collaborations with the business sector and government agencies to promote sharing of Customs knowledge;
- Conducting joint research with educational institutes to better understand the supply-chain industry and enhance the technical capacity of Customs officers;

- Obtaining accreditation from the World Customs Organisation to become a regional training centre for Customs administrations in the Asia-Pacific; and
- Providing consultancy services on customs matters, locally and internationally.

Besides the Singapore Customs Academy, three newly launched TradeXchange services were also showcased at the event. The new services for companies allow improved processing of marine cargo insurance, trade permit processing and trade financing. These services offer better connectivity between businesses through the TradeXchange platform and help to lower the costs of coordinating multiple documents among multiple partners; reduce data entry work and resultant data entry errors; and reduce turnaround times for document approval.

# Singapore Customs Academy: Meeting the Customs Training Needs of Traders



*A class being conducted at the Singapore Customs Academy.*

The Academy offers a range of courses specially designed for the trade and logistics community, covering areas such as customs procedures, import and export documentation requirements and tariff regimes.

To better cater to the diverse needs of the community, the courses are offered in a modular format, providing traders with the flexibility to attend courses in accordance with their specific needs.

Overall course capacity has increased, with the number of course runs doubling to 50. More than 2,200 training places will be available annually.

The courses will be conducted by a pool of trainers drawn from the ranks of Singapore Customs staff with a wealth of experience, industry knowledge and in-depth expertise in various Customs domains.

The Academy will also have a virtual presence through an online portal to facilitate e-learning and online course registration. The portal provides 24/7 access to e-learning resources, videos and slideshows to complement the courses conducted at the Academy. It also connects participants to the course registration system, enabling them to browse the course schedule, self-register for courses and download course materials.

In the near future, the virtual academy will also make available smart classrooms where course participants will be able to attend classes from their office or any other remote location.

To find out more about the Singapore Customs Academy, visit [www.customsacademy.gov.sg](http://www.customsacademy.gov.sg)

## TRADERS' COMPETENCY ROADMAP

### IMPORTERS

SC 102 Classification and the Harmonised System



### EXPORTERS

- SC 102 Classification and the Harmonised System
- SC 103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements
- SC 201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control
- SC 202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme



### Exporters of Singapore-Origin Goods

SC 103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements



### Exporters / Brokers of Strategic Goods

- SC 201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control
- SC 202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme



### MANUFACTURERS

- SC 102 Classification and the Harmonised System
- SC 103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements



### COMPANIES / FREIGHT FORWARDERS / LICENSEES WHO ACT AS DECLARING AGENTS

- SC 101 Customs Procedures
- SC 102 Classification and the Harmonised System
- SC 103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements



# New Services on TradeXchange to Boost Business Productivity

*At its International Customs Day celebrations on 9 February 2012, Singapore Customs showcased three new services on the TradeXchange platform that offer businesses the opportunity to reduce costs and increase efficiency in handling trade matters.*

TradeXchange is a multi-party collaborative platform for the trade and logistics community, which includes importers, exporters, forwarders, carriers, insurers and financiers.

Developed in 2007 as a multi-agency initiative led by Singapore Customs, the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA), the Economic Development Board, and SPRING Singapore, the TradeXchange platform is among the first of its kind in the world.

“TradeXchange can play a useful role to raise the productivity of the trade and logistics community. In essence, TradeXchange is about providing faster and more seamless connectivity and data exchange between the various players and stakeholders in the supply chain, including Customs,” explained Mr Fong Yong Kian, Director-General of Singapore Customs.

Through TradeXchange, companies can easily integrate with their business partners to share and re-use data for faster and more efficient Business-to-Business and Business-to-Government transactions. Companies need only connect once to the TradeXchange platform to access multiple parties across the supply chain.

IDA’s Assistant Chief Executive Mr James

Kang said: “By playing a facilitative role, IDA hopes the trade and logistics community can exploit the full potential of information technology to reap real benefits in terms of time and cost savings from a more efficient supply chain.”

To date, more than 100 companies, including manufacturers, logistics companies, banks and insurance companies, have benefitted from TradeXchange. This number will continue to grow as more businesses avail themselves of the productivity gains and easy access to new partners through the platform.

The three new services enabled by TradeXchange were piloted in 2011. They cover trade permit processing, cargo insurance and trade financing. Companies using these services have enjoyed up to 50 per cent time savings in trade permit preparation, up to 90 per cent time savings in marine cargo insurance applications, and faster approval and lower costs in trade finance (factoring) applications.

## SEAMLESS TRADE PERMIT DECLARATIONS

While many shippers and logistics service providers manually enter shipment data into their system and re-enter it through TradeNet to obtain trade permits,

such information can be transmitted seamlessly from the shipper’s system via a direct link to TradeXchange to auto-populate trade permit declaration forms.

This means that shipping data needs to be entered only once, reducing the chance for error and increasing staff productivity. The integration cuts preparation time for trade declarations by half to just a day or two.

“From a trade permit declaration standpoint, we see significant gains in efficiency. Much of the information needed in the TradeNet system is actually available from the shipper’s own system. A link through TradeXchange eliminates the need for manual entries on our side,” said Ms Lim Khoon Ling, Country Manager and Managing Director of Expeditors Singapore, a logistics service provider. “As a result, we have seen significant improvements in turnaround time for permit preparation, as well as substantial improvement in data accuracy.”

Added Mr Luke Teo, General Manager of APAC Distribution Centre for Hitachi Data Systems: “The faster turnaround and higher accuracy of trade permit clearance has enabled us to increase our competitiveness in the marketplace.”

**IMPROVING EFFICIENCY OF MARINE CARGO INSURANCE APPLICATIONS**

Through TradeXchange, forwarders can now re-use shipment information entered for regulatory compliance to auto-populate cargo insurance applications, offering reduced data entry times and preventing mismatched information across forms. Insurers can also directly view and approve the application documents on the platform, doing away with the need to enter data into their systems when insurance applications are received by email or fax. This results in faster approval for insurance applications.

In addition, by leveraging on TradeXchange, which has a ready base of users, forwarders and insurance companies alike can gain access to multiple business partners through a single connection.

“Our clients can key in less information since there is already a central data warehouse, and this cuts down the time that is needed to process the policy. The entire process becomes more efficient and there are savings in both time and cost,” said Mr Colin Lincoln, Regional Underwriter for QBE Insurance.

“We have received very positive feedback from our customers and the collaboration through TradeXchange has certainly been a plus point for us,” he added.

**LOWERING COST IN TRADE FINANCE**

For trade finance applications, TradeXchange enables finance documents such as invoices to be exchanged electronically and securely among suppliers, buyers and banks.

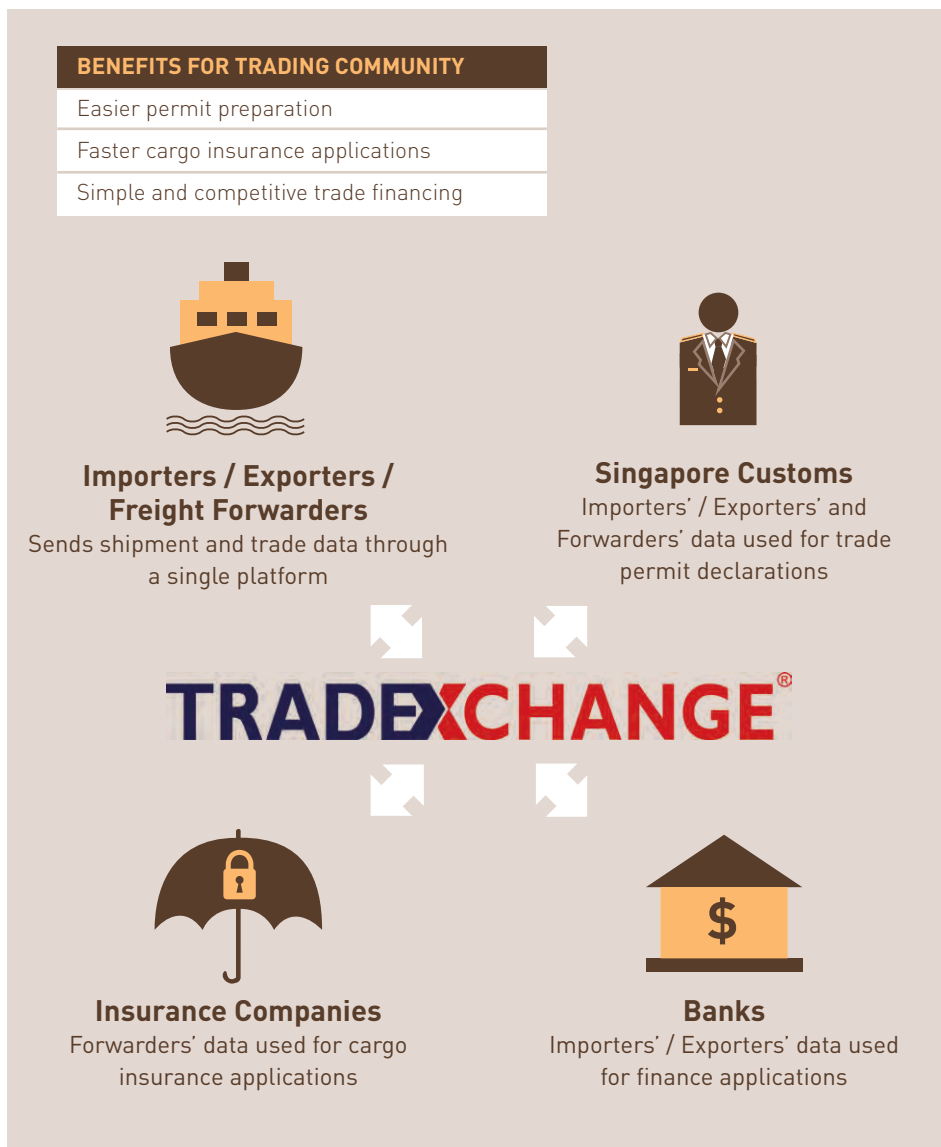
Banks can check trade finance applications and supporting documents quickly and easily, and verify whether the goods have been received through the platform. With TradeXchange, banks no longer need to manually match the invoice amounts with the application or use the phone or fax to track whether goods have arrived.

This cuts down the amount of manual processing, increases the visibility of documents needed for finance verification, lowers administrative costs and improves the overall turnaround time, resulting in faster approval of finance applications and more competitive financing services for suppliers.

By bringing suppliers, buyers and banks closer together, TradeXchange also enables banks to give suppliers credit based on the buyers’ credit risk, thereby allowing more suppliers to get access to trade finance.

Said Mr Vijay Vashist, Managing Director of Global Transaction Services at DBS Bank: “TradeXchange allows DBS to bank with multiple corporate clients through one single connection, rather than having to build one connection per client. This flexibility has generated administrative savings, and shortened the solutioning integration process with clients.”

For more information on these new services on TradeXchange, visit [www.tradexchange.gov.sg](http://www.tradexchange.gov.sg)

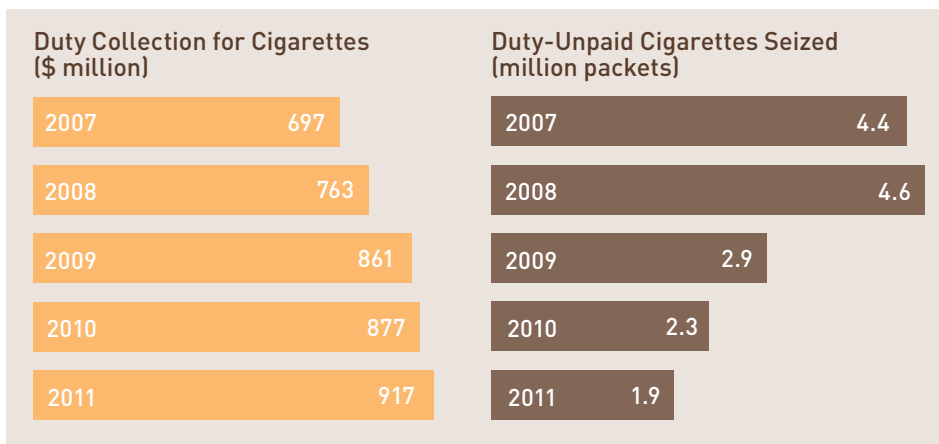


*TradeXchange aims to boost productivity within the trade and logistics community by bringing various players in the supply chain together on a common collaborative platform.*



# Contraband Cigarette Enforcement Continues to Yield Positive Results

*Higher demand for legitimate cigarettes, fewer contraband cigarettes seized and the break-up of major syndicates in 2011 show that Singapore Customs' enforcement efforts and collaborations with other agencies continue to produce results.*



In 2011, \$917m in cigarette duties were collected, up from \$877m in 2010. Overall, the supply of legal cigarettes has increased 31.6 per cent from 2007. This is attributed to stepped-up enforcement efforts, which has led to more smokers switching to duty-paid cigarettes.

As a result, the contraband cigarette market has shrunk. Collaborations with other law enforcement agencies and media publicity have proven effective in curbing the cigarette supply in the black market. The 1.9 million packets of cigarettes seized in 2011, a 17.4 per cent decrease from 2.3 million packets in 2010, was the third consecutive year of decline in the amount of cigarettes seized.

Some 458 cigarette peddlers were caught in 2011, a 34.8 per cent decrease from 702 in 2010. Due to the rigorous nature of

Customs enforcement, the peddlers have become more innovative, using modified household objects like flowerpots and rubbish bins to hide illegal cigarettes. In many cases, they will store the cigarettes in filthy places such as drains and toilets. Yet street demand remained strong with 5,977 people caught buying illegal cigarettes, a 1.6 per cent increase over 5,885 in 2010.

Singapore Customs also worked closely with other enforcement agencies, such as the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) and the Police Coast Guard, to bust four major cigarette smuggling syndicates. Three syndicates used boats calling on Singapore to smuggle boxes of cigarettes wrapped in black trash bags. A total of 47 people were arrested in the major sea smuggling cases. The quantity of cigarettes seized amounted to 20,210

cartons, with duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeding \$1.9 million.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION

Public involvement and support is vital to enhanced enforcement effectiveness. Hence Singapore Customs worked closely with the media and other agencies including the Health Promotion Board (HPB), SPF and the Singapore Civil Defence Force to enhance the effectiveness of its outreach to the community.

Singapore Customs organised more than 150 public outreach activities in 2011 to engage the community. As syndicates often use taxis as one mode of conveyance, a weekly anti-contraband cigarette message was broadcast to taxis, reaching drivers and passengers alike. Singapore Customs has now extended the outreach to tour operators.

In addition, Singapore Customs collaborated with the HPB to conduct talks in schools. Last year, Singapore Customs also referred more than 170 underage smokers to the Health Sciences Authority.

Singapore Customs' *Don't Get Burnt* public outreach campaign continued in 2011, with road shows, print, broadcast and outdoor advertisements to educate and warn the public not to get involved in contraband cigarette activities.



### AT THE BORDER

About 75 per cent of the 26,164 cigarette offenders in 2011 were incoming travellers who were fined for possessing a few packets of illegal cigarettes at the checkpoints. This is a marginal increase from 25,787 offenders last year. All cigarettes, including those with the SDPC (Singapore Duty Paid Cigarette) mark, and tobacco products are subject to duty and GST when brought in by travellers into Singapore.

Likewise, most of the 2,323 offenders committing liquor evasion duties were incoming travellers at the checkpoints. This is up 13.8 per cent from 2,042 offenders last year. With the crackdown on syndicates involved in adulterated liquor over the previous two years, only two offenders were prosecuted in 2011. Both cases involved the smuggling of adulterated whisky in the modified fuel tanks of cars at the land checkpoints.

With increased public awareness, only 14 offenders were prosecuted for fuel gauge offences as compared to 24 in 2010. Under the law, Singapore-registered motor vehicles must have at least three-quarter tank of petrol and/or Compressed Natural Gas in their fuel supply tanks when leaving Singapore. Tampering with the fuel gauge to show false readings can lead to a fine of up to \$500 and/or a jail term of up to 12 months upon conviction.

### EVASION OF MOTOR VEHICLE DUTY

Singapore Customs also prosecuted two traders for under-declaring the values of their imported motor vehicles. Both offenders were sentenced to a court fine of \$12,000 or in default, eight weeks imprisonment. Importers must ensure the accuracy and completeness of the values and other related costs declared to Singapore Customs. Under declaration of such values will result in under-payment of duty and GST, and can attract a fine of up to 20 times the duties and GST evaded, imprisonment, or both. Offenders are also required to pay the duty and GST in full.



*With more rigorous enforcement, contraband cigarette peddlers have tried to outwit Customs officers by hiding cigarettes (from top) within modified concrete slabs, under a modified rubbish bin, under an incense burner, and inside a fake electrical meter.*

Singapore Customs investigates all cases of revenue evasions and violations of Customs regulations. Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded, and/or jailed for up to six years.

From 1 January 2012, the minimum court fine for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences has been raised to \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment. Vehicles used to transport the tobacco are liable to be forfeited.

Buyers of duty-unpaid cigarettes face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

# All Exports to be Declared In Advance Come 2013

*From 1 April 2013, Singapore Customs will require declarations for the export of all goods to be submitted prior to the goods leaving Singapore. Advance Export Declaration (AED) aims to strengthen Singapore's supply chain security and align its export declaration practices with international norms.*

Improving supply chain security is crucial to the country's position as a secure and trusted global transportation and logistics hub. It also serves to promote international trade – a key component of Singapore's economy.

With advance cargo information, Singapore Customs will be able to conduct timely assessments before high-risk consignments are exported. This will benefit Singapore's collaborations with overseas Customs authorities, including the implementation of Mutual Recognition Arrangements to strengthen supply chain security and to facilitate trade flows with other countries.

Currently, Singapore Customs only requires advance declarations for exports of controlled items or exports by land. Declarations for exports of non-controlled items by sea and air can be made within three days of the goods leaving Singapore.

More than half of Singapore's exports are already declared in advance. For example, in the first half of 2011, 56 per cent of Singapore's exports were declared prior to the goods leaving Singapore.

AED is already practised in many countries including the United States, Japan, China and Australia, as well as the European Union.

## **FACILITATING THE TRANSITION FOR THE INDUSTRY**

To minimise the impact of the AED implementation on the industry, an inter-agency task force comprising the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Transport, Economic Development Board and Singapore Customs conducted extensive consultations with key supply chain stakeholders, which included trade and business associations.

The task force received many useful comments and suggestions, which were taken into consideration when Singapore Customs formulated the details for AED implementation. To mitigate the impact on companies, a slew of measures will be put in place.

These include providing the industry with one year's advance notice prior to the effective AED implementation date – 1 April 2013, so that companies can make





the necessary work process changes; allowing for an 18-month adjustment period after implementation so that companies can further fine-tune their processes, systems and information flows to fully comply with the AED requirements; giving exemptions and allowing amendments to most of the declared information within three days of the goods leaving Singapore.

“In the process of consulting the industry, we gained a good appreciation of the adjustments they need to make to comply with AED. We are therefore providing an adjustment period during which no penalties will be imposed, for companies

to make the transition to comply with AED. During the adjustment period, we will continue to engage and listen to companies on any concerns they have about the AED, and help to smoothen the implementation process for them,” said Mr Lim Teck Leong, Singapore Customs’ Senior Assistant Director-General (Trade).

Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Business Federation, Mr Ho Meng Kit, said: “We are glad that Singapore Customs has listened to the feedback of the trading community and has built in an 18-month transition period for companies to adjust their operations.”

“With the availability of accurate and timely information through the supply chain, AED will help Singapore maintain its reputation as a secure and trusted logistics hub for companies to develop their business,” added Mr Ho.

Details on the implementation of AED are available in Circular No. 01/2012 at [www.customs.gov.sg](http://www.customs.gov.sg)

Singapore Customs’ response to feedback provided by the industry on the AED implementation is available under ‘News & Events’ at [www.customs.gov.sg](http://www.customs.gov.sg)

## Enhanced GST Relief for Travellers

*As announced in the 2012 Budget Statement, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) relief for new items brought into Singapore by arriving travellers will be enhanced and simplified from 1 April 2012.*

International visitors and residents returning from abroad are given GST relief on new items, for example souvenirs, gifts (excluding intoxicating liquors and tobacco), brought into Singapore.

To keep pace with rising expenditures and international norms, travellers who have been away for more than 48 hours will have the value of goods exempted increased to \$600. For other travellers, the relief limit will be raised to \$150. Travellers will no longer need to fulfil an age criterion to enjoy the relief.

Time spent away from Singapore	Enjoy GST relief on goods valued up to
48 hours or more	\$600
Less than 48 hours	\$150

The GST relief is not applicable to work permit or pass holders, crew members and goods imported for commercial purposes.

Goods exceeding the travellers’ GST relief may be brought into the country

upon payment of the GST at the Singapore Customs Tax Payment Office or at the self-service Tax Payment kiosks at Changi Airport.

### FOREIGN CURRENCIES ACCEPTED AT LAND CHECKPOINTS

For the convenience of travellers, Singapore Customs now accepts payment in foreign currencies at Woodlands and Tuas Checkpoints as money changers are not readily available at these checkpoints. Foreign currencies accepted include the United States Dollar, Thai Baht, Malaysian Ringgit and the Chinese Renminbi.





# Singapore Aligns Strategic Goods Controls with International Norms

*Since 1 January 2012, Singapore has deregulated a number of items on its strategic goods control list. The relaxations are in line with recent updates to the control lists of the four international export control regimes.*

As part of the global effort to regulate trade in strategic goods and curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Singapore adopts the European Union (EU) Dual-Use Regulation, which is an amalgamation of the dual-use items of the four international export control regimes.

They comprise the Wassenaar Arrangement, which controls conventional weapons and sensitive dual-use goods and technologies; the Australia Group, which controls chemical and biological weapons; the Missile Technology Control Regime, which controls missile technology and its delivery systems; and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which controls nuclear-related items and technologies.

The four export control regimes have recently updated their respective control lists. The regimes' updates include the deregulation of a number of items on their control lists. Controls on these items were no longer deemed to be necessary as advancements in technology have led to the wide usage of these items in commercial applications.

In a bid to facilitate trade in items that have been deregulated by these regimes, Singapore Customs decided to update its strategic goods control list by relaxing controls on some of the deregulated items ahead of the release of the EU's updated Dual-Use Regulation. This helps to ensure Singapore's strategic goods

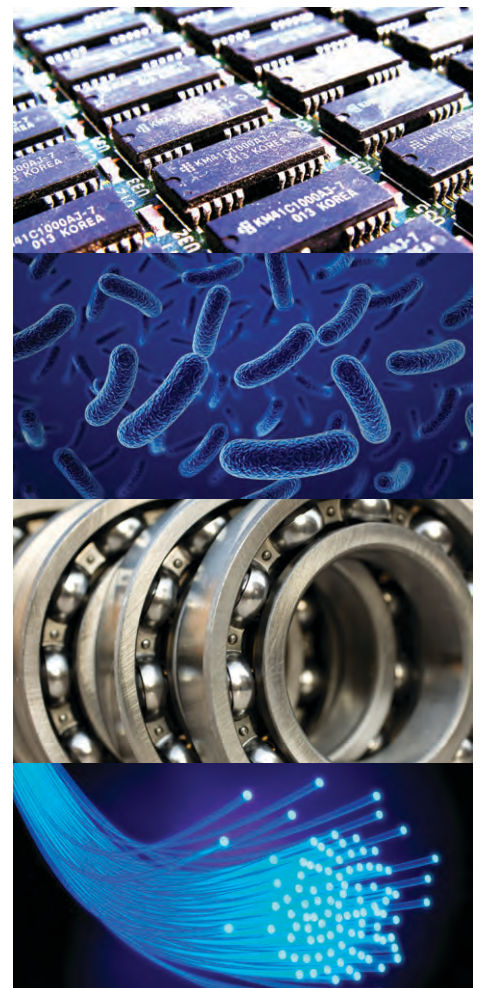
control regime remains robust, while facilitating legitimate trade flows.

The deregulated items fall mainly into the electronics, computers and telecommunications categories of the strategic goods control list. With deregulation, a normal export permit is required for the export of these goods instead of a strategic goods permit.

Businesses have welcomed this move as it lowers business compliance costs and enhances business efficiency. Companies such as JSI Logistics and IBM, for example, have benefited significantly from the review.

"It's great that Singapore Customs has already applied some of the changes based on the four multilateral export control regimes even without having the EU update their export control list yet. Some items were decontrolled, and we no longer need to apply for a Strategic Goods Tier 3 permit for these items as a normal outward permit will do," said Mr Enrico Ponce, JSI Logistics' Customs Compliance Supervisor.

"The recent relaxation in the strategic controls of products under the category of computers has helped our company achieve greater ease and speed of transportation of our goods to the end-users. This has helped to deliver workload reduction, increased process efficiency and freed up resources," said Mr Goh Beng Chee, Senior Manager of IBM Ireland Product Distribution.



For updates to the Strategic Goods Control List, please refer to the Strategic Goods (Control) (Amendment) Order 2011 at [www.customs.gov.sg/stgc](http://www.customs.gov.sg/stgc)

# Knowledge, a Catalyst for Customs Excellence

*The 2011 World Customs and Trade Forum held in Guangzhou, China, highlighted the importance of harnessing knowledge as a means to improve public-private collaboration in modernisation of the international supply chain.*

Hosted by the General Administration of China Customs (GACC), about 300 participants from Customs administrations, public agencies, international organisations and multinational corporations gathered on 24 and 25 November 2011 to exchange views on public-private best practices, challenges facing the international trading environment and the latest policy-related trends under the overall forum theme "Knowledge, a Catalyst for Customs Excellence".

The World Customs and Trade Forum, a platform for dialogue and exchange between the customs and trade sectors, is an annual event that was launched by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) in 2007.

Mr Fong Yong Kian, Director-General of Singapore Customs, was one of three panellists for a roundtable discussion on the topic 'A Professional Knowledge Based Service Culture' which was moderated by Mr Tom Doyle, Lead Customs and Border Management Specialist from Accenture. The other two panellists were Mr Jérôme Fournel, Director General of French Customs and Dato' Sri Mohamed Khalid bin Haji Yusuf, Director-General of Royal Malaysian Customs.

During the panel discussion, Mr Fong highlighted the changing role of Customs, from an enforcement agency to one that plays a vital role in facilitating international trade, and the importance of knowledge in effective decision-making. He stressed that a strong

Customs-business partnership is key to ensuring a secure supply chain and enabling legitimate trade. Mr Fournel and Dato' Sri Mohamed Khalid reiterated the importance of sharing and managing knowledge, and the forming of strategic business alliances to better understand industry needs in order to develop customised solutions for businesses.

At the close of the two-day forum, Mr Sun Yibiao, Vice Minister of GACC and Mr Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of the WCO emphasised that Customs administrations need to continue to enhance trade facilitation, beef up capacity-building and form effective government-business partnerships by sharing knowledge to mitigate risks and facilitate the global economic recovery.



Mr Tom Doyle (extreme left), Accenture's Lead Customs and Border Management Specialist, facilitated a roundtable discussion with panellists (from left) Mr Fong Yong Kian, Director-General of Singapore Customs, Mr Jérôme Fournel, Director General of French Customs and Dato' Sri Mohamed Khalid bin Haji Yusuf, Director-General of Royal Malaysian Customs.

# Recognising Efforts to Promote Connectivity

*In recognition of its officers who have made exceptional contributions towards promoting connectivity in their work, five Singapore Customs officers were presented with the World Customs Organisation's (WCO) Certificate of Merit by Director-General Mr Fong Yong Kian, on behalf of the WCO Secretary General, at the agency's observance of International Customs Day on 31 January 2012.*

The WCO has designated 2012 as the Year of Connectivity with the theme 'Borders Divide, Customs Connect'. As borders are synonymous with division, the main challenge for Customs administrations is to overcome this division by pursuing connectivity to enable Customs to achieve its goal of ensuring the smooth and lawful flow of goods.

The theme reflects the increased importance of Customs' role in a complex and globalised world to strengthen cooperation and communication, be it at the national, regional or international levels.

Connectivity encompasses three main pillars: people connectivity, which includes partnership with the business

sector; institutional connectivity, which includes connectivity between customs agencies and with other government agencies; and information connectivity, which acts as an enabler through technology and knowledge solutions.

The five officers were recognised for their work in areas such as promoting cross-border connectivity, mutual recognition arrangements and single window developments.



**JOYCE LIM SIOK KEOW**  
Chief Superintendent of Customs

As Head of the former Checkpoint Services & Investigation Branch, Joyce had overseen operations at Singapore's checkpoints and played a key role in promoting connectivity across borders. Under her leadership, working procedures to ensure efficient cross-border movement of cargo and passengers were established, and robust enforcement strategies were developed.



**YEE KWAN YEW**  
Chief Superintendent of Customs

Kwan Yew was Singapore Customs' lead for the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) from 2008 to 2010. He successfully highlighted the issues and challenges in establishing the ASW to other ASEAN member states. Kwan Yew also represented Singapore Customs in the WCO's discussions on Globally Networked Customs, where he shared ASEAN's experience in implementing the ASW with other WCO members.



**JEFFREY HO KIM LAI**  
Chief Customs Officer  
(Special Grade I)

Jeffrey is an Account Manager for 22 licencees and acts as a bridge to connect companies to customs regulatory requirements and potential business opportunities. He has provided excellent support to traders with customised solutions and facilitated licence applications and upgrading.





**LIM SOK PENG**  
Deputy Chief Superintendent  
of Customs

Sok Peng was a key driver for the development and implementation of Singapore's Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme, the Secure Trade Partnership (STP). She also played a key role in the negotiation of Singapore's Mutual Recognition Arrangements of AEO programmes with Canada, Japan and Korea.



**SEAN NG WEE HUA**  
Deputy Chief Superintendent  
of Customs

Sean was a member of the inter-agency team that worked closely with Singapore Customs' Malaysian counterparts and contributed to the successful relocation of the Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTM) Railway Station and Malaysia's Customs, Immigration and Quarantine facility from Tanjong Pagar to the Woodlands Train Checkpoint on 1 July 2011. The team was awarded the Minister for Home Affairs National Day Award (Team) 2011 for the successful relocation.

## TRAINING CALENDAR

Programme	Dates
<p><b>SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT</b></p> <p>This three-day course provides trade declarants with an overview of customs procedures pertaining to the import and export of goods, the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, classification of goods, and the rules of origin.</p> <p>The course comprises three modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days)</li> <li>• SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (Half day)</li> <li>• SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (Half day)</li> </ul> <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>3 – 5 Apr 2012</p> <p>9 – 11 May 2012</p> <p>6 – 8 Jun 2012</p>
<p><b>SC200 STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>This one-day seminar provides an overview of Singapore's strategic goods control system and its regulations, registration procedures and permit requirements for strategic goods transactions, as well as the essentials of an internal (export control) compliance programme.</p> <p>The seminar comprises two modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control (Half day)</li> <li>• SC202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme (Half day)</li> </ul> <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>27 Apr 2012</p> <p>29 Jun 2012</p>
<p><b>TRADERS CLINICS</b></p> <p>These monthly one-on-one consultation sessions provide an avenue for traders to seek advice and provide feedback on general customs procedures and services.</p>	<p>25 &amp; 26 Apr 2012</p> <p>22 &amp; 23 May 2012</p>
<p><b>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED TRADERS</b></p> <p>This quarterly programme is designed to equip new traders with a better understanding of customs documentation procedures, as well as the various customs schemes and services available.</p> <p>For enquiries, please call 6355 2000 or email <a href="mailto:customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg">customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg</a></p>	<p>29 Jun 2012</p>
<p><b>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS</b></p> <p>This bimonthly programme is designed to equip newly-registered manufacturers with a better understanding of the Rules of Origin under Singapore's Free Trade Agreements, the application procedures for Certificates of Origin, and the compliance requirements.</p> <p>For enquiries, please email <a href="mailto:customs_roo@customs.gov.sg">customs_roo@customs.gov.sg</a></p>	<p>18 Apr 2012</p> <p>13 Jun 2012</p>

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to [www.customsacademy.gov.sg](http://www.customsacademy.gov.sg)



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