CBP Cracks Down on Wood Packaging Material Requirement Violations

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Effective Nov. 1 U.S. Customs and Border Protection will penalize any documented violation of the wood packaging material requirements, eliminating its previous policy of allowing up to five violations before taking such action. There will be no annual reset for calculating repeat violations and each WPM violation may incur a penalty.

CBP states that this policy change is designed to motivate compliance with requirements for non-exempt imported WPM (e.g., crates, boxes, and pieces of wood used to support or brace cargo) that have been in effect since Sept. 16, 2005. Such WPM must be heat treated or fumigated with methyl bromide at approved facilities at places of origin to kill harmful timber pests that may be present. It must also display a visible, legible, and permanent mark certifying treatment, preferably on at least two sides of the article. The mark must be approved under the International Plant Protection Convention in its International Standards of Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM 15) regulation.

Any WPM of foreign origin found to be lacking compliant markings or infested with a timber pest is considered not properly treated and must be immediately exported. The party responsible for the violative WPM (importer, carrier, or bonded custodian) must adhere to the emergency action notification stipulations and is responsible for any costs or charges associated with such exports.

CBP encourages trade industry members to consider alternatives to WPM if possible. These may include plywood or press board, plastic pallets, oriented strand board, hardboard, parallel strand lumber, synthetic foam, metal frames, inflated dunnage, and masonite veneer.

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