

What is VACIS Exam?

Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System VACIS exam is one of the holds by US customs for importing goods. The system was introduced by U.S. Customs Service, Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the Department of Defense to inspect the cargo through low energy radio graphic images.



This system was introduced after 09/11 terrorist attacks to protect from illegal drugs, guns or currency. It is an x-ray system using gamma rays imaging to verify the contents inside the package or container without breaking the package seal. This x-ray examination is done either at pier (docks) or at port premises. VACIS equipment is used as mobile service also to use on road ,rail or any inland locations. Normally, VACIS exam is decided by Customs Border Protection (CBP) before arrival of cargo at port of discharge. Authorities at Terminal make arrangements for CBP to inspect the cargo after 48 hours of its arrival. VACIS can be decided on random, suspected or actual law violators. If contraband is found detected, the cargo or the container will be moved to



Container Examination Station (CES) for thorough VACIS exam. Initially, the cargo will be scanned whole, and examination is carried out with the images obtained. If not satisfied by CBP, each packages will be unloaded and scan thoroughly.

If a consignment is selected for VACIS by CBP, charges of VACIS exam has to be paid by the importer. In some cases, although CBP released the import shipment , the private companies whom the CBP had authorized for handling arrangements for inspection, may not release the goods unless they receives their charges. Apart from VACIS exam, there may have additional storage charges or demurrage charges to shipping carriers due to delay in taking delivery.

What is intensive exam CET exam in US import clearance?

Contraband Enforcement Team (CET) is a designation of US customs department. Normally CET exam is done to protect from narcotics, drugs or weapons. A physical examination of cargo is undertaken by Contraband Enforcement Team. In an intensive exam, normally the container is called to nearest CFS or port location. The complete physical inspection of each item in the container is carried out.

Once CET ordered for an intensive examination for a particular container by the US customs, the said container is moved to the nearest CFS for inspection. Private contractors are authorized to undertake this kind of job and the charges is on account of importer (?). The respective terminal will be intimated by customs and in turn to the carrier about the 'hold'.



At some of the Terminals, importer can opt the freight station in which the cargo to be inspected. Once after moving cargo to the freight station, the cargo is de-stuffed, whole or part and thorough inspection is carried out. Once after inspection, if customs satisfied to release the container, the container is moved back to port for necessary on-carriage, after collecting the 'intensive exam charges' by private agencies authorized by CBP. If importer cannot pay the said charges in time, the container will not be moved further, although customs already released the container. In addition to the above charges, demurrage / storage also can be attracted on such goods. Under 19 USC 1467, CBP has the right to inspect any import cargo arrives in US. It is the responsibility of importer to make the import goods available for examination. Importer is also responsible to pay all charges related to such intensive examination.