

## New Electronic Process for MAF Quarantine Declarations for Imported Containers

The New Zealand Customs Service and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) are working together to improve the process for clearing sea containers and associated risk goods.

A new electronic system has been developed so that industry can submit MAF's container Quarantine Declarations (QDs) electronically via Customs' import entries and ECI reports to provide electronic messages to port companies about the MAF status of each container.

Importers are now required to submit a QD completed by the overseas supplier (or shipping company, for empty containers) to MAF for every imported shipping container. This change is part of the revised import health standard for sea containers issued by MAF in September 2003.

MAF uses information on the QDs to assess the external and internal biosecurity risks posed by containers, and determine whether they require MAF external inspection or decontamination prior to release from a port, and whether the containers require MAF supervision of devanning. The QD includes questions about the cleanliness of a container, the types of packaging used within the container, and whether wooden packaging material has been treated.

The new system will be available for testing by industry in July 2004. A final implementation date will be dependent on the results of the testing.

The benefits of the new electronic process are:

- Importers, freight forwarders, and devanners will be able to use the existing Customs electronic interface to lodge QDs and gain immediate electronic advice of the MAF status of imported containers. This will remove the delays that can occur with manual QD lodgement, and allow early transport planning;
- For FCL containers, the QD will be made within the import entry or ECI message that is already required by Customs;
- For empty containers, the intention is to provide the facility to use the Inward Report to lodge the QD, but this may take a little longer to put in place. You will be kept informed;
- Port companies will be able to receive electronic advice of the MAF status of each container as the QD is processed, enabling early logistical planning. As 50-70 percent of containers will have MAF port holds lifted automatically after the electronic information is lodged, this benefit will be realised immediately;
- MAF will spend less resources manually entering data and removing holds in port systems, and will be able to activate new risk profiles immediately;
- As Customs will be immediately aware of MAF actions in regard to a container subject to a Customs inspection or movement permit, the requirements of both agencies can be co-ordinated at an early stage.

## Summary of Electronic QD Process

### FCL and Bulk Containers, and Empty Containers being Withdrawn from Service for Importation, including Flat Racks/Bolsters with Cargo (see Figure 1, Appendix 1)

#### *Importers or their agents*

1. Where the status of a container on a Customs import –class entry is FCL or Bulk, the QD will be made via the *Other Information* code and data fields on the header of the entry. For all entries covering such containers, declarants should insert "MCD" (standing for *MAF Container Declaration*) in the *Code* field of the entry, even where the declarant does not hold a copy of the QD. This is to distinguish between entries for which no QD is held and entries where the declarant has forgotten to enter the QD details. Once the interim implementation phase has finished, entries without "MCD" in the Code field will be rejected.
2. Where the entry declarant holds a copy of the MAF QD, inserting a combination of "Y" and "N" in the data field will declare the answers to five questions about cleaning, packaging, and packaging treatment/certification as stated on that QD (note that the answer to Question 3b of the QD, regarding the type of treatment used, is not included in this process). The significance of each letter and its order of placement is set out in Appendix 2. Note that regardless of the order in which the questions appear on an individual QD, they must be answered in the order shown in Appendix 2.
3. If the entry declarant does not hold a copy of the MAF QD, or the QD is incomplete, the data field is to be left blank.
4. An additional Other Information code will be used to specify the number of the MAF Approved Transitional Facility where the container(s) on the entry will be devanned. In the *Code* part of the field, declarants should insert "ATF" (standing for *Approved Transitional Facility*). In the data field, declarants should insert the MAF-assigned number of the devanning facility. A list of MAF-approved transitional facilities for container devanning will be placed on the MAF Biosecurity website and kept up to date, to ensure declarants have access to a current list of approved facilities.
5. Only one "MCD" declaration line and one "ATF" code can be inserted per entry. Two or more containers can only be declared on the same entry when the same answers to the QD questions apply to all those containers. Separate entries will need to be lodged for containers for which the answers differ.

#### *MAF and Customs Action*

6. For error-free entries covering FCL, Bulk and Empty containers, the Customs CUSRES message to the declarant will contain both a Customs response and a MAF response. The MAF response will be a series of code words in the free text segment of the CUSRES message, headed by the word MAF. Except where the method of payment shown on the entry is "Cash", the MAF response will also be provided to the port of discharge shown on the entry, if the port wishes to receive such responses and sets up the ability to do so<sup>1</sup>.
7. MAF alerts within the Customs entry processing system will target containers of interest to MAF, based on risk profiles and QD answers. Where a container is not of interest to MAF, the CUSRES message will advise MAF CLEARANCE GIVEN TO MOVE FROM WHARF

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<sup>1</sup> The specification for the MAF component of the message has been provided to Customs' port IT contacts

TO AN ATF. This indicates that the MAF port hold on the container can be removed – a separate BACC to move from the wharf will not be required unless the method of payment is "Cash". Note that this is not equivalent to final MAF clearance of the container – as at present, all containers removed from the wharf must be taken to MAF-approved transitional facilities for unpacking and checking by an accredited person (or inspection by MAF). A factsheet advising what the MAF codes in the CUSRES message mean is available on the MAF Biosecurity website at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/border/transitional-facilities/sea-containers/index.htm>. Where the containers are of interest to MAF, the CUSRES message will advise they are held, and any additional action required (e.g., MAF followed by some combination of EXTERNAL WASH FUMIGATE HOLD INTERNAL AUDIT). In this case, the importer or agent must contact MAF to arrange for a BACC to move the container from the wharf. **Note: regardless of the message sent, if the method of payment shown on the Customs entry is "Cash", no Customs message is generated to the port of discharge, and the importer or agent will need to contact MAF for a paper BACC to give to the port in order to authorise release of the container.**

8. According to the content of a MAF response for the containers, the port will either be authorised to lift the MAF hold, or will be able to position each container for the appropriate action (hold until further notice, wash, fumigation or inspection).
9. Upon receipt of error-free import entries covering FCL, Bulk or Empty containers, Customs will continually download to MAF's processing system relevant fields from all original entries, adjustments and cancellations. Customs will also download to MAF relevant fields from import entries that have been rejected because a MAF clearance is required. (Note that all fields relating to \$ values are excluded in the MAF download). MAF will assess entries that have been held for MAF<sup>2</sup>, decide what action is required, and issue a BACC via email to the client and port as appropriate.
10. Note that the Customs response messages remain unchanged, and have the same legal relevance as currently i.e. a MAF clearance is not Customs clearance, and vice versa.

### **LCL and FCL Containers – Movement Before Customs Clearance and Transshipment under Customs Control (see Figure 2, Appendix 1)**

#### *Deconsolidators, Freight Forwarders, Agents and Importers*

11. Where a deconsolidator, freight forwarder, agent or importer wishes to move<sup>3</sup> an LCL container off the wharf to a devanning area or other location approved by both MAF and Customs, or to move an FCL container off the wharf prior to Customs clearance, or to move a container under Customs control using a paperless transshipment system, the MAF container declaration may be made via a dedicated Customs electronic ECI report. This can only occur if the ECI declarant holds a copy of the MAF QD relating to the container/s. The reports can be made via the Customs On-line Declarations website, or using EDI software.

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<sup>2</sup> This will require importers/agents to contact MAF to provide information on risk goods or to arrange for inspections of goods or the container.

<sup>3</sup> All containers must be taken to a facility approved by MAF for container devanning, and are subject to a separate Customs Permit to Move as well

12. Note that a single ECI report can only cover containers imported on a single vessel on the same date. A separate ECI report must be made where more than one vessel or date is involved.
13. The ECI report already contains a *Quarantine Code* field to specify whether the container has been washed and/or fumigated according to MAF requirements. “F” signifies fumigated, “C” signifies cleaned, and “B” signifies both. Completion of this field should reflect the container cleanliness question of the MAF QD – e.g. if the container has been cleaned both externally and internally, the answer to this question should be “Yes”, and the value of the Quarantine Code field should be either “C” or “B”, as relevant. If the container has been fumigated but not cleaned, use “F”. The field is to be left blank where such treatment has not occurred, or the ECI declarant does not know that it has occurred (e.g. the answer to cleanliness question of the QD is “No” or left blank, or the declarant does not hold a copy of the QD).
14. The ECI report message also already contains a mandatory *Prohibited Packaging Indicator* field for each container number, to specify whether goods in the container are packaged in or with any packaging material referred to in the prohibited packaging question of the MAF QD (see Appendix 2). This field should reflect the prohibited packaging status indicated on the MAF QD – e.g., “Y” or “N” is to be inserted in this field, as stated on the MAF QD.
15. The remaining questions on the QD about wood packaging will not be included in the ECI report message. The QD must be submitted to MAF prior to the container being opened at the devanning facility, to evaluate the risks posed by the wood packaging.
16. A *Consignment* line and one *Goods Item* line are required for each container that is to be removed from the wharf. The *Goods Description* field is to contain only the words “*MAF Container Movement Request*”. No details of the contents of the containers should be provided, but other mandatory fields for the single *Goods Item* line must be completed to ensure acceptance of the ECI report into Customs' processing system

#### *MAF and Customs Action*

17. For error-free ECI reports covering FCL and LCL containers, and containing only the words “*MAF CONTAINER MOVEMENT REQUEST*” in the *Goods Description* field/s, the Customs CUSRES message to the declarant will contain a MAF response. The MAF response will in all cases also be provided to the port of discharge shown on the entry, if the port wishes to receive such responses and sets up the ability to do so<sup>4</sup>.
18. MAF alerts within the Customs entry processing system will target containers of interest to MAF, based on risk profiles and the contents of the two MAF QD fields. Where MAF is satisfied the container can move to an approved transitional facility without further action, the CUSRES message will advise MAF CLEARANCE GIVEN TO MOVE FROM WHARF TO AN ATF, and takes the place of a BACC to move from the wharf to an approved transitional facility. **Containers released to an ATF by lodgement of this report must be taken to a transitional facility approved for containers and any risk goods in the container, and held unopened until the hardcopy QD and paperwork have been screened by a MAF officer (see Figure 2, Appendix 1).** Where MAF requires certain conditions to be met prior to removal from the wharf, the CUSRES message will specify the

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1.

action required (e.g., MAF followed by some combination of EXTERNAL WASH FUMIGATE HOLD INTERNAL AUDIT). In this case, the importer or agent must contact MAF to arrange for a BACC to remove the container from the wharf.

19. According to the content of a MAF response for the containers, the port will either be authorised to lift the MAF hold, or will be able to position each container for the appropriate action. All containers must be taken to a transitional facility approved by MAF for containers as well as any risk goods inside the container, and are subject to separate Customs approval to move as well.
20. Customs will continually download to MAF's processing system relevant fields from all original ECI reports, adjustments and cancellations that cover FCL and LCL containers, and that contain only the words "*MAF CONTAINER MOVEMENT REQUEST*" in the *Goods Description* field/s. MAF will assess ECI reports that have been MAF-held, decide what action is required<sup>5</sup>, and issue a BACC via email to the declarant and port as appropriate.
21. Note that an ECI report requesting movement of a container for MAF purposes cannot be used for Customs clearance of the goods, and an ECI lodged for Customs clearance of the goods cannot be used to request a movement for MAF purposes. Similarly, Customs approval to move a container off the wharf cannot be effected via an ECI report – the existing Customs Permit to Remove continues to apply. The processing of each type of ECI report within the Customs system is different, and it is not possible to combine the three functions within this one message format. When Customs adopts the WCO data set some time after 2005, both MAF and Customs functions will be able to be combined in the one ECI message.
22. Note that a paper BACC application, including a copy of the QD, can still be lodged with MAF to move an LCL container off the wharf to a devanning area or other location, as an alternative to the electronic option. Paper applications will not be accepted for FCL movements once the initial implementation period is finished.

### **Empty Containers, including Flat Racks/Bolsters without Cargo (see Figure 3, Appendix 1)**

#### *Shipping Companies*

23. Customs has already advised industry that from 1 July 2004, vessel operators are to ensure an Inward Cargo Report is lodged for all vessels 24 hours prior to arrival in New Zealand, excluding voyages originating in or transiting through Australia. Empty containers for discharge or transhipment in New Zealand must be included in the Inward Cargo Report, which is in the format of an ECI report.
24. If empty containers are included in an Inward Cargo Report, it is intended that the Customs and MAF response will be provided to the port of discharge shown on the Inward Cargo Report, if the port wishes to receive such responses and sets up the ability to do so<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately the nature of the CUSRES message to the declarant prevents inclusion of the

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<sup>5</sup> Where containers have been held for risk goods or because of internal risks, declarants must contact MAF and arrange a time for MAF inspection or supervision of container devanning before a BACC is issued allowing the container to be removed from the wharf.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 1.

MAF response at this stage. Shipping companies can contact the port or MAF to identify the MAF status of empty containers reported on the Inward Cargo Report

25. As stated in paragraphs 13 and 14 above, the Inward Cargo Report message includes a mandatory *Quarantine Code* field, and a *Packaging Indicator* field for each container. As empty containers should not include packaging, it is expected this will generally contain "N" for "No". The answers inserted in these fields are to be as stated for the container cleanliness and prohibited packaging questions on the QDs held by the shipping company for the empty containers. If the shipping company lodging the Inward Cargo Report does not hold<sup>8</sup> a QD for the containers, or the QD is incomplete, "N" is to be inserted in the *Packaging Indicator* field, and the *Quarantine Code* field is to be left blank. Shipping companies transporting empty containers to New Zealand on behalf of other companies should arrange to receive QDs for those containers prior to lodging the Inward Cargo Report message (e.g. it is the responsibility of the overseas supplier of the container to provide a QD for all containers destined for import into New Zealand). Shipping companies do not have to lodge container QD information for loaded containers (e.g. for loaded containers, "N" should be inserted in the *Packaging Indicator* field, and the *Quarantine Code* field should be left blank).
26. For voyages originating in or transiting through Australia, where a Customs Inward Cargo Report is not required to be lodged, the shipping company can lodge an Inward Cargo Report for only the empty containers in order to obtain MAF clearance (e.g., if the containers are for discharge in New Zealand). Alternatively, if the shipping company does not lodge such a report, any entity in New Zealand with an interest in the containers can lodge an ECI report for empty containers as per the process for LCL/FCL containers set out in paragraphs 11-22 above. However, the shipping company bringing the empty containers to New Zealand must provide the Quarantine Declarations for those containers (or have an equivalent system for managing the risks associated with the empty containers, approved by MAF's Director, Border Management).

#### *MAF and Customs Action*

27. MAF alerts within the Customs entry processing system will target containers of interest to MAF, based on risk profiles and the contents of these two MAF fields. Where MAF is satisfied the container may move off-wharf without further action, it is intended that the Customs message to the port of discharge will advise this – no additional BACC will be required to move from the wharf. Where MAF requires conditions to be met, it is intended that the CUSRES message to the port of discharge will specify the action required e.g. wash, fumigation, or inspection prior to movement. In this case, the shipping company should contact MAF to arrange for a BACC to move the containers from the wharf.
28. According to the content of a MAF response for the containers, it is intended the port will either be authorised to lift the MAF hold, or will be able to position each container for the appropriate action. Whether or not this response needs to be acted on depends on whether the containers are in fact to be moved off wharf for any reason, or whether they will stay on the wharf for future use or loading for transshipment at the same port.

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<sup>8</sup> If a container does not have a QD, it will be treated as high risk by MAF and require external and internal inspection by a MAF officer.

29. Customs will automatically download to MAF's processing system relevant fields from all original Inward Cargo Reports, adjustments and cancellations covering empty containers. MAF will assess reports that have been MAF-held, decide what action is required, and issue a BACC via email to the declarant and port as appropriate.
30. Note that for empty shipping containers being withdrawn from international service, a Customs import entry must also be lodged to clear them for domestic use.
31. Paper applications for clearance will not be accepted for empty container movements once the initial implementation period has finished.

If you have any queries regarding electronic Quarantine Declarations or MAF messages for imported containers, please email [border.management@maf.govt.nz](mailto:border.management@maf.govt.nz) or [feedback@customs.govt.nz](mailto:feedback@customs.govt.nz)

*Appendix 1*

**Figure 1. New electronic biosecurity clearance process for FCL containers**

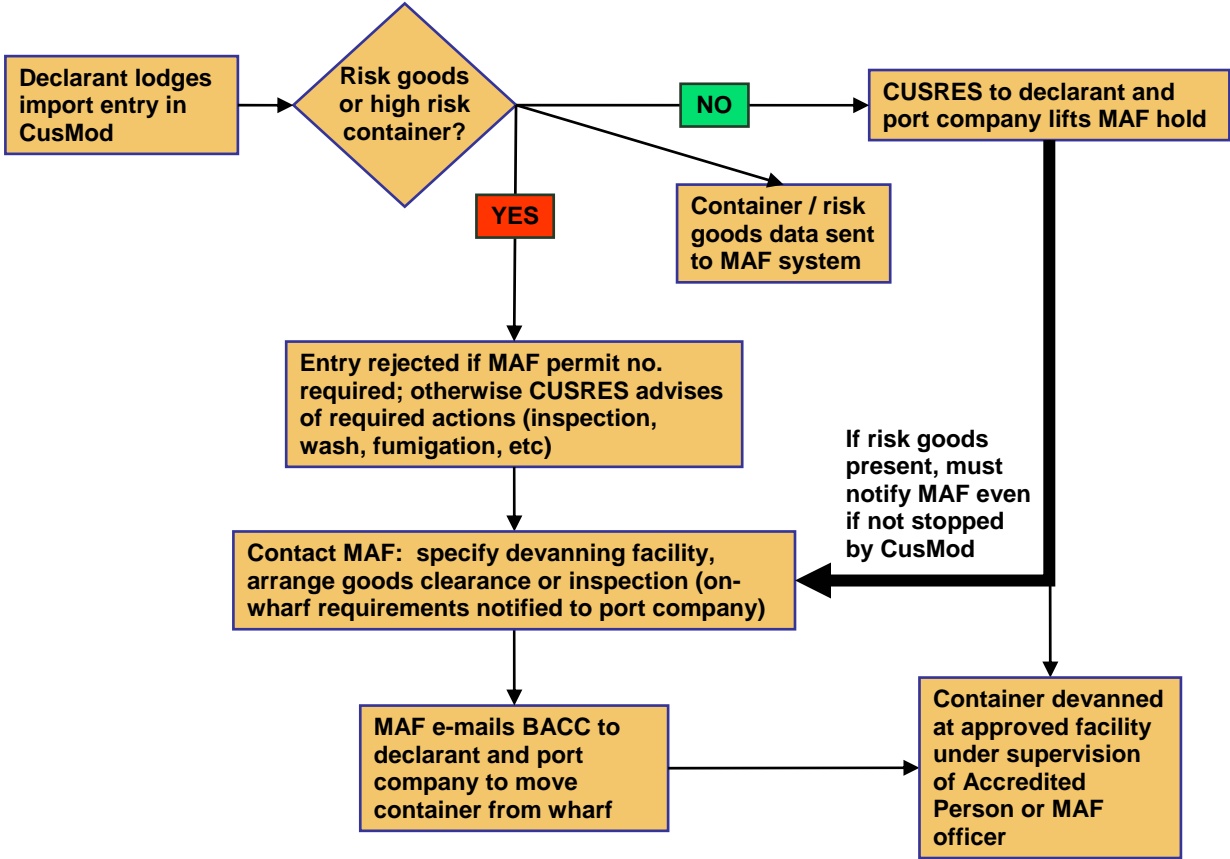
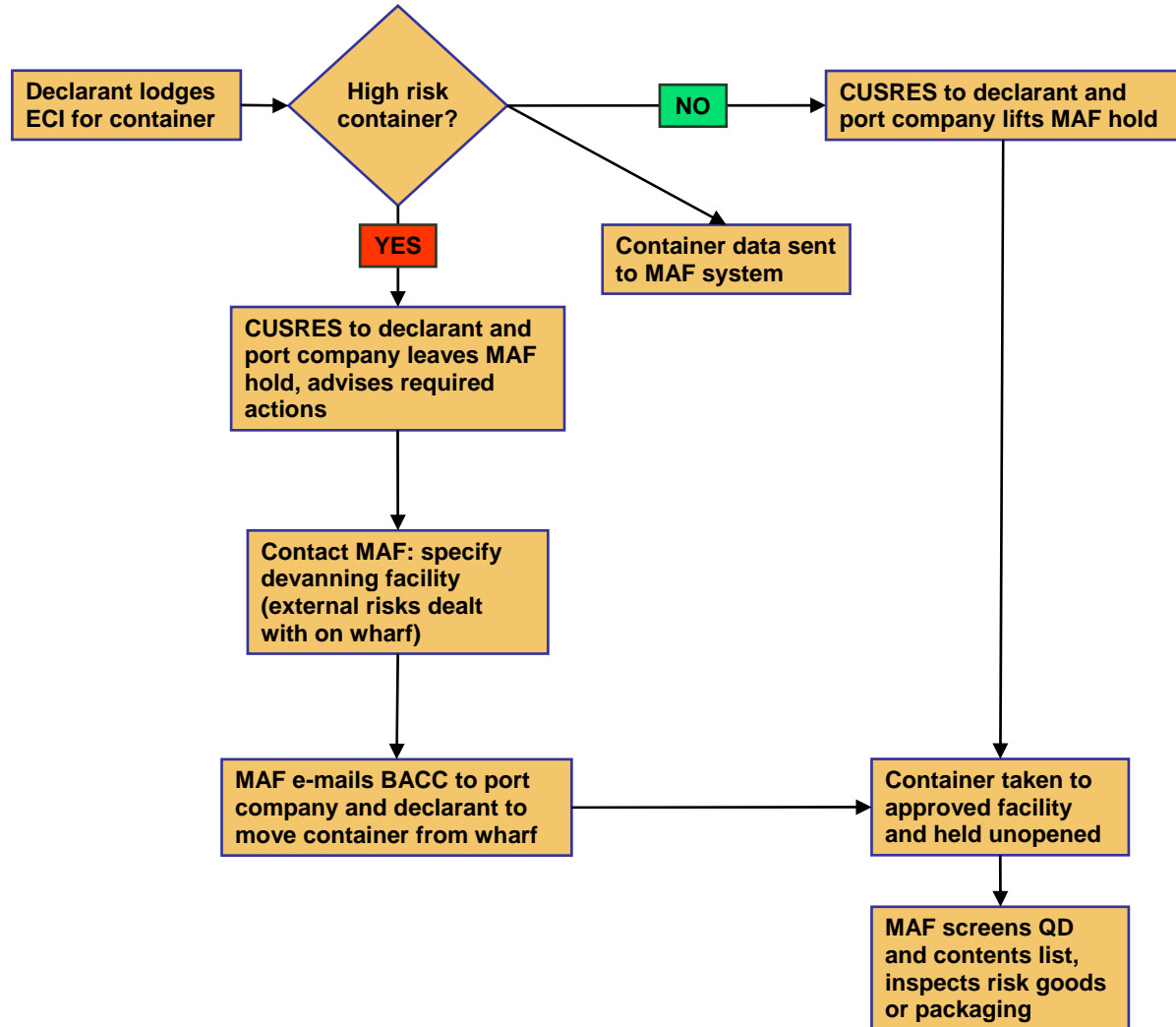
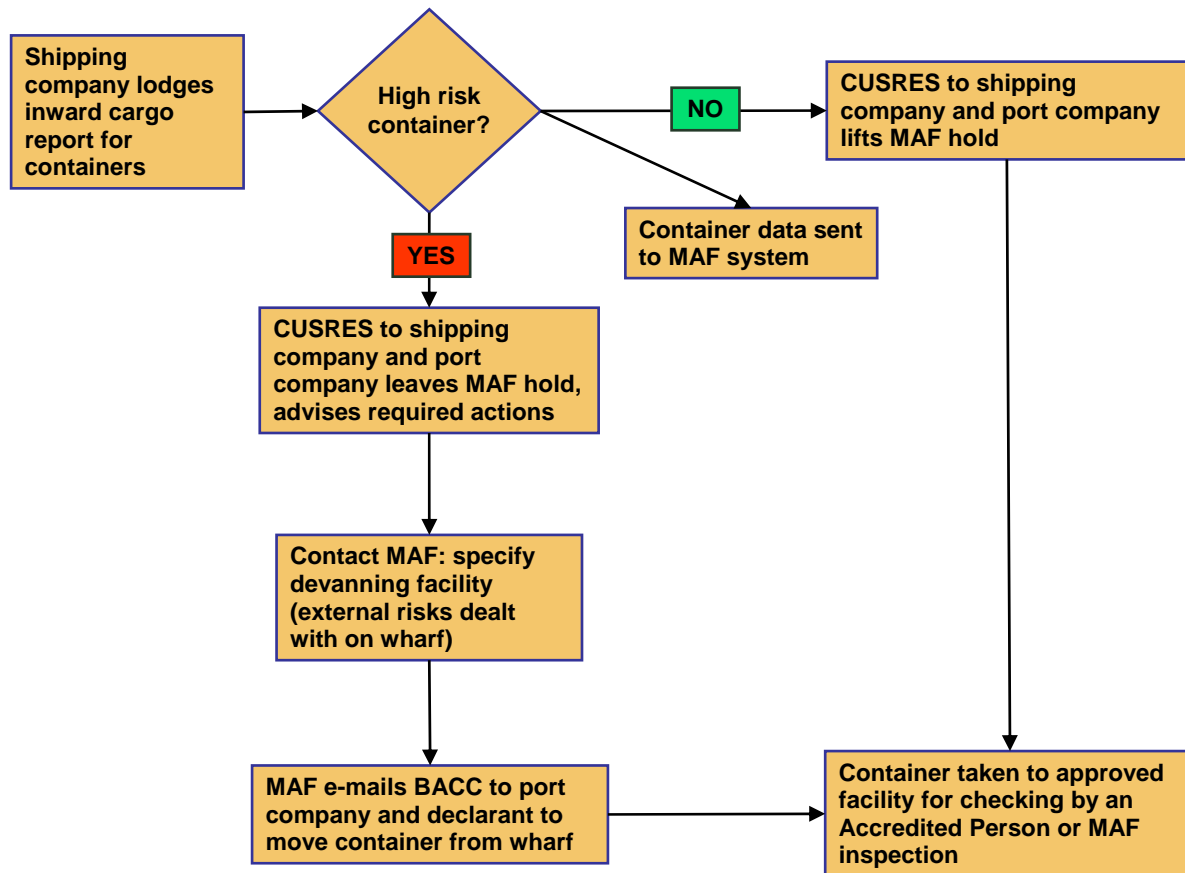




Figure 2. New clearance process for LCL containers (optional)



**Figure 3. Intended new clearance process for empty containers (timing of introduction to be confirmed)**



Note: empty containers may also be dealt with under equivalent systems approved by the Director, Border Management

## Appendix 2

### Format for Other Information Data Field Answers to MAF Container QD Questions

#### Requirements

The QD has 6 questions, as shown below. On any individual QD, the questions may appear in a different order to that shown below, but when lodging an import-class entry, the questions must be answered in the order shown below (e.g. the first character, Y or N, must refer to the cleanliness question, the second character to the packaging materials question, the third character to the wood packaging question, the fourth character to the wood treatment question and the fifth character to the wood treatment certificate question). Question 3b (type of wood treatment used) is not included in the import entry.

#### 1. Cleanliness

At the time of packing, the container/s were inspected internally and externally, and are clean and free from contamination with live organisms, material of plant or animal origin, soil and water ..... Yes/No

#### 2. Packaging Materials

Has any soil, peat, raw green or contaminated moss, used sacking material, hay, straw, chaff or any packing material contaminated with the above been used within the container/s listed above?..... Yes/No

#### 3. Wood Packaging

Has any wood packaging been used within the container/s such as cases, crates, pallets or wood used to separate, brace, protect or secure cargo in transit? ..... Yes/No

3a. If yes to 3 above, has the wood been treated? ..... Yes/No

3b. If yes to 3a above, how was the wood treated?.....

3c. If yes to 3a above, is a certificate for the treatment of this wood available? ..... Yes/No

For import-class entries covering FCL containers, the responses to five of these questions as declared in the QD for the container/s will be represented in the Other Information Data field of the entry as a series of Y/N codes in the order set out in the following table:

Data	Cleanliness	Packaging Materials	Wood Packaging	Wood Treated	Treatment Certificate
Format	an1	an1	an1	an1	an1
Possible values	Y or N	Y or N	Y	Y	Y or N
				N	N
			N	N	N

If the answer to Question 3 (is wood present) is N, then the answer to Questions 3a and 3c must also be N. If the answer to Question 3a is N (wood not treated), then Question 3c must also be N (no certificate).

The combination of answers (for instance, NYYNN) to the five questions should be inserted as the data value in the MCD OINF code field.