

# C-TPAT Enrollment Guide

Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism — Enrollment Overview for US Importers

## What is C-TPAT?

The Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) is a voluntary CBP program that recognizes importers who maintain documented supply chain security practices. In exchange for meeting CBP's minimum security criteria and undergoing validation, C-TPAT members receive reduced exam rates, expedited cargo release, and access to CBP trusted trader benefits. For high-volume importers on congested lanes, reduced exam rates directly affect distribution center scheduling and total landed cost.

## 12 Minimum Security Criteria

CBP's minimum security criteria cover: (1) Business Partner Requirements, (2) Cybersecurity, (3) Conveyance and Instrument of International Traffic Security, (4) Container Security, (5) Physical Access Controls, (6) Personnel Security, (7) Procedural Security, (8) Agricultural Security (if applicable), (9) Physical Security, (10) Seal Security, (11) IT Security, and (12) Education, Training and Awareness. The Security Profile addresses each criterion with documented policies and evidence of implementation.

## Enrollment Process

1	Create ACE portal account and submit C-TPAT application	1–2 days	Guidance only
2	Complete Security Profile across all 12 minimum security criteria	2–6 weeks	Primary — CRG drafts and reviews
3	CBP initial review and acceptance	6–10 weeks	Client-facing; CRG on standby
4	CBP validation visit (Tier 2 and Tier 3 applicants)	Scheduled by CBP	CRG prepares docs; attends if requested
5	Approval and ongoing annual maintenance	Per CBP schedule	Annual review support available

## What CRG Provides

Our involvement is concentrated in Step 2 (Security Profile development) and Step 4 (validation preparation). The Security Profile is the substantive work: it requires mapping your supply chain against each of the 12 security criteria, documenting existing controls, identifying gaps, and drafting policies where gaps exist. We have taken multiple retail importers through this process and know where the

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documentation tends to be thin.

For validation visits, we organize the documentation package, prepare staff for CBP interviews if requested, and attend as operational support. We do not represent clients as counsel.

To discuss C-TPAT enrollment for your import program, contact [enquiries@customs-release.com](mailto:enquiries@customs-release.com). Enrollment support is available to CRG freight and brokerage clients.