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## Canadian eManifest deadline looms for US truckers

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Come Monday, U.S. truckers arriving at the Canadian border may find a surprise waiting for them: fines, if they haven't submitted an electronic manifest beforehand.

Jan. 11 is the date the Canada Border Service Agency starts assessing "monetary penalties" to truckers and railroads that don't transmit electronic shipment manifests ahead of time.

For trucking companies, cargo and conveyance data must be received and validated in an electronic format or [eManifest \(http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/manif/menu-eng.html\)](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/manif/menu-eng.html) by the CBSA a minimum of one hour before a shipment arrives at the border. For rail shipments, the minimum period is two hours before arrival.

Electronic manifests are required at every crossing point on the 5,525 mile U.S.-Canadian border. Millions of eManifests will be transmitted each year. In 2014, the last year for which annual data was available, 5.8 million trucks crossed the U.S.-Canadian border, a 2.7 percent increase from 2013. Trucks carried 53.8 percent of the \$658.2 billion of freight shipped to and from Canada in 2014, and 65.6 percents of U.S. exports to Canada moved by truck.

Canada is gradually rolling out electronic filing requirements for all types of carriers, forwarders and importers. The eManifest program is the heart of Canada's Advance Commercial Information or ACI initiative, similar to the U.S. Automated Commercial Environment initiative.

Ocean shipping lines have had to submit electronic manifests 24 hours before arriving at Canadian ports since 2004, and air cargo operators since 2006. Electronic filing is not yet mandatory for freight forwarders, but the CBSA is working on it. Canadian shippers importing goods also will eventually have to file advanced trade documents online.

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Most cross-border carriers are aware of this. Electronic manifests became mandatory for truckers and railroads last July, but without fines for non-compliance. That changes next week.

"Monday is the big day when we say eManifest is finally real," said Glenn Palanacki, product manager for North American Customs at Descartes Systems Group. "It's actually been 'real' for a while, but now it hits you in the pocket if you're not in compliance," he said.

Penalties will be set on a sliding scale that can range from a few hundred dollars to as much as \$10,000 per shipment, Palanacki said. Penalties escalate for repeat offenders. "The [Administrative Monetary Penalty System \(http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/trade-commerce/amps/menu-eng.html\)](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/trade-commerce/amps/menu-eng.html) is a matrix. If you keep doing the wrong thing, they keep ratcheting it up. If carriers aren't ready, they're going to feel it in their pocketbooks."

Not being prepared could lead to delays as well, he said. Shippers would be wise to ensure carriers are compliant before giving them cross-border freight. "If you did the electronic filing right but not in the timeframe, those shipments are going to be stopped and set aside," he said.

With years of pilot tests and a phased implementation under their belts, large trucking companies should be well prepared. But smaller carriers, and carriers new to the cross-border market, may still be catching up, Palanacki said. "This created more problems for the smaller guys who don't do as many runs up to Canada," he said. "For carriers that sent one or two trucks a week to the border, this probably wasn't on their radar until last summer."

There are several routes to compliance for carriers, large and small. First, CBSA offers an [eManifest Portal \(http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/manif/portal-portal-eng.html\)](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/prog/manif/portal-portal-eng.html). Registered trucking companies can use the portal to transmit basic arrival information and shipment data to CBSA. (Railroads must use electronic data interchange or EDI.)

That may be a solution for smaller carriers or companies with infrequent shipments, but those regularly crossing the border likely will use their own EDI systems or a third-party partner, such as Descartes, to send eManifests.

The rise of electronic shipment data collection mandates in the U.S. and Canada following the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001 created a new business for companies such as Descartes, a global logistics software company. "It's carved out entirely new businesses for us, and other companies," Palanacki said. "It's had a big impact. There was a massive education curve."

That curve is far from complete. "We're pretty much at the midpoint of the eManifest initiative," Palanacki said. ([Click here \(http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/international-customs-regulations/5-steps-prepare-canadas-emanifest-mandate\\_20160109.html\)](http://www.joc.com/regulation-policy/customs-regulations/international-customs-regulations/5-steps-prepare-canadas-emanifest-mandate_20160109.html) to read a commentary on the eManifest program by Palanacki). Implementing systems for forwarders and importers will be even more complex.

Eventually, the data generated and captured by the eManifest program will be able to feed business analytics software and help carriers, forwarders and importers optimize supply chains, Palanacki said. That will help identify opportunities that are practically invisible today. "We'll be able to aggregate data from other systems" as well as the manifest data, he said.

That's several miles, or years, down a long road, but the digital horizon is drawing closer.

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