

F. No.450/33/2022-Cus. IV
Government of India
Ministry of Finance
Department of Revenue
(Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs)

Room No.227B, North Block,
New Delhi, dated 7th March, 2023.

To,

All Principal Chief Commissioners/ Chief Commissioners (Customs/ Customs
(Preventive) / Customs & Central Tax)
All Principal Commissioners/ Commissioners of Customs/ Customs (Preventive)
All Principal Directors General/ Directors General, under CBIC.

Madam/Sir,

Subject: Boarding functions – Improving transparency using boarding Jacket fitted with Body Worn Camera (BWC) having video/audio recording facility by Boarding Officer - reg.

Kind attention of field formations is drawn to relevant instructions in the Customs Preventive Manual 1987, Circular No. 36/95-Cus dated 10.04.1995 and 25/2016-Customs dated 23.06.2016 whereby Board had issued guidelines relating to boarding of vessels by Customs Officers.

2.1 It is well known that all vessels arriving into the country report their arrival to the Customs and Port authorities. The Boarding Officer/s are usually the first to set foot on any vessel entering the Indian frontiers and they are the cutting-edge functionaries of the Customs Service whose visibility extends to the shipping lines, terminal operators, logistic partners, custom brokers, businessmen, crew members /passengers, etc. The Boarding Officer acts as an ambassador of our country and is expected to seamlessly initiate and conduct customs formalities and procedures.

2.2 Keeping the above as an objective, and continuing with various reforms undertaken by Customs through leveraging technology so as to improve transparency & ease of doing business, to present more professionally the role of the Boarding Officer, keeping scope for upfront evidence in case of an offence or likely offence, and enhancing the protection of interest of the Customs Officer against frivolous complaints, the Nhava Sheva and Ahmedabad Customs Zones, had implemented, since August 2022, the sporting of boarding jacket fitted with Body Worn Camera (BWC) with video/audio recording facility by Boarding Officers while carrying out duties on board the vessels. Copies of the JNCH Standing Order No. 10/2022 dated 11.08.2022 and Ahmedabad Customs Zone Standing Order No. 03/2022 dated 12.08.2022, are enclosed for reference.

2.3 Based on the feedback received from these Zones, the Board has now decided to extend the use of boarding jackets fitted with Body Worn Camera (BWC) with video/audio recording facility by Boarding Officers while carrying out duties on board vessels from 15.04.2023 with respect to the sea customs functions.

Key duties of Boarding Officer:

3.1 The main purpose of boarding a Vessel, *inter-alia*, is to undertake verification, collect the Arrival Report (along with the supporting documents prescribed under Circular 36/95 – Cus. Dated 10.04.95) and putting the bond stores of the Vessels under Customs Seals. The responsibilities of the Boarding Officer stipulated in the Customs Preventive Manual 1987 are re-iterated for ease of reference as under:

- a. keeping an updated record of arrival / departure programmes of all the Vessels in the Port and maintain a register for all the Vessels which have arrived, anchored in the stream or taken berth in the docks, indicating all the details therein.
- b. boarding all the Vessels immediately on their first arrival in the Port in a voyage and collecting the Arrival Report thereof in the manner described above and endorsement of the same.
- c. verifying the consumable stores of the Vessel with declarations and putting the items like Liquor, Cigarettes, Tobacco, Arms & Ammunition and other sensitive items belonging to the Vessel as well to the Crew, under Customs' Seal, as prescribed in the Regulations.
- d. carrying out a percentage check (minimum 5%) of the property in possession of the Crew vis-à-vis their declaration, and keeping Liquor and Cigarettes in excess of permissible quantity under seal.
- e. forwarding, without delay, the Arrival Report and other documents collected by him to the Import Department / Manifest Clearance Department of the Custom House and keeping a record of dispatch of the same.
- f. after obtaining the documents, physical checking the "Deck and load line" of the Vessel to the effect that they are clearly marked and well preserved and making an endorsement accordingly on the Arrival Report.
- g. verifying if any gift / favour parcels have been declared on board and checking the nature of contents, port of delivery, consignee / consignor's particulars, etc., and directing the master of the Vessel to get them cleared through Customs at the Divisional Office.
- h. checking the shops or the 'slopchest' as the case may be in accordance with the list provided by the master in selective manner and placing them under paper seal.
- i. also ascertaining that undeclared and prohibited goods have not been placed or secreted on board the Vessel by taking casual strolls around the deck, crew cabins etc.
- j. any discrepancies in quality or quantity in the stores of the vessel or the property of the crew are to be reported to the Asstt. / Dy. Commissioner (Preventive) through Superintendent as these anomalies attract penal provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.
- k. to regularly intimate the Rummaging Section of the Custom House about the arrival/departure of the vessels into/from the port / harbour.

3.2 The Boarding officer shall continue to follow instructions issued vide para 5 of Circular 25/2016 – Customs dated 23.08.2016 including the collection of feedback in the enclosed format. The Arrival Report would continue to be submitted as per prevalent practice till the full operationalization of the Sea Cargo Manifest and Transshipment Regulations, 2018, after which the arrival report would be submitted electronically.

4. In addition to the above, the Boarding Officer shall ensure the following in relation to the BWC:

- a. shall activate BWC on approaching the gangway, and shall make the stakeholder/people around him/her aware that they are being recorded. The recording shall be continued uninterrupted, until the officer de-boards the Vessel, and reaches back at the end of the gangway.
- b. The BWC shall be placed on the right side at a space specifically designed in boarding jacket to hold the body camera. The BWC shall be placed upright to capture the image of interaction with vessel's crew and verification process clearly. The BWC would be positioned in such a manner so that those watching the footage see the situation from the officer's perspective.
- c. to ease out any inconvenience to stakeholders, the Boarding Officer in advance shall inform the Shipping Agent/Line that the recording of boarding functions is mandatory. The Shipping Agent/Line, in turn, will inform the Master of Vessel for smooth completion of Boarding functions.
- d. The BWC used by Boarding Officer is a stand-alone device without Wi-Fi or SIM functionality. If the Safety Officer of the Vessel carrying hazardous cargo opines that the usage of the BWC is not safe in certain areas inside the Vessel or entire Vessel, then the endorsement to that effect shall be taken from Safety Officer, and the Boarding Officer will not use BWC while in identified areas, if required. The Boarding Officer shall inform the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner (Boarding) who in turn will bring this to the notice of Joint/Additional Commissioner (Boarding) for independent cross - verification.

5. The number of Boarding Officers, normally, will be limited to one. However, depending upon requirement for Boarding functions, more than one Boarding Officer can be deputed for Boarding functions and all Boarding Officers shall wear a jacket fitted with BWC.

6. Board directs all the Pr. Chief/Chief Commissioners of Customs in charge of Sea ports to maintain regular feedback from members of the trade/vessel crew in the feedback form prescribed in Circular 25/2016 – Customs dated 23.08.2016. The feedback received from the trade shall be regularly scrutinized by the jurisdictional Pr. Commissioner/Commissioner and any discrepancies in the boarding practice and suggestions for improvement shall be considered and acted upon, and also sent to the Board.

7. The respective jurisdictions/Zones are directed to coordinate with the Mumbai II and Ahmedabad Customs Zone, respectively, for smooth and uniform implementation on 15.04.2023.

8. Necessary Standing Orders and Public Notices should be issued sufficiently in advance of 15.04.2023 by respective jurisdictions. Any difficulty faced, including by stakeholders, may also be brought to the notice of the Director Customs.

9. Hindi version follows.

Yours faithfully,



(Ananth Rathakrishnan)

Director to the Government of India



सीमा शुल्क आयुक्त का कार्यालय (सामान्य)
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS (GENERAL)
जवाहरलाल नेहरू कस्टम हाउस, न्हावा शेवा, तालुका उरण, जिला रायगढ़ - महाराष्ट्र 400707.
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU CUSTOM HOUSE, NHAVA SHEVA, TAL- URAN,
DIST- RAIGAD, MAHARASHTRA - 400 707.

F.No.S/43-150/2015CHSJNCH

DATE 11.08.2022

STANDING ORDER NO. 10/2022

Subject: - Jacket with camera for use by the vessel Boarding Officer-pilot at JNCH- procedure -reg.

Internationally, uniform jackets with equipment such as walkie talkie, night binoculars, body worn cameras (BWCs), searchlight caps, has found an increasing use by the law enforcement agencies for specific areas of work, as per the requirement.

2. The use of similar uniform jacket with equipment for Customs has been examined. It is felt that to begin with, this should be prescribed for use by the Boarding Officers at this port on pilot basis.

3. In the seaport, the Boarding officer is the first government official to deal with the foreign vessel on its first arrival to Indian ports and he/she has various responsibilities on his/her shoulders. The Boarding Officers are the face of Indian Customs at the ports. Crisp in their white uniforms, the first to set foot on any vessel entering the Indian frontiers, they are the cutting-edge functionaries of the Service whose visibility extends to the Shipping lines, terminal operators, logistic partners, custom brokers, businessmen and most importantly the common man. Thus, the boarding officer has to act as an ambassador of the country and has to initiate customs formalities and procedure without causing any inconvenience to the trade.

4. As per his/her duties, he/she shall board all the vessels on their first arrival in India and collect the Arrival report consisting of General declaration, Vessel's stores list, Crew list, private property list of the members of the crew, a detailed list of embarking / disembarking of the passengers/crew, list of same bottom cargo, Vessel Cargo, vessel's currency declaration, list of arms, ammunition and satellite phones, list of permissible dangerous drugs for the use of vessel or its crew, if any, etc.. He/She shall verify Bond stores and the consumable stores of the vessel with the declaration and shall put the items like liquor, cigarettes, tobacco, arms & ammunition and other such items of the vessel and its crew, under customs seal. He/She shall carry checks of minimum 5% of the property in possession of the crew with their declaration and shall put the excess quantity, if any, under seal.

5. The performance of the above duties and the interaction during the course of his/her duties require maintaining of absolute transparency, legitimacy and accountability. In order to highlight the importance of Customs and accord it the fitting tag of frontiers of economic borders of the country, the visibility of Customs officers at the port should be enhanced.

6. Keeping the above objective in mind, it has been decided to prescribe and use a jacket with body worn camera for the Boarding officers at this port. This will provide transparency, while carrying on physical checks on board and also provide evidence in case of an offence or suspected offence. It will not only add to the visibility of the officer but also has the benefit of increased transparency, legitimacy and accountability for both the citizens and the Customs especially in light of enhanced scrutiny of such public interactions.

7. In this regard, the following procedure shall be followed by the boarding officers-

- (i) The boarding officer shall wear the jacket with their name and badges before boarding the vessel. The body worn camera shall be placed on the right side at a space specifically designed to hold the body camera. The camera shall be placed upright to capture the image of interaction with vessel's crew and verification process clearly.
- (ii) The recording camera would be positioned in such a manner so that those watching the footage see the situation from the officer's perspective.
- (iii) Officer shall activate their camera at the start of their boarding duty on approaching the gangway and make people aware that they are being recorded. The recording shall be continued uninterrupted until the officer de-boards the vessel, and reaches back at the end of the gangway.
- (iv) At the end of the officer's shift, the officer shall transfer the recorded data in an internal drive secured with password protection. At the end of every day, a backup copy in hard disk to be sent and kept in safe custody of AC/DC concerned. The recordings shall be retained for minimum 30 days. All the officers shall ensure safe storage of data and access to the same shall be restricted for outside use.
- (v) The body camera after transferring all the data shall be handed to next batch officer safely. It needs to be recorded in the register immediately during handover.
- (vi) Asst/Deputy Commissioner Boarding shall oversee these recordings on random basis every week and send the details of video reviewed and observations made to Joint/Additional Commissioner Boarding.
- (vii) Joint/Additional Commissioner Boarding shall review these recordings and the observations made by the Asst/Deputy Commissioner Boarding every month and submit a monthly report to Commissioner (General).

8. The Standing Order shall come into force with effect from 15.08.2022(10:30AM). Any difficulty faced in implementation of these instructions shall be brought to the notice of the undersigned.

This issues with the approval of Competent Authority.


(Merugu Suresh) 11/08/2022

Addl. Commissioner of Customs(General).
JNCH, Mumbai Zone II

I/715967/2022



प्रधान आयुक्त का कार्यालय, सीमाशुल्क, अहमदाबाद

"सीमाशुल्क भवन", पहली मंजिल, पुराने हाईकोर्ट के सामने, नवरंगपुरा, अहमदाबाद 009 380-
दूरभाष 4630 2754 (079) : फैक्स 2343 2754 (079) : ई-मेल: technical-customs@gov.in

Date: 12-08-2022

STANDING ORDER NO. 03/2022

**Subject: - Jacket with camera for use by the Vessel Boarding Officer-
pilot at Customs Commissionerate, Ahmedabad- procedure -reg.**

Internationally, uniform jackets with equipment such as walkie-talkie, night binoculars, body worn cameras (BWCs), searchlight caps, etc. have found an increasing use by the law enforcement agencies for specific areas of work, as per requirement.

2. The use of similar uniform jacket with equipment for Customs has been examined. It is felt that, to begin with, this should be prescribed for use by the Boarding Officers at the ports under Customs Commissionerate, Ahmedabad on a pilot basis.
3. At the seaport, the Boarding officer is the first government official to deal with the foreign vessel on its first arrival at Indian Ports and they have various responsibilities on their shoulders. The Boarding Officers are the face of Indian Customs at the ports. Crisp in their white uniforms, the first to set foot on any vessel entering the Indian frontiers, they are the cutting-edge functionaries of the service whose visibility extends to the shipping lines, terminal operators, logistic partners, custom brokers, businessmen and most importantly, the common man. Thus, the Boarding Officer has to act as an ambassador of the country and has to initiate customs formalities and procedure without causing any inconvenience to the trade.
4. As per their duties, the Boarding Officer shall board all the vessels on their first arrival in India and collect the Arrival Report consisting of General declaration, Vessel's stores list, Crew list, Private Property list of the members of the crew, a detailed list of embarking / disembarking of the passengers/crew, list of same bottom cargo, vessel cargo, vessel's currency declaration, list of arms, ammunition and satellite phones, list of permissible dangerous drugs for the use of vessel or its crew, if any, etc., The Customs Officer shall verify Bond Stores and the Consumable Stores of the vessel with the declaration and shall put the items like liquor, cigarettes, tobacco, arms & ammunition and other sensitive items of the vessel and its crew, under the Customs seal. They shall carry checks of minimum 5% of the property in possession of the crew with their declaration and shall put the excess quantity, if any, under seal.
5. The performance of the above duties and the interactions during the course of

I/715967/2022

their duties require maintaining of absolute transparency, legitimacy and accountability. In order to highlight the importance of Customs and accord it the fitting tag of guardians of the frontiers of the economic borders of the country, the visibility of Customs Officers at ports should be enhanced.

6. Keeping the above objective in mind, it has been decided to prescribe the use of jacket with body worn camera for the Boarding Officers at ports. This will provide transparency, while carrying out physical checks on board and also provide evidence in case of an offence or suspected offence. It will not only add to the visibility of the officer but also has the benefit of increased transparency, legitimacy and accountability for both citizens and Customs, especially in light of enhanced scrutiny of such public interactions.

7. In this regard, following procedures shall be followed by Boarding Officers-

- i. The Boarding Officer shall wear the jacket with their name and badges before boarding the vessel. The body worn camera shall be placed on the right side at a space specifically designed to hold the body camera. The camera shall be placed upright to capture the image of interaction with vessel's crew and verification process clearly.
- ii. The recording camera would be positioned in such a manner so that those watching the footage see the situation from the officer's perspective.
- iii. Officer shall activate his/her camera at the start of his/her boarding duty on approaching the gangway and make people aware that they are being recorded. The recording shall be continued uninterrupted until the officer de-boards the vessel, and reaches back at the end of the gangway.
- iv. At the end of the officer's shift, the officer shall transfer the recorded data in an internal drive secured with password protection. At the end of every day, a backup copy in hard disk shall be sent and kept in safe custody of AC/DC concerned. The recordings shall be retained for a minimum of 30 days. All the officers shall ensure safe storage of data and access to the same shall be restricted to internal use only.
- v. The body camera after transferring all the data shall be handed to next batch officer safely. It needs to be recorded in the register immediately during handover.
- vi. Asstt/Deputy Commissioner (in-charge) shall oversee these recordings on random basis every week and send the details of video reviewed and observations made to Joint/Additional Commissioner (in-charge).
- vii. Joint/Additional Commissioner (in-charge) shall review these recording and the observations made by the Asstt/Deputy Commissioner (in-charge) every month and submit a monthly report to the Commissioner.

8. This Standing Order comes into force with effect from 15.08.2022 (10.30 am). Any difficulty faced in implementation of these instructions shall be brought to the notice of the undersigned.

This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

I/715967/2022

Signed by Mohit Agrawal

Date: 12-08-2022 18:17:16

Reason: Approved

MOHIT AGRAWAL

Additional Commissioner (Technical)

Ahmedabad Customs