SUB.: Measures to facilitate trade during the lockdown period - Section 143AA of the Customs Act, 1962 - reg.

Attention of the importers, Customs Brokers and all other stakeholders is invited to Board Circular No. 17/2020- Customs dated 03.04.2020 on the captioned subject.

2. Difficulty is being faced by importers/ exporters and their authorised Customs Brokers, during the ongoing lockdown period announced by the Government to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the country, in obtaining notarised stamp papers for furnishing bonds required by Customs in certain situations during the assessment and clearance of goods. The measures taken by the Government to prevent the said pandemic are at present in force for a period of 21 days w.e.f 25.03.2020 i.e. till 14.04.2020.

3. In light of the unprecedented situation caused due to COVID-19 pandemic, it has been decided to relax the requirement to submit bonds prescribed under various provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 for a temporary period in terms of section 143AA of the Customs Act, 1962 with a view to expedite Customs clearance of goods and for maintaining balance between Customs control and facilitation of legitimate trade.

4. In this regard, relaxation of the requirement to submit bonds prescribed under section 18, section 59 and section 143, and under notifications issued in terms of section 25 of the Customs Act, 1962, is granted subject to compliance of conditions as listed below:

4.1 While the above-referred lockdown is presently in force till 14.04.2020, considering that the importer/ exporter may find it difficult to comply with requirement of furnishing bond for some more time thereafter till the situation normalizes, the said relaxation shall be available up to 30.04.2020.
4.2 In the period up to 30.04.2020, request for submission of an undertaking from the importer/exporter in lieu of a bond prescribed under the above-mentioned provisions shall be accepted. This relaxation will apply to the following categories of the importers/exporters:

a. Government/Public Sector Undertakings (Central/State/UT Govts. or Administrations and their undertakings);
b. Manufacturer/Actual User importer;
c. Authorised Economic Operators;
d. Status holder;
e. All importers availing warehouse facility in terms of section 59 of the Customs Act, 1962.

4.3 Each such relaxation, where requested, should comply with the following conditions:

i. The content of the undertaking should, to the extent possible, be same as the content of the prescribed bond.

ii. The undertaking should be duly signed by the IEC holder concerned on their business letter head and submitted by the registered email ID of the IEC holder or their authorised Customs Broker.

iii. The undertaking should include a commitment from the IEC holder to submit the proper bond in prescribed format on notarised stamp paper etc. on or before 07.05.2020.

iv. The undertaking will not be treated as a substitute for security, wherever mandated.

v. The security, where required, shall be furnished in the nature and manner as deemed fit by the proper officer. Board’s instructions issued from time to time regarding such security in specific cases should be kept in view in this regard.

vi. In case of warehoused goods, any subsequent movement of goods to another warehouse under section 67 of the Customs Act, 1962, shall be allowed only to manufacturer/actual user importer or AEO or Status holders. For requests related to change of ownership after warehousing, the facility shall be considered only in cases where the prospective buyer is either manufacturer/actual user importer or AEO or Status holder.

5. Such relaxation from submitting a bond would also be considered on case to case basis for any other importer who requests for the same, with such additional safeguards over and above those listed in this Public Notice, as deemed fit by the Commissioner of Customs, ICD PPG & other ICDs to safeguard revenue and ensure compliance of the statutory provisions.

6. Importers availing this facility shall ensure that the undertaking furnished in lieu of Bond is duly replaced with a proper bond before the stipulated period i.e. 07.05.2020.
7. Bond section of the concerned port shall keep a record of such undertaking and ensure that the undertaking furnished in lieu of Bond is duly replaced by Bond within stipulated time period i.e. 07.05.2020.

8. All trade associations/members of Customs Brokers Association are requested to take note and publicize the contents of this Public Notice among their members/constituents.

9. For the departmental officers, this may be treated as Standing Order.

10. Difficulties, if any, may be brought to the notice of the undersigned.

11. This issues with the approval of Commissioner of Customs, ICD PPG & other ICDs.

Sd/-
(Dr. Abhishek Chandra Gupta)
Additional Commissioner
ICD-PPG & other ICDs

Copy forwarded to:-

1. The Pr. Chief Commissioner of Customs(DZ), New Custom House, New Delhi-110037
2. The Principal Commissioner of Customs, ICD, TKD (Import), New Delhi.
3. The Principal Commissioner of Customs, ACC (Import), New Custom House, New Delhi.
4. The Commissioner of Customs, ICD, TKD, (Export), New Delhi,
5. The Commissioner of Customs, ACC (Export), New Custom House, New Delhi,
6. The Commissioner of Customs (Airport & General), New Custom House, New Delhi,
7. The Commissioner of Customs (Preventive), New Custom House, New Delhi,
8. The Commissioner of Customs, ICD, PPG, Delhi.
9. The Joint Commissioner of Customs, ICD, PPG, Delhi.
10. The Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of Customs, ICD, PPG (Import Shed/Export Shed/Appraising Groups/Refund/SIIB/Drawback/Export Processing/Disposal) ICD BBG, ICD Piyala, ICD Palwal, ICD Garhi Harsaru, ICD Patli, ICD Rewari, ICD Pali, ICD Bawal, ICD Sonepat, ICD Barhi, ICD Jhattipur
11. The President, Delhi Customs Clearing Agents Association, 260-61, Anarkali Bazar, Jhandewalan Extension, DDA Shopping Complex, New Delhi-110055.
12. Notice Board