

ELVIS

Electronic Visa Information System

Since January 1, 1993 the U.S. Customs computerized visa system known as ELECTRONIC VISA INFORMATION SYSTEM has been in operation for visa shipments from many countries. Countries participating in this electronic program require shippers (exporters) to report all invoice data for each shipment to their government in exchange for a visa. The data so reported is then transmitted to the Customs Automated Commercial System (ACS), which stores the data awaiting receipt of an electronic entry via ABI. Upon receipt of the entry data, it is matched with the data received via ELVIS. ***If there is not an exact, line by line match, the entry is rejected and release of cargo is refused.***

One of the main reasons for non-matching data is a difference in the Manufacturer's Identification Code. This code has long been required on entries. It is constructed from the letters and numbers in the manufacturer or vendor's name and address. The code is constructed from the country of origin code (such as UK for England), the first three letters of the first two words of the mfg./vendor name, the first four numbers in the mfg./vendor address, and the first three letters in the mfg./vendor city. Therefore, Smith Company, 12789 Stanton Road, London, England is UKSMICOM1278LON.

Unfortunately, addresses in many Asian countries are not as simple as those in England or other European countries. The same company in Taiwan may be Smith Company, Building 4, Block 16, Suite 19, 12789 Stanton Road, Taipei, Taiwan. It has become obvious that not all manufacturers/vendors know which of the numbers in these addresses are to be used (1278 would be correct). Additionally, it is not uncommon in Asia for a mfg./vendor to have several addresses, not all of which are shown on their invoice. If the MID code transmitted via ELVIS is incorrect, the entry will be rejected regardless of the reason the MID is incorrect. MID codes are considered to be incorrect by Customs if they cannot be constructed from the name and address shown on the invoice.

Of course, we can input into the Customs system any MID code. This cannot be done by merely inputting a code provided by the vendor. Codes can only be inserted into the system by inputting the complete name and address of the vendor. When such data is input, the ABI system will immediately report on our screen the code constructed by the system. At the same time, the code will be placed in the ABI database.

Customs will not have the ability to resolve problems. If an incorrect MID code can be properly re-input by our office, we will do so. Where it cannot, queries to the vendor will have to be made. Where mismatches in values and quantities are concerned, the vendor will have to make corrections with their government for re-transmission through the ELVIS system.

Vendors should be cautioned to exercise extreme care in all data they report to ELVIS including their MID code.