

# CUSTOMS DIRECTIVE ON VISA'S FOR SPLIT SHIPMENTS

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Generally, each shipment of merchandise from a country having a bilateral textile visa arrangement with the United States must be entered using an original visa covering the goods in that shipment only. This is often referred to as the one visa, one shipment rule. If the shipment is split or divided in the exporting country while under the control of the exporter or importer, then a separate visa is required for each portion of the shipment. In lieu of separate original visas, visa waivers must be obtained.

There are two exceptions to the above one visa per shipment rule:

1. The merchandise is accepted by the carrier under one airway bill or bill of lading, and the shipment is split by the carrier after it leaves control of the exporter and arrives in the U.S. port on different vessels.
2. The shipment leaves the exporting country as one shipment, but is off loaded in a second country, and is laden in the second country onto two or more vessels by the carrier for continuation to the United States.

For both of the above exceptions, the carrier splits the shipment after the carrier has been given control of the shipment. Neither the exporter nor the importer intended to send the merchandise covered by one visa on two or more vessels.

For either of the above exceptions, the same visa may be used to enter each of the separate arrivals into the United States.

**ACTION:** The above guidelines will be used in instances in which a split shipment occurs and is beyond the control of the importer and/or exporter. The importer must document that the carrier split the shipment. The importer should notify Customs of the split shipment at the time of entry of the first portion of the shipment so that proper visa extracts can be made at time of initial entry.

In addition, according to individual port requirements, port directors may develop local policy on entry processing of visas used on multiple entries resulting from split shipments so long as the local policy does not conflict with the above guidelines.

**INFORMATION:** If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact June Pergola at telephone number (202) 927-0705 or Bob Dorsett at (202) 927-7002, Trade Compliance.

By: Philip Metzger Director, Trade Compliance Division    May 3, 1996