CONTAINER SEAL SECURITY

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) program requires all full Instruments of International Traffic (i.e. shipping containers) to be sealed with a high security seal; often referred to as a bolt seal. The seals must meet or exceed the current ISO17712 standards for High Security seals. The seals must be affixed at the point of container stuffing to prevent theft and terrorist devices or other contraband from entering the international supply chain.

SEAL CONTROL

Seals are to be affixed by a responsible, designated representative of the manufacturing/shipping entity. Access to seals must be strictly controlled by a responsible party and shall be issued at random in order to avoid seals being affixed in sequential order. Seals shall be stored in a secure location (locked cabinet, safe, etc.) until such a time as their use is warranted. Access to such secure locations must be restricted to those parties responsible for the inventory and affixing of seals. A log must be maintained in order to account for all seals under the control of the manufacturer/ shipper/importer.

NOTE: All seals that are removed from a cargo container/trailer for legitimate intermediate examinations (customs inspection, conveyance damage surveys, law enforcement activity, etc.) must be placed in the container just inside the doors, in plain view, before a new seal is affixed to the container. Establish a system for annotating and reporting any changes due to legitimate intermediate examination purposes as described above.

SEAL VERIFICATION

Upon receipt of container/trailer, ensure that all seal information is true and correct as reflected on manifests, bills of lading or other documentation related to the movement of cargo.

Establish procedures for reporting any discrepancies or anomalies related to seal integrity. Establish a system to ensure verification of seal numbers and types and that all pertinent seal information is reflected on all manifests, bills of lading or other documentation (including electronic data transmissions) related to the movement of cargo

Minimize the possibility of seals being tampered with by establishing a seal integrity process. The VVTT seal verification and inspection process should be used before seals are put in place and closed:

V – View seal and container locking mechanisms. Look for excessive damage to the seal or locking mechanism or loose bolt or hasp.
V – Verify seal number for accuracy. Compare to shipping documents, and look for alterations to the seal number.
T – Tug on seal to make sure it is affixed properly. Notice if the seal comes apart, is bent or does not lock properly.
T – Twist and turn seal to make sure it does not unscrew.

Establish a process to notify management and authorities if the seal has been compromised. Only when the seals and container have been inspected, the doors can be opened.