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# PortCalls

The Philippines' only shipping and transport guide

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## Beyond the Pandemic: Shock Proofing Supply Chains

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How does a company build a more resilient supply chain model? Find out at this webinar aimed at addressing supply chain challenges after the coronavirus pandemic.

## E-TRACC in effect for Cavite ecozone II-bound containers from Manila, Batangas

- Electronic customs seal is being implemented for import containers leaving Manila and Batangas ports and bound for Cavite Economic Zone II
- Shipments of electronic materials not yet covered by E-TRACC
- BOC-Port of Davao already adopting E-TRACC; Subic to follow soon

ALL import containers from the ports of Manila and Batangas bound for Cavite Economic Zone II (CEZ II) now require an electronic customs seal (ECS).

Under Assessment and Operations Coordinating Group (AOCG) Memo No. 180-2020 dated October 12, all CEZ II-bound import containers discharged from the Port of Manila, Manila International Container Port (MICP), and Port of Batangas and covered by the transit single administrative document must be sealed

with the ECS from October 13. This allows monitoring of containers via the Bureau of Customs' (BOC) Electronic Tracking of Containerized Cargo (E-TRACC) System for irregularities during transit.

E-TRACC, which was launched last May, is a web-based system that tracks inland movement of containerized cargoes during transit and transfer to other customs territories and facilities. It allows BOC

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## Installation of RFID stickers extended beyond Nov 2

- San Miguel Corp. has extended to Nov 30 free installation of its Autosweep RFID stickers
- Vehicles without RFID stickers allowed to enter toll plaza but will be led to a nearby area to be equipped with an RFID sticker

SINCE many motorists have yet to secure radio frequency identification (RFID) stickers, they have been given an extension period to get the stickers installed on their vehicles beyond November 2, 2020.

The Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) said all Luzon expressways are ready to implement the cashless toll collection on all toll roads on November 2, but toll operators will continue to install the RFID stickers on vehicles even after the scheduled enforcement date.


“To avoid overcrowding at toll plazas and accommodate infrequent toll road users, the operators have extended the RFID installation,” TRB executive director Abraham Sales said in a statement.

Vehicles without RFID stickers will be allowed to enter the toll plaza but will be led to a nearby area to be equipped with an RFID sticker before proceeding on the expressway.

Cashless toll collection is being implemented pursuant to Department of Transportation (DOTr) Department Order 2020-012, which was issued by the government to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and facilitate passage on expressways.

Under the order, the TRB, an attached agency of the DOTr, should ensure toll operators install electronic tags or other cashless systems for all motorists and motor vehicles using the expressways, and to transact only through a cashless mode of payment.





Toll operator Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC), in a separate statement, said it is aware motorists who have been



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paying cash for the longest time will also need a transition period.

Thus, MPTC said motorists without Easytrip RFID stickers by November 2 will be allowed passage on its operated expressways, but directed to the RFID installation lanes to have their RFID stickers installed.

The corresponding toll fee charge for their passage on that particular day will then be deducted from the initial load the motorists paid in getting the RFID stickers.

MPTC operates the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX), Manila-Cavite

Expressway (CAVITEX), C5 Link, and Cavite-Laguna Expressway (CALAX).

“We will convert some of the remaining cash lanes in all toll plazas of MPTC expressways to RFID installation lanes. At the same time, the off-site customer service stations will continue to operate and install RFID stickers,” MPTC chief of technology and MPT south president and general manager Roberto V. Bontia said.

“The stickers will remain to be free except for the initial load,” he added.

MPTC said it will open RFID installation lanes at all entry toll plazas for motorists who still have no Easytrip RFID

sticker after November 2.

Aside from drive-through installation lanes, other RFID installation and reloading sites in various locations will remain open. At NLEX-SCTEX, there will be drive-through reloading lanes in Balintawak, Mindanao, Bocaue, Angeles, and Tupo. RFID assist squads will also be positioned at the toll plaza to help motorists. At CALAX, tents will be installed along lanes to augment the number of booths.

The tollway company also reminds the public to avail of their Easytrip RFID stickers at authorized customer service stations,

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## DOH eyes vaccine cold storages in every region

- DOH wants cold storages put up per region
- Type of cold storage facility needed will depend on which SARS-Cov 2 vaccine is approved
- Without sufficient cold chain facilities COVID-19 vaccines will be rendered useless

THE Department of Health (DOH) is looking to set up more cold storage facilities nationwide to ensure enough proper stor-

age for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines when they become available in the Philippines.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire in a press briefing on October 24 said the cold storage facilities or hubs should ideally be in each region or, if possible, per province.

In case of a shortage of cold storage facilities, Vergeire said DOH will be reaching out to various groups to expand their storage facilities in preparation for

the delivery and receipt of COVID-19 vaccines.

Cold storage facilities are used to ensure medicines maintain their effectiveness when rolled out for delivery.

Vergeire said the type of cold storage facility needed will still depend on the type of SARS-Cov 2 vaccine to be approved.

SARS-Cov 2 vaccines have varying cold storage requirements. Some will need to be stored in ultra-low temperature conditions of about -70 degrees while others will require the usual temperature used in cold storage facilities.

DOH is currently using the storage facility of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine as the national vaccine storage facility.

SARS-Cov 2 is the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease and was first detected in Wuhan, China last December.

Vergeire noted that aside from COVID-19 vaccines, other existing vaccines used in the country also need storage facilities.

In a separate briefing earlier, Philippine ambas-

sador to China Jose Santiago Santa Romana said the Philippines must prepare its cold chain facilities to effectively receive, store and distribute COVID-19 vaccines from China.

Being on China’s priority list of recipient countries, the Philippines “should make sure” it has cold chain storages with the capability to receive and store the vaccines so they don’t lose their effectiveness prior to distribution, Santa Romana said during a Malacañang press briefing on October 22.

“These vaccines have to be stored in the conditions [of] freezing conditions. Otherwise if exposed to tropical weather or to normal weather conditions, the vaccine could lose its effectiveness,” Santa

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# GCQ in Metro Manila extended until Nov 30

- **National Capital Region, Batangas, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Iligan City, and Lanao Del Sur will remain under GCQ in November**
- **The rest of the country will still be under MGCQ**
- **Movement of all types of cargoes via land, air, and sea should remain unhampered**

METROMANILA, Batangas, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Iligan City, and Lanao del Sur will remain under general community quarantine (GCQ) for the month of November, President Rodrigo Duterte announced in a pre-recorded public address on October 27.

The rest of the country will remain under the less strict modified GCQ (MGCQ) until the end of next month.

In GCQ areas, the logistics sector is allowed to operate at full capacity, according to the latest omnibus guidelines on the implementation of community quarantines.

The road, rail, maritime, and aviation sectors of public transportation are also allowed to operate at reduced operational and vehicular capacity in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Transportation (DOTr).

All public transport vehicles should

also observe a strict one-meter distance between passengers and put appropriate engineering controls in place.

MGCQ, which is the transition phase to the "new normal," has more relaxed measures than GCQ in terms of limiting movement and transportation, regulating the operations of industries, and fielding uniformed personnel to enforce community quarantine protocols.

Road, rail, maritime, and aviation sectors of public transportation will be allowed to operate at a capacity in accordance with guidelines issued by the DOTr.

Private transportation will also be allowed, again subject to DOTr guidelines.

Within and across areas placed under any form of community quarantine, movement of all types of cargoes via land, air, and sea should remain unhampered. Likewise, workers in the logistics sector, such as cargo, trucking, courier delivery and port operations, should be allowed to transit across areas placed under any form of community quarantine.

All local government units (LGU) are directed to strictly abide by this national policy, provided that only up to five personnel may operate cargo and delivery vehicles by land, with or without load.

LGUs and local health units are also enjoined not to issue orders contrary to or

## Mindanao exporters seek exemption from BOC policy on clerical errors

A group of exporters and two big companies in Northern Mindanao are asking the Bureau of Customs (BOC) for some leeway—even possible exemption—from fines for clerical errors made in export declarations.

Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT) Region 10A acting managing director Valerie Ramos-Lasmarias, in making the group's appeal, said the group is asking for "some leeway or consideration to our exporters, especially during this time of the pandemic where labor is reduced and production is slow."

Lasmarias in a September 18 letter of appeal to BOC-Cagayan de Oro district collector John Simon, pointed out it is difficult to comply with BOC's Customs Administrative Order (CAO) No. 01-2020 due to the nature of production and the actual export conditions exporters work under.

She said the group understands that implementing CAONo.01-2020, the new policy on clerical errors, "has been proven to prevent fraudulent import/export transactions," while also contributing to the bureau's "documentation efficiency."

But "some exporters of certain products are experiencing its impracticality when applied in actual export conditions," said Lasmarias.

"Our exporters are even lucky they still have Purchase Orders. This is of great help to our economy," she added.

CAO 01-2020, issued last March, outlines BOC's new fines and surcharges for clerical errors, misdeclaration, misclassification, and undervaluation.

Since it was implemented together with Customs Memorandum Order (CMO) 49-2019, stakeholders have been requesting for the policy's temporary suspension over reports that importers and customs brokers are being penalized with the P5,000 fine for every violation.

CMO 49-2019, issued last year, orders the mandatory filling in of Box No. 41 (Supplemental Units) in the lodgment of goods declaration in BOC's Electronic-to-Mobile System.

The P5,000 fee is deemed excessive by stakeholders, citing Section 108 of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA). The section states that BOC should not impose substantial penalties for

errors committed inadvertently and without fraudulent intent or gross negligence, provided that to discourage repetition of such errors, "a penalty may be imposed but shall not be excessive."

In a BOC webinar on October 10, BOC Prosecution and Litigation Division acting chief Atty. Julito Doria acknowledged the provision of Section 108, but also noted that "what is excessive is relative."

He added "these fines pertain to the imposition of penalties as decided by the management to ensure that the customs clearance processes are being taken seriously by the importers."

Exporters of certain goods said it is hard to comply with CAO 01-2020 due to the nature of production and actual export procedures; such conditions necessitate making changes in export declarations, except that these changes are considered by BOC as clerical error.

For lumber exports, Lasmarias said the actual cargo weight per container can only be determined upon gate-in at the port or origin.

"While this is happening, the documentation specialists will simultaneously make an educated estimate of the cargo's weight. While the estimated cargo weights usually coincide with the actual weights, chances of variances in the final declaration [do] occur, even for kiln dried lumber," she explained.

Similarly, bamboo slats would sometimes fail quality standards (e.g., slats succumb to mold infection while in storage and prior to loading) and must be removed. This affects total weight, which means the final option in the declaration is the registered weight upon gate-in at the port of origin. And since these export products still require stuffing inspection and x-ray, Lasmarias said documents have to be submitted prior to weigh-in at the port of origin.

She noted final weight issues are also common among charcoal and activate carbon exports.

In the case iron ore exports, the production of the quantity is not final or exact, and has a tolerance of +/- 10%.

Banks are another concern because while exporters auto-debit their PAS5 accounts, some banks still do manual debit instead of auto debit, which further



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inconsistent with said directive, such as by requiring asymptomatic drivers and crew

of cargo or service delivery vehicles to undergo mandatory 14-day home quarantine.

delays the export declaration approval process. PAS5 (Project Abstract Secure 5) is a system that enables 24/7 host-to-host interface with banks and BOC's Online Release System.

### Big producers seek exemption

Two big manufacturers in the region, Del Monte Philippines, Inc. (DMP) and Pilipinas Kao, Inc., in separate position papers to BOC this month also sought exemption from the policy.

DMP pointed out it "cannot fall under misdeclaration, misclassification, nor under valuation because our exports are exempt from duties."

However, since the company files two export declarations for the same customer/filing, DMP's action is deemed as correcting "clerical errors" and therefore subject to fines under CAO 01-2020.

DMP explained that it files the first export declaration, a pre-lodged declaration filled with best estimates of data to serve as an Authority to Load, because actual shipment data will only be available after containers are stuffed, sealed, and brought to the port. The second and final export declaration is filed when the actual shipment data from the invoice is generated after the shipment has been brought to the port.

DMP noted that doing these two filings is not "correcting errors but actualizing data that were still estimates at the time of the first filing."

DMP said that since it has five changes in every final lodgment, it will be paying P25,000 per export declaration, which means an average of almost P9 million a month since they re-file 350 export declarations a month.

Pilipinas Kao also said changes to its export declarations "are necessary adjustments not at all arising from any deliberate attempt or otherwise (inadvertence) as these entries are determined to be correct and not in error at that time of lodgment." It noted the adjustments are due to varying business conditions such as cargo handling and measuring factors, which are beyond its control.

### Margin for discrepancy

PHILEXPORT 10A is requesting BOC to consider a 10% tolerable margin

for weight. It noted that under CMTA's Section 1414 (Discrepancy Between Actual and Declared Weight of Manifested Goods), if the gross weight of goods or package described in the manifest or bill of lading exceeds the declared weight by more than 10%, and such discrepancy was due to the negligence of the master or pilot-in-command, the owner, employee, operator or agent of the importing vessel or aircraft shall be liable for a fine of not more than 20% of the value of the package or goods in respect to which the deficiency exists.

PHILEXPORT 10A also suggests creating criteria to determine if a clerical error is honest or deliberate, and the criteria would include details, goods descriptions spelling, volume (pieces and cu.m values), and customs value (dollar), which could also fall under the 10% margin rule.

Another suggestion is to "ladderize" penalties into three categories. The first modification will be allowed; second modification will be fined with P2,000; and the third modification will be slapped with a P5,000 fine.

DMP, for its part, is asking for exporters' exemption from CAO 01-2020 since it "appears that the CAO is directed (at) importers rather than exporters because we have no reason to misdeclare, misclassify, nor under value our exports."

"It just happens that we share with importers the same access point and form when we do our filings in BOC's computer system," DMP pointed out.


If exemption is not possible, DMP is requesting that exporters be allowed two filings for the same customers/shipment, without penalties.

Similarly, Pilipinas Kao is also requesting making adjustments on entries without fine, "based on varying business considerations..."

The company also recommends reducing fines "to a reasonable amount ranging from Php500 to Php1,000 or in the alternative, compute fine per export declaration."

In addition, the company seeks suspension of the order pending review and revision.

Aside from CAO 01-2020, exporters are appealing that cancellations of export declarations be allowed in collection



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A Roku		20014N	7-Nov	9-Nov	-	13-Nov	14-Nov

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Derby D	OKRG2N	5-Nov	7-Nov	12-Nov	14-Nov
Navios Dedication	OKRG6N	12-Nov	14-Nov	19-Nov	21-Nov

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FEEDER VESSEL	VOY.	ETD MNL (NTH)	ETA PUS	QIN	SHA WQG2
APL England	OFD16E1MA	2-Nov	6-Nov	8-Nov	10-Nov
Xin Chi Wan	2001E	OMIT	5-Nov	7-Nov	9-Nov

<b>PH3 - Manila - Ningbo - Shanghai</b>					
FEEDER VESSEL	VOY.	ETD MNL (STH)	ETD MNL (NTH)	ETA SHA WQG4	ETA NBO
Maersk Davao	045W	3-Nov	4-Nov	-	-
AS Pauline	046W	10-Nov	11-Nov	-	-

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FEEDER VESSEL	VOY.	ETD MNL (NTH)	ETA SHA (WQG4)
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FEEDER VESSEL	VOY.	ETD MNL (NTH)	ETA TAICHUNG	ETA XIAMEN	ETA YANTIAN
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## DOH eyes vaccine...

Continued from page 2

Romana said.

Chinese pharmaceutical companies have pointed out that after the vaccines are approved, the next challenge is their distribution and deployment, he noted.

"And it will depend on our capability to receive the vaccines in terms of our facilities, in terms of distribution," Santa Romana said.

The ambassador said he has conveyed this message from the Chinese pharmaceutical companies to the Philippines' health authorities.

Santa Romana clarified, however, that having cold chain facilities is not a condition set by China for the Philippines to get the vaccines, but "just a reminder that if you get the vaccine and you don't have cold chain storage, then it's useless."

"I think the health experts are very much aware of this, I just don't know the condition of cold storage in the Philippines, that's why I want to reiterate this necessary condition for effective deployment and effective distribution of the vaccine," he said.

PortCalls as of press time is awaiting the response of the Cold Chain Association of the Philippines on whether there are enough cold chain facilities nationwide to handle the vaccines.

Santa Romana said he hopes mass production will start as early as November or December, and distribution by early next year.

"As far as I know, in China there's a possibility for one or two vaccines that will be approved here soon. And of course they have to undergo their own requirements in the Philippines," he said.

These requirements include approvals from DOH, Food and Drug Administration, and Department of Science and Technology, which are already preparing for this development, Santa Romana said.

In China, two of the four vaccines being developed to treat SARS-Cov 2 are already in the third phase of development.

Earlier, President Rodrigo Duterte and Chinese ambassador to Manila Huang Xilian said China will give the Philippines priority access once a vaccine has passed clinical trials and been approved.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque, Jr. earlier said the government will announce by the last week of October initial information on its program on the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines once concerned government agencies have finalized the plan.

## Airport contact tracing app soft-launched on Oct 28

- **TRAZE app for pilot-testing at Manila, Clark, Mactan-Cebu and Davao airports**
- **App for mandatory use by all passengers at airports by end-November**
- **TRAZE to be later utilized across all modes of transportation to contain COVID-19**

QR code, or they may ask a family member to register them with the app. The QR code can be used at any DOTr offices nationwide.

DOTr said through the use of QR code, TRAZE speeds up the tedious manual contact tracing process to just a few minutes.

Passengers will scan the QR codes at designated areas of the airport. Once a COVID-19-positive patient is identified, an in-app notification will be sent to individuals who may have had contact with the patient so they can immediately self-isolate and take other precautionary health measures.

TRAZE will eventually be utilized across all modes of transportation as part of the government's effort to contain the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by immediately identifying individuals who've had contact with COVID-19-positive patients, DOTr said.

TRAZE is compliant with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act, as it allows anonymous registration and optional submission of personal information (i.e., mobile phone, email address). DOTr said the app does not require Bluetooth or GPS, and works even on weak mobile data or WiFi connection.

The app, which will have nationwide coverage, can also be used to scan QR codes in participating shops, buildings, and transportation modes the users went into to record their movement. It also allows person-to-person contact tracing by scanning the unique QR codes of other individuals using the application, as well as those of messengers and delivery personnel.

A contact tracing application for the aviation sector will be soft-launched at key airports on October 28, in preparation for its mandatory use in all Philippine airports by end of next month, according to the Department of Transportation (DOTr).

TRAZE, a new mobile application that uses QR code scanning for contact tracing, will be simultaneously pilot-tested first at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Clark Internal Airport, Mactan-Cebu International Airport, and Davao International Airport, DOTr said in a statement.

Other airports will also conduct pilot-testing soon. After a month or by November 28, use of TRAZE will be made mandatory for all air passengers in all airports nationwide.

TRAZE, co-developed by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) with Cosmotech Philippines, Inc., is already being implemented at PPA ports.

All departing and arriving passengers at the pilot airports will be required to download the app on their mobile phones, and to register an account before proceeding to the airport.

Passengers without mobile phones or any other mobile gadget can go to the Malasakit Helpdesk at the airport for registration assistance in getting a unique

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# Agriculture department investigates rising pork prices

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has started an investigation into high prices of pork products.

Based on data, there is significant inventory of both locally slaughtered and imported pork in cold storage facilities accredited by DA's National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS).

As of the third week of October 2020, the inventory of frozen pork, both local and imported, in NMIS-accredited cold storages nationwide was at 38,216 metric tons (MT), 55% more than the same period in 2019.

Likewise, the inventory of frozen local

and imported dressed chicken and chicken parts was 260% more, at 83,266 MT versus 22,953 MT in 2019.

"This slow drawdown or small demand for frozen meat indicates that most Filipinos prefer 'fresh' or newly-slaughtered meat, or traders are holding off the supply to artificially jack up prices," Agriculture Secretary William Dar said in a statement.

"Also, we should convince our countrymen to consume more chicken in lieu of pork as a source of meat protein," Dar added.

He said DA will not hesitate to file cartel charges if hog growers and traders

are found engaging in anti-competitive practice and restricting the supply of pork products, resulting in higher prices at retail markets.

"We're looking into reasons why there's a very slow withdrawal of frozen pork products despite the availability of supply, and demand has started to pick up as the government opens up the economy," Dar said.

As of October 21, prices of kasim (pork ham) reached P320/kg and liempo (pork belly) at P360/kg in most Metro Manila public markets, P20 to P40 more compared to P300 and P320, respectively,

two weeks ago.

The DA chief said they are also looking at whether the high prices are a result of inefficiencies in the supply chain.

He said the DA will ask the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) to conduct a parallel probe for possible violations of the Philippine Competition Act by traders who may be manipulating pork supply.

DA has an existing agreement with the PCC on information exchange, investigation, and enforcement, as well as action plans through shared resources to limit and put a stop to anti-competitive practices.

# Mindanao exporters seek exemption from BOC policy...

districts, instead of in the AOCG deputy commissioner's office in Manila in accordance with AOCG Memo 164-2020 issued last September.

AOCG Memo 164-2020 requires that all single administrative document (SAD)

cancellation forms after complete staff work from the collection district should be forwarded to the AOCG deputy commissioner's office for approval.

In a position paper dated October 21, PHIELXPOR 10A said such procedure

"will further burden the BOC Central Office, incur longer processing time resulting to additional costs to exporters like demurrage and may cause port congestion."

It added that the new policy is in

*Continued from page 3*

contrast with Republic Act No. 110321 (Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018), which aims to streamline current systems and procedures of government services. — **Roumina Pablo**

# E-TRACC in effect for Cavite ecozone II-bound containers...

to track, monitor, and audit the location and condition of cargoes, as well as obtain real-time alarms on diversion and tampering of cargoes.

E-TRACC was established under Customs Memorandum Order (CMO) 04-2020, which was issued last February.

The system is already being implemented for all containers—except those containing electronic materials—discharged from the Port of Manila, MICP, and Port of Batangas and bound for Laguna Technopark, Inc. and CEZ.

Electronic materials bound for PEZA zones are not covered as they are to be tacked in a separate memorandum.

E-TRACC is also now being adopted in Subic. Imports for other Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) economic

zones will be covered by another customs memorandum.

AOCG deputy commissioner Atty. Edward James Dy Buco earlier said they are coordinating with PEZA on the phased implementation of E-TRACC for PEZA shipments.

Stakeholders at CEZ II are required to self-register in the system at www.ecms.ph.

Under AOCG Memo 180-2020, the collection districts at Port of Manila, MICP, and Batangas should ensure all containers processed for PEZA adhere to the guidelines of CMO 04-2020.

When booking through the E-TRACC website, the stakeholder should choose the economic zone where the locator is situated.

Full-container-load shipments bound for PEZA locators should be sealed with

the ECS, a GPS-enabled sealing device or lock that physically secures a cargo and provides real-time information on its location. The ECS will be armed or fixed by the service provider personnel.

Once the Start Trip Authorization is approved by the control tower, the vehicle carrying the cargo can leave the vicinity and head for its destination.

When the vehicle and container arrive at the destination, BOC's authorized personnel should first compare the container's visual evidence of sealing of ECS against the actual container that arrived, and look for discrepancy or signs of tampering.

The BOC authorized personnel should also check if the container seal number and the electronic customs seal number are the same as indicated in the trip details, and

*Continued from page 1*

inform the control tower for approval to end the trip.

Once ending of the trip is authorized, authorized BOC personnel should disarm the container by removing the ECS and tag the cargo as received.

AOCG Memo 180-2020 notes that the customs operations officer will not approve any customs clearance without the required E-TRACC booking as prescribed in CMO 04-2020.

Booking for the E-TRACC trip can be made one day earlier or up to one hour before departure of the container.

E-TRACC requires payment of P500 within a 10-kilometer (km) radius from port of discharge and P700 beyond the 10-km radius from port of discharge. The charge covers both arming and disarming of the ECS. — **Roumina Pablo**

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