



### **FAST Overview**

The *FAST* program is a bilateral initiative between the United States and Canada designed to ensure security and safety while enhancing the economic prosperity of both countries. In developing this program, Canada and the United States have agreed to harmonize, to the maximum extent possible, their commercial processes for clearance of commercial shipments at the border. This will promote free and secure trade by using common risk-management principles, supply chain security, industry partnership, and advanced technology to improve the efficiency of screening and clearing commercial traffic at our shared border.

### **FAST Objectives**

*FAST* is an ambitious program both in terms of its scope and its implementation date. For the U.S. and Canada the initiative's objectives promise to revolutionize the processing of transborder trade:

1. The program aims to increase the integrity of supply chain management by offering expedited clearance to carriers and importers enrolled in Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), or Canada's Partners in Protection (PIP).
2. It's designed to streamline and to integrate registration processes for drivers, carriers, and importers; minimizing paperwork and ensuring only low risk participants are enrolled as members.
3. The initiative seeks to expedite clearance of low risk transborder shipments by reducing Customs information requirements, dedicating lanes at major crossings to *FAST* participants, using common technology, and physically examining cargo transported by these low risk clients at the lowest levels possible.
4. The program is a catalyst for both Customs administrations to integrate and enhance technologies—transponders employed on both sides of the border, for example—which would make it even easier to clear low risk shipments, and which would mitigate the cost of program participation for *FAST* partners.

### **FAST Benefits**

*FAST* approved highway carriers will benefit from:

1. Dedicated lanes (where available) for greater speed and efficiency in the clearance of *FAST* transborder shipments.

2. Reduced number of examinations for continued compliance with Customs *FAST* requirements.
3. A strong and ongoing partnership with the Canadian (PIP) and U.S. Customs (C-TPAT) administrations.
4. Enhanced supply chain security and safety while protecting the economic prosperity of both countries.
5. The knowledge that they're carrying shipments for a C-TPAT approved importer.
6. A head start for the upcoming modifications to *FAST* that will expand eligible electronic cargo release methods. The *FAST* processing of Pre Arrival Processing System (PAPS) shipments is expected to commence within the next year.

### **FAST Inauguration**

The initial phase of *FAST* for U.S. Bound commercial shipments, which began in December 2002, will be available for qualifying commercial shipments at the following U.S./Canadian ports:

1. Blaine - Douglas
2. Detroit - Windsor
3. Port Huron - Sarnia
4. Buffalo - Fort Erie
5. Lewiston - Queenston
6. Champlain - Lacolle

### **Qualifications for FAST Participants**

*FAST* is a harmonized clearance process for known low-risk shipments. Thus, any truck using *FAST* lane processing must be a C-TPAT approved carrier, carrying qualifying goods from a U.S. Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) approved importer, and the driver in the possession of a valid *FAST*-Commercial Driver Card. *FAST* processing is based upon advanced electronic transmission of information. The following are the key components:

1. **Importer Registration:** Importers will complete separate applications to the Customs administrations in the United States and Canada. Importers authorized to use the *FAST* program for clearance into the United States will have a demonstrated history of complying with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, and will have made a commitment to security enhancing business practices as required by C-TPAT.
2. **Carrier Registration:** Carriers will complete the *FAST* Highway Carrier Application Process requirements that include corporate information, a security profile, and a written Highway Carrier Agreement. In order to qualify for *FAST* Highway Carrier membership

into the U.S. and Canada, two separate applications must be submitted to each country's respective *FAST* Processing Centers. Each country will perform an independent risk assessment and each country will issue independent approvals for participation. For the United States, a *FAST* approved carrier will have met all aspects of C-TPAT through the *FAST* registration process.

3. **Commercial Driver Application:** Drivers will complete a single *FAST* Commercial Driver Application for the U.S. and Canada. The application will be risk assessed by the customs and immigration services of both countries. Applicants identified as low risk will report to an enrollment center where they will be interviewed, have their original identification and citizenship documents reviewed, fingerprinted and have a digital photo taken. Low-risk applicants will then be issued a *FAST* – Commercial Driver Card.

### **FAST Commercial Driver Enrollment Centers**

*FAST* enrollment centers can be found at the following locations:

1. Blaine, Washington
2. Detroit, Michigan
3. Port Huron, Michigan
4. Buffalo, New York
5. Champlain, New York

### **Cargo Release Method(s)**

The two cargo release methods for *FAST* shipments are the National Customs Automated Prototype (NCAP) and the Pre-Arrival Processing System (PAPS). NCAP/*FAST* processing for *FAST* began in December, 2002. The *FAST* processing of PAPS shipments is expected to start next year.

1. **FAST:** *FAST* is the first completely paperless cargo release mechanism put into place by U.S. Customs. This paperless processing is achieved through electronic data transmissions and transponder technology. *FAST* is highly automated and allows for the expedited release of highly compliant cargo from major importers, reducing congestion at our land borders.
2. **Pre Arrival Processing System (PAPS)** -The Pre-Arrival Processing System (PAPS) is a U.S. Customs ACS (Automated Commercial System) border cargo release mechanism that utilizes barcode technology to expedite the release of commercial shipments while still processing each shipment through Border Cargo Selectivity (BCS) and the Automated Targeting System (ATS).

Each PAPS shipment requires a unique barcode label, which the carrier attaches to the invoice and the truck manifest while the merchandise is still in Canada. The barcode consists of the Standard Carrier Alpha Code (SCAC) and Pro-Bill number. This information is then faxed ahead to the Customs broker in the U.S., who prepares a BCS entry in ACS. Upon the truck's arrival at the border, the Customs Inspector scans the barcode, which automatically retrieves the entry information from ACS. If no examination is required, the Inspector then releases the truck from the primary booth, reducing the carrier's wait time and easing congestion at the U.S. border.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information can be found on the Customs web site at [www.customs.gov](http://www.customs.gov) by typing *FAST* under the search criteria. In addition, you can call one of the designated *FAST* ports and ask for a *FAST* representative.