

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROVED CONTINUOUS EXAMINATION PROGRAMME (ACEP) (UNITED STATES SUBMISSIONS)

Background

The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-second session (12 to 21 June 2013) approved the Guidelines for Development of an Approved Continuous Examination Program (ACEP) set out at annex in CSC.1 Circ. 143 dated 5 August, 2013. This document has been drafted to assist container owners seeking U.S. review and approval of continuous examination programs and conforms to the guidelines approved by the International Maritime Organization.

The International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC), 1972, as amended requires containers used for international transport, excluding containers specifically designed for air transport, to meet certain safety approval requirements and be periodically examined. Container owners can choose to follow a periodic examination program (PEP) or may apply to the U.S. Coast Guard for approval of a continuous examination program (ACEP). This document only addresses continuous examination programs. Therefore, U.S. owners desiring to examine containers under a PEP should review U.S. regulations outlined in 49 CFR Parts 452.1 through 452.3 and/or contact the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Vessel and Facility Operating Standards Division at (202) 372-1413 for assistance.

Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to establish a unified approach when developing a continuous examination program by container owners for submittal to the U.S. Coast Guard for approval. These Guidelines provide recommendations to help expedite development and approval of examination programs in accordance with CSC 1972, as amended. Additionally, adherence to these Guidelines will help to establish a means by which details concerning an approved program can be easily conveyed and communicated by owners to persons responsible for maintaining their containers in accordance with their approved program.

Discussion

Format: In order to provide for ease of evaluation, reference and filing, continuous examination programs should follow these format recommendations at the time of applications. Program submittals in hard copy format should be suitably assembled. Alternatively, use of electronic media for document submittals is encouraged. Programs should be submitted to the following address:

COMMANDANT (CG-OES-2)
ATTN: ACEP PROGRAM MANAGER
U.S. COAST GUARD STOP 7509
2703 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR AVE SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20593-7509

The front cover should clearly identify the container owner. If the submitted program is completed on behalf of the container owner by another organization, the submitting organization should be referenced on the front cover as well.

1 Cover letter, requesting approval for the submitted program.

2 Company information

- 2.1 Brief description of company's business operations.
- 2.2 Brief description of type and quantity of containers to be subject to the program.
- 2.3 Company head office contact information. Main phone, fax, e-mail, website and address. Phone number and e-mail of company point of contact for ACEP issues, if different from head office.
- 2.4 Basic organization chart or information detailing the responsibilities of key persons or positions associated with the program.
- 2.5 Confirmation that the company agrees to implement the approved program and to maintain the safety of containers as prescribed by CSC 1972, as amended.
- 2.6 Description of any certified quality system of which the company will use to operate, manage and maintain containers.

3 Container marking

- 3.1 Describe procedures for marking new and existing containers with identification to show that the container is examined under an ACEP as well as the procedure for restoration of damaged or lost ACEP markings.
- 3.2 Describe the placement of the ACEP label on the container and provide supplement with label image.
- 3.3 Describe how individual containers are uniquely identified.
- 3.4 Describe procedures and obligation of the container owner to remove (or not remove) the ACEP label if the container is sold/leased.

4 Container examinations

- 4.1 Detail which industry accepted pass/fail criteria is used for container examinations, repair and maintenance. If an owner criterion is used provide associated methods, scope and criteria for conducting container examinations, repair, and maintenance.
- 4.2 In case that no industry pass/fail criteria is used, describe the methods for maintenance criteria that address the design characteristics of the specific containers.
- 4.3 Describe any procedures for auditing container examinations, either internal or external by or on behalf of the container owner.
- 4.4 Detail the maximum time allowed between container examinations. Identify events that trigger a container examination. Describe the procedures to ensure that the maximum time allowed between examinations is not exceeded.

4.5 Describe the methods to ensure that container examinations are conducted by competent persons.

4.6 Describe procedures for repairing and re-examining failed containers.

5 Documentation

5.1 Describe the procedures for recording container examination results and methods for tracking examinations through the use of unique container serial numbers. If contractual personnel or contracted container yards conduct container examinations detail the process for recording these examinations and the scope of information to be recorded.

5.2 Describe the process for the automated exchange of interchange and/or repair information. In case of non-automated procedures, provide a copy of container owner inspection form(s) or equipment interchange receipt(s) used in the program.

5.3 Describe the means of identifying containers, their last examination dates, and any repair work in their records.

5.4 Describe the procedure to control examination dates and the personnel responsible for control.

5.5 Specify the period of time that records will be retained under control of the container owner.

5.6 Identify the location where examination records are maintained and the personnel or organization responsible for control of that location.

5.7 Detail examination record availability to the U.S. Coast Guard for inspection upon request.

5.8 If applicable, provide details on the inclusion of the program into the container owner's quality management program.

5.9 Detail procedures for maintaining a file of training certificates or records for personnel qualified to conduct container examinations and the availability for review by U.S. Coast Guard personnel upon request.

5.10 Describe the procedures for adding, removing, and updating containers in the program.

5.11 Describe the procedure to ensure that only containers equipped with a valid CSC Approval Plate will be included in the program.

6 Leasing

6.1 Detail how the examination program of the lessor (owner) company is transferred to the lessee or bailee company and is implemented under lease agreements

6.2 Provide a sample copy of container lease agreements and identify where the leases are maintained and the personnel and/or organization responsible for control of the location.

7 Container compliance with CSC

7.1 Provide a declaration from the applicant that only containers approved under CSC are included in the program.

7.2 Provide evidence that containers entering the program are approved in accordance with the CSC (e.g. copies of approval certificates or photos of Safety Approval Plates).

8 Conclusion

8.1 Upon review and consideration of a continuous examination program submitted to the U.S. Coast Guard for approval and found satisfactory, the U.S. Coast Guard will:

- .1 provide an approval letter; and
- .2 inform the container owner of their ACEP registration number which includes:
 - .1 the letters ACEP;
 - .2 identification of the Contracting Party; and
 - .3 the assigned number.

8.2 The U.S. Coast Guard will make information on ACEPs publicly available through the internet on the World Wide Web. Such information will include, but may not be limited to:

- .1 company's name and contact details;
- .2 identification system of ACEP; and
- .3 date of ACEP approval.

8.3 Approved continuous examination programs will be periodically reviewed by the U.S. Coast Guard not later than 10 years after approval or re-approval to ensure their continued viability.

8.4 Owners of approved program should notify the U.S. Coast Guard about significant changes as soon as possible. Such changes may include modifications to:

- .1 contact information;
- .2 responsibilities;
- .3 provisions for conducting examinations; and
- .4 fleet operator.

8.5 The U.S. Coast Guard has established a program for conducting periodic reviews of approved program and will periodically inquire about changes made to their approved programs.
