

March 8th 2013

SEQUESTRATION

How it could affect the Ports of LA-Long Beach Night Gates

On March 8, 2013 the [Journal of Commerce](#) presented an article on the effects of the sequestration on the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach California. As we all know these ports encourage the use of night gates by accessing a Pier Pass fee for day side container pick-up's thus encouraging the use of night gates where there are no additional Pier Pass fees.

According to the article, the decision by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to cease overtime work for its personnel while Washington attempts to solve the sequestration issue will be a burden for all ports, but it could be disastrous for the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

CBP plays a crucial role in the Pier Pass extended-gates program by paying its inspectors and other personnel overtime, as needed, to cover as many as four night gates and one Saturday gate each week. CBP's no-overtime decree will hurt the ports in three areas: hours-of-service reductions for manning radiation portal monitors, shipments requiring intensive examinations and vessel boarding by Customs personnel.

One possible problem scenario involving radiation portal monitors (RPM), which are used to scan containers to ensure there are no nuclear weapons of mass destruction in the containers. Two inspectors are assigned to an RPM. If an alarm sounds, one Customs inspector re-examines the box that triggered the alarm while the other officer continues to inspect the other containers. If only one Customs officer is available, the entire line must be shut down while the red-flagged container is inspected.

It is obvious that if it were necessary to reduce each RPM to one inspector the entire line would shut down and create huge back logs of all containers requiring RPM examination. Multiplied by continuing vessel arrivals one can only imagine the possible delays this could create should any container be designated for this type of exam. And many are, sometimes an entire vessel's containers are subject to these exams.

While CBP continues trying to figure out how it will manage the sequestration, there seems to be some level of reprieve as volumes are currently somewhat lower due to mass factory shut downs due to traditional Chinese New Year activities. But soon these factories will be ramped back up to full production and cargo volumes will increase. And with CBP's inability to fill overtime slots during these night gates could begin a snow balling effect that could create mounting delays as more and more vessels continue to arrive.

The JOC article referenced above can be found ([here](#)). Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact your TAC Customer Service Representative or Sales Person who will assist as needed.



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