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KASTURI COTTON BHARAT

E-Serve No.: 83 of 2026 | Date: March 09, 2026

Sub: Return of export cargo from international waters due to closure of the Strait of Hormuz – Section 143AA of the Customs Act, 1962

Dear Member,

This is to inform you that CBIC has issued Circular No. 09/2026-Customs dated 08th March 2026, with regard to the above subject matter (copy enclosed).

Due to closure of the Strait of Hormuz and disruption in maritime routes, some vessels carrying export cargo from India are unable to reach their destination ports and are returning to Indian ports.

Considering this exceptional situation affecting international shipping and exports, the authorities have prescribed a simplified procedure under Section 143AA of the Customs Act, 1962 for handling such returned cargo.

Accordingly, vessels will generally be allowed to berth at the same Indian port from which they departed, except in cases of transshipment. The detailed procedures to be followed are given below.

(a) Cargo loaded on vessel but within Indian territorial waters and EGM/SDM not filed

If the vessel has not crossed Indian territorial waters, the captain must submit an undertaking to this effect. The vessel may then be allowed to berth at the same Indian port without filing a Sea Arrival Manifest (SAM), provided it has not called at any foreign port.

Containers may be offloaded without filing a Bill of Entry, subject to verification of shipping documents and container seals with the corresponding Shipping Bills. If seals are found tampered, the container will be subject to 100% examination.

The Shipping Bills and Let Export Orders will be cancelled, and exporters may be allowed Back to Town facility upon request.

(b) Cargo loaded on vessel and EGM/SDM filed, or vessel beyond Indian territorial waters but returning without calling any foreign port

The Captain must submit an undertaking stating that the vessel has not called at any foreign port. The vessel may then be allowed to berth at the same Indian port without filing Sea Arrival Manifest (SAM).

Containers may be offloaded without filing a Bill of Entry, subject to verification of SDM, shipping documents, container details and seals with the corresponding Shipping Bills. If seals are found tampered, the container will be subjected to 100% examination.

A system facility will be provided to cancel Shipping Bills after EGM in the ICES system to ensure that export incentives are not disbursed. Details of cancelled Shipping Bills will be shared with RBI, DGFT and other agencies through ICEGATE. Until the system is developed, Customs will maintain records manually and update them once the facility becomes operational.

(c) Vessel returning after calling at a foreign port without discharging cargo

Such consignments will be treated as exported out of India. The Sea Arrival Manifest

(SAM) must be filed by the shipping line or authorised representative, and the procedures prescribed under para (b) will apply.

Customs will ensure recovery of export incentives such as IGST refund or Drawback, if already disbursed. Transshipment of cargo will be handled as per existing provisions.

The above relaxation will remain valid for 15 days from the date of issuance of the Circular.

Any difficulties in implementation may be brought to the notice of the Board.

Regards,

Dr. Siddhartha Rajagopal
Executive Director

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TEXPROCIL
Engineering Centre, 5th Floor, Shrimad Rajchandraji Marg,
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