



E-Serve No.: 92 of 2026 | Date: March 15, 2026

Sub: Procedure for Handling Export Cargo Returning to Indian Ports due to Closure of the Strait of Hormuz

Dear Madam / Sir,

This is to inform you that the Office of the Commissioner of Customs, Chennai has issued a Public Notice 17/2026 dated 13 March 2026 ([copy enclosed](#)) prescribing a simplified procedure for handling export cargo returning to Indian ports due to the ongoing disruption in maritime routes following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Due to the prevailing situation in the Middle East, several export consignments destined for Gulf countries may return to Indian ports without reaching their destination. In this regard, Customs has introduced the following facilitation measures:

1. Simplified handling of returning cargo

Where vessels carrying export cargo return to India without calling at a foreign port:

- Containers may be offloaded at the port without filing a Bill of Entry, subject to verification of shipping documents.
- Container seal integrity will be verified against details declared in the Shipping Bill.
- If seals are intact, the Shipping Bill and Let Export Order (LEO) will be cancelled and exporters may request Back to Town (BTT) movement of cargo.
- If seals are tampered, the container will be subject to 100% examination.

2. Cancellation of Shipping Bills

- Where EGM/SDM has not been filed, cancellation of Shipping Bill and LEO will be done through the existing system in ICES.
- Where EGM/SDM has already been filed, cancellation will be processed through a new system facility to be provided by DG Systems. Until then, Customs will maintain manual records.

3. Export Incentives

Where export incentives such as IGST refund, drawback, or other benefits have already been disbursed, the same will be recovered before cancellation of Shipping Bills and LEO.

#### 4. Procedure for Trade

Exporters or Customs Brokers seeking cancellation and return of cargo should submit a request letter along with relevant documents (Shipping Bill details, container number, seal number, etc.) to the Preventive Section of Chennai Customs for processing.

#### 5. Stranded Containers at Ports / CFS

For export containers lying at ports, terminals, or CFSs after LEO but where EGM has not been filed, Customs has prescribed a simplified procedure for Back to Town movement to reduce congestion at terminals.

Members facing issues with export consignments destined for the Gulf region may coordinate with their Customs Broker and the concerned Customs authorities for availing the above facility.

Members are requested to carefully go through the enclosed Public Notice and take necessary action as applicable.

Regards,

**Dr. Siddhartha Rajagopal**  
Executive Director

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Engineering Centre, 5th Floor, Shrimad Rajchandraji Marg,  
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