

New Zealand Customs Service Process Advice: MAF Electronic Container Quarantine Declarations

An electronic system has been developed so that industry can submit MAF (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) container Quarantine Declarations (QDs) electronically via Customs' import entries and ECI reports to provide electronic messages regarding the MAF status of the containers.

The following is a basic explanation of the process involved in submitting the data:

Import Entries

For Import Seafreight FCL containers the QD will be made via the *Other Information* code and data fields on the header of a Customs import-class entry. For all entries covering FCL containers, declarants should insert "MCD" (standing for *MAF Container Declaration*) in the *Code* field of the entry, even where the declarant does not hold a copy of the QD. This is to distinguish between entries for which no QD is held and entries where the declarant has forgotten to enter the QD details.

Where the entry declarant holds a copy of the MAF QD, inserting a combination of "Y" and "N" in the data field will declare the answers to five questions about cleaning, packaging, and packaging treatment/certification as stated on that QD (note that the answer to Question 3b of the QD, regarding the type of treatment used, is not included in this process). If the entry declarant does not hold a copy of the MAF QD, or the QD is incomplete, the data field is to be left blank.

An additional *Other Information* code will be used to specify the number of the MAF Approved Transitional Facility where the container(s) on the entry will be devanned. In the *Code* part of the field, declarants should insert "ATF" (standing for *Approved Transitional Facility*). In the data field, declarants should insert the MAF-assigned number of the devanning facility. A list of MAF-approved transitional facilities for container devanning will be placed on the MAF Biosecurity website.

See the following example:

Other Information Code	Other Information Data
MCD	YNNNN
ATF	1111

Detailed information regarding the QD questions and ATF facilities can be obtained using the link to the MAF website shown at the end of this document.

Only one "MCD" declaration line and one "ATF" code can be inserted per entry and only at the header level. Two or more containers can only be declared on the same entry when the same answers to the QD questions apply to all those containers. Separate entries will need to be lodged for containers for which the answers differ.

For error-free entries covering FCL containers, the Customs response message to the declarant will contain both a Customs response and a MAF response. The MAF response will be a series of code words in the free text segment of the delivery instructions, headed by the word MAF.

An example of this would be

MAF CLEARANCE GIVEN TO MOVE FROM WHARF TO AN ATF. 2 FCL(S) SAID TO CONTAIN 40 PACKAGE(S) OR ITEM(S)'

or

MAF EXTERNAL INTERNAL. 1 FCL(S) SAID TO CONTAIN 200 PACKAGE(S) OR ITEM(S), 100 LOOSE PACKAGE(S) OR ITEM(S), 1 CONTAINER(S) SAID TO CONTAIN BULK

Note that the Customs response messages remain unchanged, and have the same legal relevance as currently i.e. a MAF clearance is not Customs clearance, and vice versa.

For Customs Deferred Payment clients the MAF response will also be provided to the port of discharge shown on the entry, if the port wishes to receive such responses and sets up the ability to do so. A response to the Ports will not be generated for Cash clients in line with present policy and they will have to manually advise the Port of MAF requirements where necessary.

ECI Entries

Where a Deconsolidator, Freight Forwarder, Agent or Importer wishes to move an LCL container off the wharf to a devanning area or other location approved by both MAF and Customs, or to move an FCL container off the wharf prior to Customs clearance, the MAF container declaration may be made via a dedicated Customs electronic ECI report.

Note that a single ECI report can only cover containers imported on a single vessel on the same date. A separate ECI report must be made where more than one vessel or date is involved.

The ECI report already contains a *Quarantine Code* field to specify whether the container has been washed and/or fumigated according to MAF requirements. "F" signifies fumigated, "C" signifies cleaned, and "B" signifies both. Completion of this field should reflect Question 1 of the MAF QD – e.g. if the container has been cleaned both externally and internally, the answer to Question 1 is "Yes", and the value of the Quarantine Code field should be either "C" or "B", as relevant. If the container has been fumigated but not cleaned, use "F". The field is to be left blank where such treatment has not occurred, or the ECI declarant does not know that it has occurred (e.g. the answer to Question 1 of the QD is "No", or the declarant does not hold a copy of the QD).

The ECI report message also already contains a mandatory *Prohibited Packaging Indicator* field for each container number, to specify whether goods in the container are packaged in or with any packaging material referred to in Question 2 of the MAF QD. This field should reflect Question 2 of the MAF QD – e.g., "Y" or "N" is to be inserted in this field, as stated on the MAF QD.

The remaining questions on the QD (Questions 3, 3a-3c) will not be included in the ECI report message. The full QD must be submitted to MAF **prior to the container being opened** at the devanning facility, to evaluate the risks posed by the wood packaging.

A *Consignment* line and one *Goods Item* line are required for each container that is to be removed from the wharf. The *Goods Description* field is to contain only the words "*MAF Container Movement Request*". No details of the contents of the containers should be provided, but other mandatory fields for the single *Goods Item* line must be completed to ensure acceptance of the ECI report into Customs' processing system.

For error-free ECI reports covering FCL and LCL containers, and containing only the words "*MAF CONTAINER MOVEMENT REQUEST*" in the *Goods Description* field/s, the Customs CUSRES message to the declarant will contain a MAF response. The MAF response will also be provided to the port of discharge shown on the entry, if the port wishes to receive such responses and sets up the ability to do so.

Where MAF is satisfied the container can move to an approved transitional facility without further action, the CUSRES message will advise MAF CLEARANCE GIVEN TO MOVE FROM WHARF

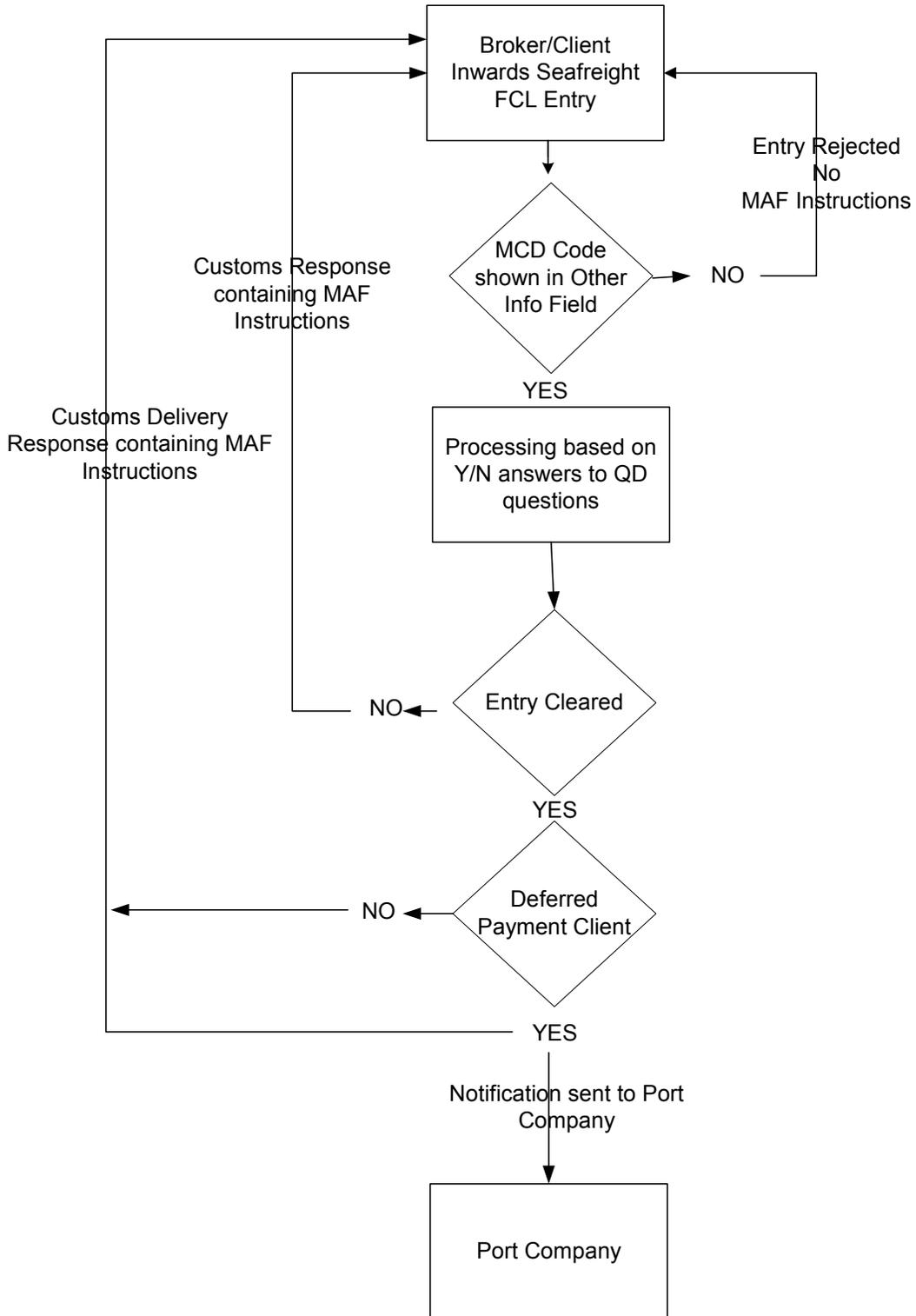
TO AN ATF, and takes the place of a BACC to move from the wharf to an approved transitional facility. **Containers released to an ATF by lodgement of this report must be taken to an approved transitional facility and held unopened until the hardcopy QD and paperwork have been screened by a MAF officer.** Where MAF requires certain conditions to be met prior to removal from the wharf, the CUSRES message will specify the action required (e.g., MAF followed by some combination of EXTERNAL WASH FUMIGATE RISK GOODS INTERNAL AUDIT). In this case, the importer or agent must contact MAF to arrange for a BACC to remove the container from the wharf.

According to the content of a MAF response for the containers, the port will either be authorised to lift the MAF hold, or will be able to position each container for the appropriate action.

It is important to note that there can only be one goods item per consignment and the goods description must contain only the words "*MAF Container Movement Request*" for the MAF response to be generated. This process is to be used for MAF declaration purposes only and cannot be used for any Customs purposes.

More in-depth information pertaining to the Quarantine Declaration for Containers can be obtained from the following MAF Biosecurity website link on [Transitional Facilities](#).

**MAF CONTAINER
DECLARATION
PROCESS FOR IMPORT
ENTRIES**



**MAF CONTAINER
DECLARATION
PROCESS FOR MAF
ONLY ECIs**

