

# Getting Started

This edition of the *Customs and Trade Automated Interface Requirements* (CATAIR) document replaces all previous editions.

## General Organization

CATAIR is organized by subject with chapter tabs for convenient quick reference. Everything pertaining to one subject is included in one chapter. Each chapter contains all references for input and output transactions, corrections or updates, and queries. Each chapter has its own Chapter Table of Contents, which lists the topics within the chapter.

Each record is shown in its entirety, printed across one or more pages in an easy-to-read chart format. The whole record can be viewed on an open page spread without having to refer back to previous pages. All explanatory notes immediately follow the record.

General reference material applicable to more than one Automated Commercial System (ACS) module is included in appendices. Among the topics included are valid region/district/port codes, entry type codes, mode of transportation codes, country codes, standard abbreviations and duty computation formulas. Common errors and their possible solutions are also presented in an appendix.

This chapter, Getting Started, provides a detailed explanation of the structure and format of this document.

## Introductory Chapters

The first three chapters of this document contain background or explanatory information and do not contain record identifiers. These chapters are Introduction, Getting Started, and Requirements.

## Chapter Structure

Each chapter of this document relates to a specific ACS process and contains four primary sections. These are:

- Chapter contents
- Introductory text
- Record layouts
- Explanatory Notes (where appropriate)
- User Notes page (where appropriate)

The chapter contents list all the record identifiers, record descriptions, and topics contained in the chapter. The introductory text follows the chapter contents and provides an overview of the information in the chapter. Individual record layouts follow the introductory text. Explanatory notes pertaining to specific records follow the record layouts. Some chapters include user note pages that can be used to write comments or notes pertaining to the record layouts for ready reference.

A record layout consists of the record identifier, data elements, length and class of the data elements, number of positions, status (whether mandatory, conditional or optional), and a brief description of the data elements. Notes that pertain to data elements in the record follow the record layout. This arrangement allows viewing records in their entirety without turning pages. The data elements and status codes used in the record layouts are described below.

## Data Elements

The data element descriptors are defined as:

Code	Description
A	The data element is alphabetic only.
AN	The data element is alphanumeric only.
C	The data element is special characters.
N	The data element is numeric only.
X	The data element is alphanumeric or special characters.

All data elements are in fixed length format. If all positions are not filled, the formatting rules are:

Code	Description
A	Left justify and space fill.
AN	Left justify and space fill.
C	Left justify and space fill.
N	Right justify and zero fill.
X	Left justify and space fill.

**Note:** If there is no data to insert in a field, space fill.

## Status Codes

Status codes are important to ensure that appropriate data is transmitted. Codes must be used where indicated or errors will occur.

Code	Description
M	Mandatory data element - must always be present.
O	Optional data element - generate data if available.
C	Conditional data element - data is provided if the conditions warrant.

**Note:** Because of the number of possible conditions, no attempt has been made to include them here. The conditional status for most elements and records means that the data is not always required for all entry types or functions performed, but may be required for most entry types and functions. For example, Mode of Transportation is not required for a Foreign Trade Zone Entry (Type 06) so it is listed as “conditional” even though Mode of Transportation is required (mandatory) for most other entry types. In the case of Ultimate Consignee which is required for many entry types, it is listed as “conditional” because it is not required for Temporary Importation Bond (TIB), Informal Entries, and others. Refer to U.S. Customs Service current instructions for completing entry forms to determine the mandatory or conditional status of each data element.

## Page Numbering

Each chapter pertaining to an ACS module or process has been assigned a three-letter code, which identifies the subject. For example, APL represents the Application Control chapter, CRL represents the Cargo Release chapter, and ENS represents the Entry Summary chapter.

The pages of each chapter are numbered independently for ease of reference and to accommodate the need for updating material. The page number format is AAA-NN. The first three positions are the three-letter code, which identifies the chapter. The next one or two positions are the consecutive page number(s) within the chapter.

For example, the Application Control chapter is numbered APL-1 through APL-18. The Entry Summary Chapter is numbered ENS-1 through ENS-96.

## **Chapter Dividers**

To assist the user in locating a specific chapter quickly, a tab that contains the chapter name separates each chapter in this document. A single tab precedes the appendices.

## **Updates**

Notice of changes to this document is issued as they occur through the ACS Administrative Message feature. (For additional information on administrative messages, refer to the Administrative Messages chapter of this document.) Replacement change pages for this document are issued twice a year, or as needed.

***User Notes:***