

Subcommittee on
Import and Export (General) (Amendment) Regulation 2003
Import and Export (Registration) (Amendment) Regulation 2003
Import and Export (Removal of Articles) (Amendment) Regulation 2003
Reserved Commodities (Control of Imports, Exports and Reserve Stocks)
(Amendment) Regulation 2003
Import and Export (Electronic Transactions) Ordinance 2002 (24 of 2002)
(Commencement) Notice 2003 and
Dutiable Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance 2001 (19 of 2001)
(Commencement) Notice 2003

Government's response
to Questions Raised at Meeting on 5 March 2003

The Government's response to the questions raised by the Subcommittee at its 5 March meeting is set out below.

Share of manifests submitted by ocean carriers which have signed up to use electronic service

2. Some 80 ocean carriers have agreed to adopt the electronic service for processing cargo manifests. These carriers submitted around 115 000 manifests last year, which represented about 80% of the total number of manifests submitted by ocean carriers last year.

Removal of requirement for signature

3. The absence of a requirement for an officer's signature in the proposed Schedules 1 and 2 of the Import and Export (Removal of Articles) (Amendment) Regulation 2003 will not affect the legal status of the notice, notification or information given under section 20A or 20B of the Import and Export Ordinance. The signature is not necessary because for generation of the document, we have built in a mechanism to establish accountability and ensure data accuracy. In addition, the name of the officer who authorises the issue of the document will be contained in the document.

Use of digital signature

4. The Government requires all electronic services providers to adopt a reliable authentication system. This is given effect through a contract between the Government and each services provider. At present, the contract between the Government and Tradelink stipulates the use of digital signature for message authentication. If Tradelink wishes to make any change to the digital signature requirement, prior consent of the Government is required. In addition, Tradelink must ensure that its systems and Government's systems are aligned for any change.

5. In practice, the Government's back-end computer system can immediately detect any message sent to the Government which is not digitally signed.

Commerce and Industry Branch
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
March 2003