Fact Sheet

January 2005

Free and Secure Trade program

The **Free and Secure Trade** (FAST) program is a joint Canada-U.S. initiative involving the Canada Border Services Agency and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Both Canada and the U.S. are working together to enhance the security and safety of Canadians and Americans, while keeping their shared border open to the free flow of low-risk, legitimate trade.

The FAST program expedites border clearance and reduces delays for pre-approved, low-risk truck drivers, carriers, and importers. The program promotes free and secure trade by using common risk-management principles, supply chain security, industry partnership and advanced technology. This approach improves the efficiency of screening and of clearing commercial traffic at our shared border.

There are three major participant groups who are eligible for FAST - importers, carriers and drivers. FAST is available to those participants who have demonstrated a history of compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations, and have acceptable books, records and audit trails.

Benefits of the FAST program

The ultimate benefit of the program is that FAST shipments are cleared into either country with greater speed and certainty, and at a reduced cost of compliance. This is accomplished by:

- reducing the information requirements for customs clearance;

- eliminating the need for importers to transmit data for each transaction;

- dedicating lanes for FAST clearances (where feasible);

- reducing the rate of border examinations;

- conducting trade-compliance verification away from the border; and

- streamlining accounting and payment processes for all goods imported by approved importers (Canada only).

Canada

FAST into Canada

FAST builds on the **Customs Self-Assessment** program as well as on the increased security measures under the **Partners in Protection** program. Importers and carriers must be approved in the CSA program and must be a participant in the PIP program to be eligible for the FAST program.

FAST into the United States

FAST is a clearance process for low-risk shipments. Any truck using FAST lane processing must be a **U.S. Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism** (C-TPAT) approved carrier, carrying qualifying goods from a U.S. C-TPAT approved importer. The driver must have a valid FAST driver card.

Goods that qualify for the FAST program

Low-risk goods being imported by highway from the U.S. into Canada and automotive goods being imported from Mexico, by a pre-authorized importer using a pre-authorized carrier and a registered driver, qualify for the FAST program. Drivers are to present their FAST driver registration card or a **Commercial Driver Registration Card** and bar codes to identify the shipments, the importers, and the carrier.