

# Pre-Arrival Review System (PARS)

## Understanding the Canadian Cross-Border Clearance Process

The Pre-Arrival Review System (PARS) is administered by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) as a way to facilitate the entry of commercial goods into Canada while at the same time ramping up border security efforts. Through PARS, importers and brokers submit electronic manifests and other shipment documentation to CBSA up to 30 days prior to arrival at the Canadian border. The program serves a dual purpose:

- Permits expedited clearance for low-risk shipments upon arrival at the border.
- Provides advance notification about incoming shipments that may contain contraband or hazardous substances. CBSA is thus able to ensure that adequate staffing is available to examine any questionable shipments upon arrival at the border.

PARS was developed by the Canadian government as a way to address the growing problem of long lines at the border for “routine” shipments awaiting clearance. Prior to PARS, every shipment arriving at the border was subject to examination by a CBSA agent, with no consideration for a shipment’s contents or for the frequency with which a particular carrier or broker transported goods into Canada.

### How does PARS work?

Following is a brief overview of the program’s key components:

- Shortly after pickup, a carrier or exporter affixes a bar-coded control number to the documentation accompanying a shipment. That documentation, along with all other required documents (including invoices, certificates of origin, bills of lading, shipment number, etc.), is transmitted to the Canadian importer or broker.
- The importer or broker then submits that data to CBSA or, if applicable, to a Canadian food inspection agency, depending on the type of product. With few exceptions, all data must be transmitted electronically via CBSA’s Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).
- CBSA requires the importer or broker to submit the PARS documentation within the following time frames:
  - EDI: at least one hour before goods arrive at the border
  - Paper (where allowable): at least two hours prior to arrival at the border



Advance information about cross-border shipments allows Canadian customs agents to prioritize resources.

- CBSA agents will review the submitted materials and determine whether or not the shipment warrants additional inspection.
- Upon arrival at the border, the CBSA agent will use the bar-coded cargo control number on the PARS sticker to retrieve information about the shipment. At that point, the shipment will either be released for entry or held for additional review.

## What are the benefits of PARS?

For businesses that ship to Canada:

- Faster clearance into Canada means customers will receive their shipments on time.
- There is a reduced risk of incurring penalties/unexpected fees as a result of improperly completed or missing paperwork.
- Real-time notifications are made when shipments have gained entry into Canada.
- There is a “Big Picture” understanding that advance notification helps border agents identify potentially hazardous shipments and ensures the safety of the overall supply chain.

## How can a business take advantage of PARS?

While more than 225,000 importers deal with CBSA each year, most rely on licensed customs brokers to handle their border clearance issues. The customs process can be confusing, and because regulations and mandates can change with little prior notice, most businesses find it makes sense to entrust this responsibility to qualified compliance experts. It's important to ensure your compliance partner is experienced and knowledgeable about all aspects of the Canadian clearance process. Ask a lot of questions, and with regard to PARS, make sure that a potential partner has the following:

- Direct access to CBSA and therefore is privy to any changes in filing procedures
- The technological capability to access CBSA's EDI interface
- Provide you with real-time tracking of your PARS-eligible shipments

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