

fore benefits are revoked. Such procedures may not limit the ability of the Commissioner to take actions to protect the national security of the United States.

(b) False or misleading information

If a C-TPAT participant knowingly provides false or misleading information to the Commissioner during the validation process provided for under this part, the Commissioner shall suspend or expel the participant from C-TPAT for an appropriate period of time. The Commissioner, after the completion of the process under subsection (c), may publish in the Federal Register a list of participants who have been suspended or expelled from C-TPAT pursuant to this subsection, and may make such list available to C-TPAT participants.

(c) Right of appeal

(1) In general

A C-TPAT participant may appeal a decision of the Commissioner pursuant to subsection (a). Such appeal shall be filed with the Secretary not later than 90 days after the date of the decision, and the Secretary shall issue a determination not later than 180 days after the appeal is filed.

(2) Appeals of other decisions

A C-TPAT participant may appeal a decision of the Commissioner pursuant to subsection (b). Such appeal shall be filed with the Secretary not later than 30 days after the date of the decision, and the Secretary shall issue a determination not later than 180 days after the appeal is filed.

(Pub. L. 109-347, title II, §217, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1911.)

§ 968. Third party validations

(a) Plan

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall develop a plan to implement a 1-year voluntary pilot program to test and assess the feasibility, costs, and benefits of using third party entities to conduct validations of C-TPAT participants.

(b) Consultations

Not later than 120 days after October 13, 2006, after consulting with private sector stakeholders, including the Commercial Operations Advisory Committee, the Secretary shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the plan described in subsection (a).

(c) Pilot program

(1) In general

Not later than 1 year after the consultations described in subsection (b), the Secretary shall carry out the 1-year pilot program to conduct validations of C-TPAT participants using third party entities described in subsection (a).

(2) Authority of the Secretary

The decision to validate a C-TPAT participant is solely within the discretion of the Secretary, or the Secretary's designee.

(d) Certification of third party entities

The Secretary shall certify a third party entity to conduct validations under subsection (c) if the entity—

(1) demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the entity has the ability to perform validations in accordance with standard operating procedures and requirements designated by the Secretary; and

(2) agrees—

(A) to perform validations in accordance with such standard operating procedures and requirements (and updates to such procedures and requirements); and

(B) to maintain liability insurance coverage at policy limits and in accordance with conditions to be established by the Secretary; and

(3) signs an agreement to protect all proprietary information of C-TPAT participants with respect to which the entity will conduct validations.

(e) Information for establishing limits of liability insurance

A third party entity seeking a certificate under subsection (d) shall submit to the Secretary necessary information for establishing the limits of liability insurance required to be maintained by the entity under this Act.

(f) Additional requirements

The Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) any third party entity certified under this section does not have—

(A) any beneficial interest in or any direct or indirect control over the C-TPAT participant for which the validation services are performed; or

(B) any other conflict of interest with respect to the C-TPAT participant; and

(2) the C-TPAT participant has entered into a contract with the third party entity under which the C-TPAT participant agrees to pay all costs associated with the validation.

(g) Monitoring

(1) In general

The Secretary shall regularly monitor and inspect the operations of a third party entity conducting validations under subsection (c) to ensure that the entity is meeting the minimum standard operating procedures and requirements for the validation of C-TPAT participants established by the Secretary and all other applicable requirements for validation services.

(2) Revocation

If the Secretary determines that a third party entity is not meeting the minimum standard operating procedures and requirements designated by the Secretary under subsection (d)(1), the Secretary shall—

(A) revoke the entity's certificate of conformance issued under subsection (d)(1); and

(B) review any validations conducted by the entity.

(h) Limitation on authority

The Secretary may only grant a C-TPAT validation by a third party entity pursuant to sub-

section (c) if the C-TPAT participant voluntarily submits to validation by such third party entity.

(i) Report

Not later than 30 days after the completion of the pilot program conducted pursuant to subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that contains—

- (1) the results of the pilot program, including the extent to which the pilot program ensured sufficient protection for proprietary commercial information;
- (2) the cost and efficiency associated with validations under the pilot program;
- (3) the impact of the pilot program on the rate of validations conducted under C-TPAT;
- (4) any impact on national security of the pilot program; and
- (5) any recommendations by the Secretary based upon the results of the pilot program.

(Pub. L. 109-347, title II, §218, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1912.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This Act, referred to in subsec. (e), is Pub. L. 109-347, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1884, known as the Security and Accountability For Every Port Act of 2006 or the SAFE Port Act. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

§ 969. Revalidation

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall develop and implement—

- (1) a revalidation process for Tier 2 and Tier 3 participants;
- (2) a framework based upon objective criteria for identifying participants for periodic revalidation not less frequently than once during each 4-year period following the initial validation; and
- (3) an annual plan for revalidation that includes—
 - (A) performance measures;
 - (B) an assessment of the personnel needed to perform the revalidations; and
 - (C) the number of participants that will be revalidated during the following year.

(Pub. L. 109-347, title II, §219, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1913.)

§ 970. Noncontainerized cargo

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall consider the potential for participation in C-TPAT by importers of noncontainerized cargoes that otherwise meet the requirements under this part.

(Pub. L. 109-347, title II, §220, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1914.)

§ 971. C-TPAT program management

(a) In general

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall establish sufficient internal quality controls and record management to support the management systems of C-TPAT. In managing the program, the Secretary shall ensure that the program includes:

(1) Strategic plan

A 5-year plan to identify outcome-based goals and performance measures of the program.

(2) Annual plan

An annual plan for each fiscal year designed to match available resources to the projected workload.

(3) Standardized work program

A standardized work program to be used by agency personnel to carry out the certifications, validations, and revalidations of participants. The Secretary shall keep records and monitor staff hours associated with the completion of each such review.

(b) Documentation of reviews

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall maintain a record management system to document determinations on the reviews of each C-TPAT participant, including certifications, validations, and revalidations.

(c) Confidential information safeguards

In consultation with the Commercial Operations Advisory Committee, the Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall develop and implement procedures to ensure the protection of confidential data collected, stored, or shared with government agencies or as part of the application, certification, validation, and revalidation processes.

(d) Resource management staffing plan

The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner, shall—

- (1) develop a staffing plan to recruit and train staff (including a formalized training program) to meet the objectives identified in the strategic plan of the C-TPAT program; and
- (2) provide cross-training in postincident trade resumption for personnel who administer the C-TPAT program.

(e) Report to Congress

In connection with the President's annual budget submission for the Department, the Secretary shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on the progress made by the Commissioner to certify, validate, and revalidate C-TPAT participants. Such report shall be due on the same date that the President's budget is submitted to the Congress.

(Pub. L. 109-347, title II, §221, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1914.)

§ 972. Additional personnel

For fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the Commissioner shall increase by not less than 50 the number of full-time personnel engaged in the validation and revalidation of C-TPAT participants (over the number of such personnel on the last day of the previous fiscal year), and shall provide appropriate training and support to such additional personnel.

(Pub. L. 109-347, title II, §222, Oct. 13, 2006, 120 Stat. 1914.)