



**UPU** | UNIVERSAL  
POSTAL  
UNION



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Organisation mondiale des douanes

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To: UPU member countries and their  
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**Subject:** Actions taken by the WCO and UPU to facilitate the sharing of information on the global postal supply chain in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to inform you of some of the actions taken by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Coordination between customs administrations and designated postal operators (DOs) is critical to the continued facilitation of the global postal supply chain, and to mitigating the outbreak's overall impact on our societies.

As a result of COVID-19's impact on the aviation industry, a large portion of international mail has had to be shifted from air to surface<sup>1</sup> transportation, such as road and rail. As a result, some customs authorities may now be confronted with postal documentation intended for other modes of transport at land border ports due to the need to reroute postal traffic. Customs administrations are encouraged to be flexible and accept postal shipments with any of the accompanying legitimate UPU documentation (e.g. CN 37 (for surface mail), CN 38 (for airmail) or CN 41 (for surface airlifted mail) delivery bills).

In this context, we would like to recall that, in addition to the provisions relating to postal items contained in the WCO's Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), the UPU Convention and its regulations preserve the freedom-of-transit principle for international postal items. Noting that the RKC does not preclude customs administrations from conducting necessary controls, we would like to urge WCO members to facilitate international postal traffic procedures. Customs administrations are encouraged to take due consideration of the RKC recommendation, which establishes that Customs shall accept as the goods transit declaration any commercial or transport document for the consignment concerned that meets all customs requirements (Recommended Practice 6, Chapter 1, Specific Annex E).

In addition, the WCO has created a section on its website to assist supply chain stakeholders with customs issues related to the COVID-19 outbreak: [www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/natural-disaster/coronavirus.aspx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/natural-disaster/coronavirus.aspx).

This section includes the following:

- A list of HS Classification references for COVID-19-related medical supplies;
- Examples of WCO members' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic;

<sup>1</sup> Surface transportation of international mail refers to land (rail, road) and sea.

- The latest WCO communications on the outbreak, including:
  - information on the introduction of temporary export restrictions on certain categories of critical medical supplies (from the European Union, Viet Nam, Brazil, India, Russian Federation, and Ukraine, among others);
  - urgent notices (e.g. on counterfeit medical supplies).

Members are encouraged to consult the WCO's COVID-19 webpage, which is updated regularly.

Since the outbreak, the UPU has been publishing urgent messages from its members on disruptions to the global postal supply chain and response measures to the pandemic received through its Emergency Information System (EmIS). For summaries of the EmIS messages received, Union member countries and their DOs may consult the COVID-19 status table at [www.upu.int/en/activities/quality-of-service/communication-from-member-countries-on-covid-19.html](http://www.upu.int/en/activities/quality-of-service/communication-from-member-countries-on-covid-19.html).

Furthermore, the UPU has prepared a new dynamic reporting tool consolidating transport solutions by rail and air freight within its Quality Control System (QCS) Big Data platform, which is updated regularly based on input from all supply chain partners and available to all Union member countries and their DOs at [qcsmailbd.ptc.post](http://qcsmailbd.ptc.post).

For support and inquires relating to the UPU's and the WCO's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact Mr Noor M. Adan or Mr Javier Garcia in the UPU International Bureau Supply Chain Management Programme (tel: +41 31 350 32 02, e-mail: [customs@upu.int](mailto:customs@upu.int)), or Mr Min Han (e-mail: [min.han@wcoomd.org](mailto:min.han@wcoomd.org)) or Ms Satoko Kagawa (e-mail: [satoko.kagawa@wcoomd.org](mailto:satoko.kagawa@wcoomd.org)) in the WCO Facilitation Sub-Directorate.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support for joint WCO–UPU activities and programmes.

Yours faithfully,

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Secretary General  
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