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PRESS RELEASE

NIGERIA CUSTOMS SERVICE ISSUES GUIDELINES ON DWELLING TIME FOR IMPORT AND EXPORT CONSIGNMENTS AT PORT TERMINALS

1. The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) will commence implementation of new guidelines regulating the dwelling time for import and export consignments at port terminals, reflecting its commitment to trade facilitation in line with the Federal Government's Ease of Doing Business initiatives. The new measures aim to address port congestion, streamline clearance processes and reduce disputes arising from the disposal of overtime cargo.
2. Pursuant to the Nigeria Customs Service Act (NCSA) 2023, the Service is reinforcing the provisions that mandate imported consignments to be cleared within 30 days after the completion of discharge of the importing carrier or within a timeframe prescribed by the Service, as provided in Section 30(1). In addition, Section 149(1) empowers the Service to establish time limits for cargoes to leave customs territory. These guidelines will ensure compliance, prevent undue delays, and maintain order at port terminals while allowing importers and exporters ample time for cargo clearance.
3. To enhance efficiency in cargo clearance, all consignments shall enjoy 30 days from the date of arrival at the port, free of overtime clearance encumbrances.

Cargo exceeding 30 days shall be deemed “overtime” but may still be cleared within an additional 30 days upon application and approval by the relevant Customs Area Controller (CAC). Where a consignment remains undeclared within 60 days, clearance shall require approval from the Assistant Comptroller General/Zonal Coordinator upon application. This clearance opportunity is valid within 90 days from arrival. Any consignment uncleared beyond 90 days shall be due for the commencement of the disposal process.

4. It is important to note that without prejudice to the guidelines above, the Service reserves the right to initiate the disposal process, if necessary, following the initial 30-day grace period stipulated by the NCSA 2023.

5. The Service, under the leadership of the Comptroller General of Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR, remains committed to ensuring a transparent and efficient cargo clearance process that prevents undue port congestion, mitigates legal disputes associated with overtime cargo, and enhances overall trade facilitation. Stakeholders are encouraged to comply with these regulations to facilitate smooth trade operations.



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