The Cargo Preference Act of 1954 and Related Legislation
Guidance Document for Contracting Officers and Government (Sub-) Contractors

Thank you for your interest in the Cargo Preference Act of 1954 and related legislation. As a Contracting Officer employed by an Agency of the United States Government, or a government contractor (or sub-contractor), it is important to understand the requirements for shipping U.S. government-impelled cargoes on U.S.-flag commercial vessels.

The cargo preference regulations in 46 CFR 381 govern the implementation of the Cargo Preference Act of 1954.

Reporting, as outlined in 46 CFR 381, requires U.S. flag and foreign flag shipments to be furnished to the U.S. Maritime Administration within 20 working days of the date of loading for shipments originating in the United States or within 30 working days for shipments originating outside the United States. These details, in the form of a rated master bill of lading, must be furnished via email to cargo.marad@dot.gov or in hard copy to the following address:

Office of Cargo and Commercial Sealift, Maritime Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590

For more information, the Cargo Preference Laws and Regulations are available on the Maritime Administration website or call (202) 366-4610.

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