Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) at Virginia International Terminals (VIT)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Methods of Data Exchange
Processing Schedule for EDI Documents
Recent EDI Initiatives at VIT
Things You Need To Know
EDI Documents Processed By VIT
Reference Tables
Useful Links

The VIT EDI Team can assist you with your EDI communications with VIT. Please contact them for more information about setting up communications, for details about the documents we can exchange, or if you are having problems with your EDI communications with VIT.

Methods of Data Exchange

VIT uses several methods of exchanging data with trading partners.

Value-Added Network (VAN):
VIT uses Corvedia to provide VAN services. Corvedia has interconnects with U. S. Customs and all major VANs.

File Transfer Protocol (ftp):
VIT can exchange EDI documents via ftp, using individual ftp logons for each trading partner. We can accommodate push or pull from either your end of the ftp connection or our end. If you use a list of IP addresses that are authorized to connect to your ftp server, we can provide our addresses when the ftp link is established.

E-mail Attachments:
VIT can receive EDI documents through e-mail attachments, using individual e-mail addresses for each trading partner.

Processing Schedule for EDI Documents

VIT processes EDI data seven days a week with different schedules for each category of data. All times mentioned in this section are for the Eastern Time zone.

Inbound Data - U. S. Customs:
The first batch of U. S. Customs data is picked up at 1:00 and is usually processed within minutes. Processing continues every 15 minutes through 22:45.

Inbound Data - VAN:
The first batch of data delivered via VAN is picked up at 4:05 - processing begins immediately and the data is posted to our production databases within a few minutes. Processing continues every 15 minutes, with the last batch picked up at 22:50.

Outbound Data - VAN and ftp:
The first batch of outbound data is extracted, processed and transmitted beginning at 4:00, with data typically reaching its destination within minutes. Processing continues every 15 minutes, with the last batch beginning processing at 22:45.

Inbound Data - ftp and E-mail:
Data that VIT receives via ftp and E-mail is processed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The processing usually begins within a few minutes of the receipt of the data. In most cases, the results are posted to the VIT system within an hour.

EDI Documents Processed By VIT

VIT processes the following EDI documents. Contact the EDI team if you need an unlisted version.

INBOUND

Document	Description	Standard	Version(s)	Source
301	Booking (see FAQ below)	ANSI X12	C2/9, 003030, 004010	Shiplines
309	Manifest	ANSI X12	004010	U. S. Customs
315	Release	ANSI X12	C2/9, 003030, 004010	Shiplines
317	Delivery Order	ANSI X12	003030, 004030	Shiplines
350	Status Information	ANSI X12	004010	U. S. Customs
417	Waybill	ANSI X12	004010, 004050	Railroads
864	Text Message	ANSI X12	004010	Shiplines
997	Functional Aknowledgement	ANSI X12	004010	Shiplines
BAPLIE	Stowage Plan	EDIFACT	091001, D95B	Stevedores

OUTBOUND

Document	Description	Standard	Version(s)	Destination
210	Freight Details/Invoice	ANSI X12	004010	Shiplines
322	Terminal Operations Activity	ANSI X12	003030, 004010	Shiplines
324	Stowage Plan	ANSI X12	004010	Shiplines
404	Shipment Information	ANSI X12	004030	Railroads
810	Invoice	ANSI X12	004010	Shiplines
997	Functional Acknowledgement	ANSI X12	004010, 004030	Shiplines

VIT Reference Tables

Codes associated with VIT's terminal facilities:

Terminal	Terminal Code	Port Code	Firms Code	UN LOCODEs
Norfolk International Terminals	NI	1401	L005	USORF
Portsmouth Marine Terminal	PM	1401	L045	USPTM
Newport News Marine Terminal	NN	1402	N778	USNNS
Virginia Inland Port	IP	1410	O164	USFRR
Norfolk Empty Container Yard	NY	N/A	N/A	N/A
Portsmouth Empty Container Yard	PY	N/A	N/A	N/A
Off Terminal Container Yard	OT	N/A	N/A	N/A

Special values in the Entry field on VIT screens:

Sample Entry Value	Description
HOLD BROK EI0001	A broker hold has been placed on the container by user EI0001.
HOLD CSI MANAGE	U. S. Customs has selected the container for an intensive (X-ray) exam. Please contact the Operations staff at the appropriate facility to guarantee the cost of the exam. MANAGE can also be a code, such as CC1234, which indicates that VIT placed the hold at U. S. Customs request.
HOLD SL AP0001	A shipline hold has been placed on the container by user AP0001.
HOLD USC EDI1H	A U. S. Customs hold has been placed on the container via an AMS transaction. The last two characters, here 1H, are the disposition code from a U. S. Customs 350 document and they indicate the type of hold that has been placed. *
HOLD USDA EDI2H	A USDA hold has been placed on the container via an AMS transaction. The last two characters, here 2H, are the disposition code from a U. S. Customs 350 document and they indicate the type of hold that has been placed. *
HOLD USDA INSPEC	VIT staff has placed a hold on the container at the request of the USDA.
HOLD VIT MANAGE	VIT staff has placed a management hold on the container. Please contact the Operations staff at the appropriate facility for additional information.
REL BROK EI0001	A broker hold has been released from the container by user EI0001.
REL CSI MANAGE	U. S. Customs has completed an intensive (X-ray) exam on the container and that the Operations staff at the appropriate facility has been contacted to guarantee the cost of the exam. MANAGE can also be a code, such as CC1234, which indicates that VIT released the hold at U. S. Customs request.
REL SL AP0001	A shipline hold has been released from the container by user AP0001.
REL USC EDI1I	A U. S. Customs hold has been released from the container via an AMS transaction. The last two characters, here 1I, are the disposition code from a U. S. Customs 350 document and they indicate the type of hold that has been released. *
REL USDA EDI2I	A USDA hold has been released from the container via an AMS transaction. The last two characters, here 2I, are the disposition code from a U. S. Customs 350 document and they indicate the type of hold that has been placed. *
REL USDA INSPEC	VIT staff has released a hold from the container at the request of the USDA.
REL VIT MANAGE	VIT staff has removed a management hold from the container. Please contact the Operations staff at the appropriate facility for additional information.

* Note: A table of U. S. Customs disposition codes can be found by searching the U. S. Customs web site for the term "AMS disposition codes" - the search results that are returned should provide a link to an AMS appendix that lists the AMS disposition codes. No URL is provided here because over the years we have seen that the disposition code appendix changes both in the letter of the appendix and in the location of the document on the U. S. Customs web site.

Things You Need To Know

U. S. Customs:

1. U. S. Customs manifests (309 documents) are not posted to the VIT system until vessel/voyage is on the VIT vessel schedule. Contact Vessel Operations to have vessels added to the VIT vessel schedule. See VIT's Company Info and Contacts for Vessel Operations contact information.

2. To account for additions to the vessel schedule, un-posted U. S. Customs manifests are reprocessed once a day, shortly before midnight, seven days a week.

3. If an un-manifested container physically arrives at VIT, the container enters a hold condition, indicated by a C18 disposition code. Manual effort is then required by both the vessel and manifest owners to enter the bill and container information into the VIT system.

4. By company policy, VIT only accepts manifest information directly from U. S. Customs via EDI 309 documents, and only accepts entry information directly from U. S. Customs via EDI 350 documents. We process numerous hold codes received via U. S. Customs EDI 350 documents, as well as the corresponding release-of-hold codes.

5. U. S. Customs EDI entry documents (EDI 350s) are processed and posted to the VIT system on a bill basis only. We do not post releases by container.

6. VIT uses the piece count values provided in U. S. Customs 309 and 350 documents when determining if entries can be posted to the containers on a bill. An entry for a bill is not posted until the sum of the piece counts on the 350 documents is equal to the piece count specified on the EDI 309 document most recently received from U. S. Customs for the bill. An individual container will not be available for pick-up until an entry has been posted for every bill associated with the container. If a bill lists multiple containers, none of the containers will be available for pick-up until an entry has been posted for the bill. PLEASE NOTE: If a bill is deleted in AMS, that bill will be considered to have a zero piece count in the VIT system. This means that the entries for containers on the bill will never be automatically posted because the piece count of zero will not match the sum of the piece counts on the entries.

7. The list of containers associated with a bill can change during the life of a bill as it is added, deleted, re-added or updated in the U. S. Customs AMS system. VIT uses the list of containers on the most recently received bill as the active container list for the bill. Entries will only be posted for containers currently in the bill's active container list.

Miscellaneous:

1. If VIT establishes the ftp connection to exchange data between you and VIT, there could be instances in which we are unable to deliver data to you. Those instances could include problems with your ftp server, DNS problems, changes in your IP address, etc. If we are unable to deliver your data, we retain that data and the entire backlog of data will be delivered when we are again able to successfully establish a connection to your ftp server.

2. U. S. Customs pushes data to VIT from their AMS system. We have no way to pull data from AMS. We closely monitor the flow of data from U. S. Customs and would be notified if there was a disruption in the data flow. If your data is missing or needs to be resent, please contact your U. S. Customs representative to find out why your data was not transmitted to VIT.

EDI FAQ

Electronic Data Interchange

- Who do I contact if there seems to be a problem with my EDI data?
- Why doesn't my shipline release appear for a specific container?
- I don't see my bill or any of the containers on the bill in the VIT system. Why?
- When does a container become ready for pick-up?
- Why haven't my U. S. Customs entries posted for a container?
- I attempted to cancel a booking with a 301 document, but the booking still appears in the VIT system ? why?
- How do I contact members of the EDI team?
- What are the top two situations that cause problems with containers in the VIT system?

- Who do I contact if there seems to be a problem with my EDI data?

If, in the VIT system, it appears that your EDI data has not been processed, the first point of contact should be the operations division most appropriate for the situation (container, cargo, rail, etc.) at the terminal that is handling your shipment. See Company Info & Contacts for contact information. The division you contact will attempt to diagnose and solve your problem; if they are unable to resolve the issue, they will then refer the problem to the EDI team for further research and analysis.

Why doesn't my shipline release appear for a specific container?

If the shipline release was bill-based, the container for which the shipline release does not appear could have been added to the manifest after the shipline release was received and processed. Resend the shipline release to have it posted to the additional container(s).

I don't see my bill or any of the containers on the bill in the VIT system. Why?

The vessel specified on a manifest must be on the VIT vessel schedule before we can post the bills and containers in the manifest. If the vessel is not on the VIT vessel schedule when the manifest arrives, unposted manifests are reprocessed nightly. If your vessel was added to the VIT vessel schedule today and your manifests have already been filed in AMS, please allow the automatic overnight reprocessing to occur and wait until the next day to check the VIT system for your bills and containers.

While we are not direct users of the U. S. Customs AMS system, it is our understanding that U. S. Customs will not send 309 and 350 documents for a bill until the vessel associated with the manifest "has been arrived." Check to see if the vessel for the bills/containers in question has been arrived in the U. S. Customs AMS system.

It can take an hour or more for documents to make their way from U. S. Customs to VIT... however, documents are sometimes held at U. S. Customs and not transmitted to VIT until certain conditions have been met within the U. S. Customs AMS system. If you've recently posted your documents, please keep this in mind - your documents are usually received, translated, and processed within an hour, but if they're not, it could be that some condition in AMS is holding up the flow of data to VIT.

Your manifest, when filed in the U. S. Customs AMS, did not specify 1401 or 1402 for the port code. We only process manifests for ports 1401 (Norfolk and Portsmouth) or 1402 (Newport News.)

When does a container become ready for pick-up?

A container becomes ready for pick-up when 1) there are no holds on the container, 2) a U. S. Customs entry has been posted for each and every bill associated with the container, and 3) a shipline release and a delivery order have both been posted for the container.

Why haven't my U. S. Customs entries posted for a container?

The most common cause is a discrepancy between the piece count specified on the bill and the sum of the piece counts on the entries. Those two figures must match before a U. S. Customs entry is posted to the VIT system. Another cause is that the bill was deleted in the U. S. Customs AMS system before the container handling was completed at VIT. The VIT system must honor AMS deletes which sets the piece count on the bill to zero. If a bill is prematurely deleted in AMS, the corresponding entries will not post automatically and must be entered manually in the VIT system.

I attempted to cancel a booking with a 301 document, but the booking still appears in the VIT system ? why?

Per company policy, VIT does not process booking cancellations via 301 documents. This can only be done via the on-line system.

How do I contact members of the EDI team?

The best way to make contact is via e-mail (with complete problem or question details) using this link: VIT EDI Team. Your e-mail will be delivered to all current members of the VIT EDI team.

Should you need to reach an individual member of the team, contact information for the current team (Feb 28, 2008) is given in the table below. Voice mail is available on all phones. When you make contact via e-mail or voice mail, please provide full and complete details as appropriate to your concern.

Name (click to e-mail)	Phone Number
Tracy Parsons	757-391-6183
Sharon Swirsky	757-391-6179
Cindy Dennison	757-391-6184
Don Seay	757-391-6200

What are the top two situations that cause problems with containers in the VIT system?

The first thing to check when there are problems with your container in the VIT system are the piece count values for the bill (Customs 309 document) and the entry (Customs 350 document.) The bill piece count must exactly match the sum of the entry piece counts. Otherwise, a "piece count discrepancy" will exist - the entry will not show (or post) in the VIT system for the bill, and the containers on the bill will not be available for pick up. Once the piece count discrepancy is corrected in the Customs AMS system, the updated 309 and/or 350 documents will be relayed to VIT for processing.

The second thing to check is that the manifest for the bill is still active in Customs. If the manifest has been deleted in the Customs AMS system, it will soon thereafter be deleted in the VIT system.

Recent EDI Initiatives at VIT

Here are some recent EDI-related initiatives at VIT. Please contact the VIT EDI Team for more information or to participate in any of these initiatives.

1. We have implemented a "deferred 322" program in which we hold vessel departure documents until we have received a final stowage plan for the vessel from the stevedore who planned the vessel. This allows us to provide a more complete EDI 322 document than was available under our old method of delivering these 322s. We plan to phase in the "deferred 322s" for all shiplines in the near future. If your shipline is not already participating in this program and would like to begin receiving

"deferred 322s" immediately, please contact the VIT EDI Team.

2. We are expanding our use of ftp for exchanging EDI documents. We can push/pull data from our end, or you can push/pull from your end.

3. We are expanding our use of 997 acknowledgements in order to improve our EDI data communications.

4. We can now automatically provide shipline releases for inbond containers that are just passing through VIT and will receive final U. S. Customs clearance at another port. Participation in this program is limited to shiplines, and a formal request to participate in the program must be sent via postal mail on your company letterhead from someone authorized to approve your company's participation.

Useful Links

Corvedia - VIT's VAN

U. S. Customs - Customs web site home page

equasis.org - Great site for researching vessels (free registration required)