

VI. INITIATIVES OF JAPAN CUSTOMS FOR PREVENTING SMUGGLING

1. Effective Use of Inspection Equipment

(1) X-ray inspection equipment

Customs has installed various X-ray inspection equipment in order to inspect commercial cargo, passengers' personal effects, international mail, etc. being imported and exported more speedily and appropriately without opening them. Fully utilizing such X-ray inspection systems, Customs endeavors to find and seize smuggled methamphetamine, cannabis and other illicit drugs and firearms.

In consideration of the fact that large containers or containerized cargo are used for smuggling, large-scale X-ray inspection equipment has been installed at 16 locations (13 ports) nationwide, starting from the one introduced at Yokohama Port in 2001. Previously, it took around 2 hours to bring out and inspect all cargo of one container, but thanks to the introduction of large-scale equipment, it became possible to complete an inspection of one container in around 10 minutes, and the time required for inspections was thus reduced significantly.

Recently, X-ray CT scanning inspection systems, with which the inside of the cargo can be visualized in 3D images, are also being introduced and utilized.



(2) Customs' patrol boats

Customs' patrol boats dispatched from customs offices surveil a wide area and crack down on smuggling at seaports or trade on the sea that uses fishing boats.



(3) Drug detector dogs



The first 2 drug detector dogs were introduced with the cooperation of the US customs in 1979. At present, approx. 130 dogs are stationed at customs offices nationwide. They are mainly used for inspections of passengers' personal effects and international mail, etc. and have contributed to a number of seizures of cannabis, methamphetamine or other illicit drugs. In 2002, dogs to detect explosives and drugs were also introduced.

(4) Port monitoring camera systems

Since March 1996, highly sensitive monitoring cameras with night vision have been installed at major seaports to tighten surveillance of vessels, movement of goods, and persons at the port areas.



(5) Metal detector gates

Metal detector gates were first introduced in 2017 as countermeasures against the smuggling of gold bullion, and have already been installed at airports and ports nationwide. Compared with conventional hand-held metal detectors, metal detector gates enable stricter regulations through swift customs clearing targeting a larger number of passengers, without the need to stop the procedural flow.



(6) Illicit drugs and explosives detector systems

Illicit drugs and explosives detector system (TDS; Trace Detection System) detects concealed methamphetamine, other illicit drugs, and explosives through the procedures of wiping the surface of commercial cargo, passengers' personal effects, and international mail, etc. being imported or exported, ionizing collected specimens, and analyzing their mass. The TDS has contributed to seizures of a large amount of methamphetamine and other illicit drugs. As the TDS enables detection of concealed illicit drugs and explosives in a short time without destroying inspection targets, swift and strict inspections have become possible.



(7) Electronic Customs Declaration Gate System



As of April 2022, the Electronic Customs Declaration Gate System (e-Gate) is operating at Narita Airport, Haneda Airport, Kansai Airport, Chubu Airport, Fukuoka Airport, New Chitose Airport and Naha Airport. A passenger can complete the submission of "Declaration of Accompanied Articles and Unaccompanied Articles" by having an electronic declaration terminal scan the IC passport and the QR code created by the Customs Declaration App, and taking the customs entry procedures in accordance with the terminal's instructions. During this process, face photos are taken to verify identification with the photo in the IC passport. After completing the procedures at the terminal, the passenger is asked to go to the electronic declaration gate. The passenger may simply pass through the gate as face photos are taken once again for facial recognition.



(Please download the Customs Declaration App from the QR code below.)

App Store



Google Play



Customs declaration
WEB



(8) Utilization of digital forensics

Digital forensics are techniques and procedures for analyzing electromagnetic records to prove crimes. Information collected from digital data of communication equipment that was used in a crime often serves as significant objective evidence for solving the crime. With further advancement of ICT in society and economy, such information and digital forensics are expected to become even more significant.

2. Customs Controls by Utilizing Information

(1) Utilization of the information system

The Customs Intelligence Database System (CIS)—a computerized system capable of sorting out and managing a wide variety of information, such as customs clearance for exports and imports as well as ship entries and departures—has been introduced at customs offices throughout the nation. Through the improvement and reinforcement of the system for intelligence analysis, processing, and management, intensive and efficient border control of smuggling is being carried out.

(2) Utilization of prior information

For effective and efficient border control, enforcement activities actively utilizing prior information, such as passenger name records (information on passenger reservation and boarding procedures held by airline companies), are being conducted.

(3) Development of the Customs controls system

Each customs office has the Customs Intelligence in charge of handling smuggling-related information with an appointed Customs Intelligence Manager. Additionally, the National Intelligence & Targeting Center, which conducts nationwide collection and analysis of information, was established and has been comprehensively managing and analyzing smuggling-related information received from domestic law enforcement authorities, such as the police and the Japan Coast Guard, as well as from foreign customs and other sources. In this manner, efforts have been made to reinforce the capacity to collect and analyze information.

In order to cope with organized and large-scale smuggling cases, the Criminal Investigation Center and the Customs Surveillance and Control Center were established. In close collaboration among these three Centers, efficient and effective enforcement activities have been conducted against cases involving two or more jurisdictions.

(4) Strengthened cooperation with trade circles for better information collection

Customs has concluded Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with various related organizations, aimed at ensuring greater cooperation in the prevention of smuggling.

Organizations with which the Customs and Tariff Bureau has concluded MOUs: 11 organizations

The Japanese Shipowners' Association; The Scheduled Airlines Association of Japan;

Japan Air Cargo Forwarders Association; Japan Customs Brokers Association;

Japan Foreign Steamship Association; Japan Fisheries Association;

Japan Oceangoing Passenger Ship Association; All Nippon Hotel Association;

Japan Ryokan & Hotel Association; All Japan Ryokan Hotel Association; and

National Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations

(5) Enhancement of collection of information from the public

Ongoing efforts to gather information from the public throughout the nation include the opening of a single toll-free telephone number accessible 24 hours a day from everywhere across the nation, the distribution of leaflets, and public relations activities such as those regarding law enforcement countermeasures at the border by using posters, the Japan Customs' website, and various social media services (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube).

[Leaflet]



[Poster]



* In addition, materials for port-related organizations and fishery cooperatives, for logistics companies and warehouse companies, and for accommodation suppliers have been made and distributed.

[Customs YouTube Channel]



[Tekken × Japan Customs]

Protect and Take over Responsibility for People's Lives

Access to videos
Customs YouTube Channel



[Customs Twitter]



@Custom_kun

[Customs Facebook]



@Japan.Customs

SMUGGLING - HOTLINE
(24 hours a day: toll-free)

0120-461-961

(Call Customs, Ministry of Finance, for information on smuggling.)

Customs website
https://www.customs.go.jp/english/quest/smuggling_e.htm



Webpage for information provision
https://www.customs.go.jp/english/quest/smuggling_e.htm



3. Closer Cooperation with Relevant Agencies

(1) Border controls through cooperation with relevant agencies

With the aim of imposing effective controls at the border, Customs, police, Coast Guard, and other organizations are working in close cooperation, each making full use of its own information, organizational resources, jurisdiction, and experience. In more specific terms, Customs is conducting joint training and joint operations together with the police and Coast Guard across the country.



(2) Holding of Law Enforcement Meeting on Measures against Smuggling

The Customs and Tariff Bureau of the Ministry of Finance organizes the Law Enforcement Meeting on Measures against Smuggling with the aim of strengthening cooperation with the ministries and agencies concerned and promoting the exchange of information needed to interdict smuggling cases. Thus, information exchange is promoted at the national level. Regional customs offices also organize regional law enforcement meetings on smuggling with the law enforcement authorities concerned to promote information exchange at the regional level.



4. Promotion of International Information Exchange

(1) Promotion of information exchange with foreign customs administrations

As the single contact point of Japan Customs for information exchange with foreign customs administrations, the International Intelligence Office has been established in the National Intelligence & Targeting Center. Japan Customs has been continuing its efforts to promote the establishment of an international framework of customs cooperation with foreign countries, such as Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (hereinafter referred to as "CMAAs"), which includes provisions for information exchange concerning the smuggling of illicit goods (e.g. illicit drugs) (See "Present Status of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements, etc.").

Utilizing international networks, including the ones managed by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) for Asia and the Pacific, Japan Customs exchanges smuggling-related information and intelligence with foreign customs administrations and other law enforcement authorities.

(Reference) RILO (Regional Intelligence Liaison Office)

The RILO is the base for the WCO regional projects, which has been established for the purpose of promoting information exchange on illicit drugs among customs administrations in the region and improving the intelligence analysis on the trends of smuggling in the region. The RILO for Asia and the Pacific, in which Japan Customs has a membership, was established as the first RILO of the world in December 1987. Japan Customs hosted the RILO for Asia and the Pacific (located in Tokyo Customs) for the five years from January 1999 and has continued active participation in the RILO project with many contributions. The RILO for Asia and the Pacific, whose office has been in South Korea since January 2012, analyzes trends in smuggling within the region based on reports from participant countries and regions on interdicted cases of smuggling of illicit drugs and related objects, distributes the results to participating countries and other organizations, and facilitates the information exchange among participating customs administrations.

(2) Information exchange under CMAAs

Japan Customs is actively working toward new CMAAs in order to facilitate information exchange with the source or transit countries of illicit drugs and firearms, and is also committed to further promoting information exchange through the existing CMAAs.

(Reference) Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements

A Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement is an international agreement that includes the provision of the mutual assistance by the customs authorities of the Contracting Parties for the prevention of smuggling of goods harmful to society and strict border control against goods infringing intellectual property rights, and also provides for cooperation in simplification and harmonization of customs procedures.

(3) Collecting smuggling-related information through the dispatch of officers and online conferences

Customs officers are sent to the countries and regions that are likely to be sources for illicit drugs, etc. smuggled into Japan to collect information on smuggling and exchange opinions with foreign customs administration. In addition, efforts are being made to establish mutual cooperative relations with the foreign customs administrations by the use of online conferences. Japan Customs also dispatches officers specialized in intelligence analysis to the countries and regions which are tackling offenses related to illicit drugs smuggling and holds online conferences to exchange views on the analysis of intelligence on source countries of smuggling, etc.

(4) Participation in international conferences

Japan Customs is actively taking part in international conferences (including online participation), such as the Enforcement Committee of the WCO and the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to exchange opinions and information on control of illicit drugs with various countries.



Present Status of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements, etc. (As of January 2022)

<p>Enforcing or signed (39 countries and regions)^(Note1)</p>	<p>< Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAAs) > U.S.A. (Jun. 1997), Republic of Korea (Dec. 2004), China (Apr. 2006), EU (Feb. 2008), Russia (May 2009), the Netherlands (Mar. 2010), Italy (Apr. 2012), South Africa (Jul. 2012), Germany (Dec. 2014), Spain (May 2015), <u>Norway (Sept. 2016)</u>, <u>Mexico (Jul. 2018)</u>, <u>Uzbekistan (Dec. 2019)</u>, <u>U.K. (Jan. 2021)</u>, <u>Iran (Aug. 2021, signed)</u>, <u>Brazil (Sept. 2021)</u>, <u>Uruguay (Oct. 2021)</u>, and <u>Moldova (Jan. 2021, signed)</u>.</p> <p>< EPAs^(Note 2) > Singapore (Nov. 2002), Malaysia (Jul. 2006), Thailand (Nov. 2007), Indonesia (Jul. 2008), Brunei Darussalam (Jul. 2008), the Philippines (Dec. 2008), Switzerland (Sept. 2009), Vietnam (Oct. 2009), India (Aug. 2011), Peru (Mar. 2012), <u>Australia (Jan. 2015)</u>, Mongolia (Jun. 2016), and TPP11^(*) (Mar. 2018, signed) ^(Note 4) TPP11(CPTPP) participants: <u>Mexico</u>, <u>Singapore</u>, <u>New Zealand</u>, <u>Canada</u>, <u>Australia</u>, <u>Vietnam</u>, <u>Peru</u>, <u>Brunei Darussalam</u>, <u>Chili</u>, and <u>Malaysia</u></p> <p>< Administrative Arrangements > <u>Australia (Jun. 2003; Jul. 2017, revised)</u>, <u>New Zealand (Apr. 2004; Jun. 2014, revised)</u>, <u>Canada (Jun. 2005)</u>, <u>Hong Kong; China (Jan. 2008)</u>, <u>Macau; China (Sept. 2008)</u>, <u>France (Jun. 2012)</u>, <u>U.K. (Jun. 2013)</u>, <u>Belgium (Jul. 2017)</u>, and <u>Austria (May 2019)</u></p> <p>< Others > Chinese Taipei (Nov. 2017)^(Note 5)</p>
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(Note 1) A country with which Japan has concluded multiple frameworks in different formats is counted as one. (ex. with Australia, Japan has concluded an EPA, TPP and administrative arrangement.)

(Note 2) EPAs listed here are those incorporating provisions concerning customs mutual assistance.

(Note 3) Those underlined incorporate the content of the amendment of the Customs Act in FY2012 for the purpose of enhancing information exchange with foreign customs administrations.

(Note 4) TPP11 (CPTPP) was signed by 11 countries in March 2018. Countries with a dotted underline are those which have reported the completion of their procedures under domestic laws to New Zealand, the Depository of the Agreement, and for which the agreement has become effective.

(Note 5) Regarding Chinese Taipei, a private sector arrangement signed between the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association.

(5) Technical cooperation for enhancing border control capacity

In order to ensure a safe and secure society in Japan through enhancing the border control capacity of the customs administration of developing countries, such as by strengthening their capabilities for collecting and analyzing information on smuggling of illicit drugs and firearms, Japan Customs has been dedicated to technical cooperation to extend Japan's expertise and technologies in this field.