

Ministry of Finance

CBIC releases National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024

9 ports witness reduction in average release time with a significant 50 percent reduction in case of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and 6 percent reduction in case of Air Cargo Complex (ACCs) Y-o-Y

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Shri Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), along with other Members of the Board, released the National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024 report.

NTRS 2024 is 4th annual national-level study adopting a standardized methodology and covering the bills of entry (for imports) and shipping bills (for exports) submitted during the first week of January 2024 which were tracked till February 7, 2024, for cargo clearance via 15 major customs formations (categorised into 4 categories- Seaports, Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and Air Cargo Complex (ACCs)).

For imports, the study has noted that, out of the 15 ports covered under the purview of the study, 9 ports have witnessed a reduction in the average release time in 2024 vis-a-vis previous year. Also, there has been reduction in release time in case of ICPs and ACCs – a significant 50 percent reduction in case of ICPs and 6 percent reduction in case of ACCs in 2024 compared to the corresponding period in 2023.

NTRS 2024 has also looked at the CBIC Pre-payment Customs Compliance Verification (PCCV) initiative, in which all the Customs formalities are completed and final clearance is pending only for want of payment of duties by the importer. It was noticed that once the payment is made, the final Clearance is granted by the Customs through automated Machine Release process, on an average, within 3 minutes from the duty payment. Further, the bills of entry that have all the three features - advance bills of entry, facilitated bills of entry, and AEO (Trusted Clients programme) bills of entry — report a significantly lower average release time of 46% for seaports, 36% for ICDs and 45% for ACCs than the overall release time for that port category.

For exports, the study distinguishes between regulatory clearance (customs release), completed with the grant of Let Export Order (LEO), and the wider aspect of physical clearance, completed with the departure of the carrier with the goods. It was noticed that the time of the arrival of the cargo at the customs station/port to its regulatory clearance, marked by grant of Let Export order (LEO) has reduced for ICDs and ACCs in 2024 vis a vis 2023. In absolute terms, the average release time taken in export Customs clearance regulatory process, in 2024, stood at 22:49 hours for seaports, 30:20 hours for ICDs, 3:50 hours for ACCs and 5:28 hours for ICPs.

The Time Release Study (TRS) serves as a performance measurement tool aimed at providing a quantitative measure of cargo release time. This time is defined as the period from the arrival of cargo at the Customs station to its out-of-charge for domestic clearance in the case of imports, and from the arrival of cargo at the Customs station to the eventual departure of the carrier in the case of exports.

The objective of NTRS 2024 is to present a comprehensive quantitative national-level assessment of the cargo clearance process for this year, compare it to performance during the corresponding periods of the previous years to measure success in terms of (a) the progress made towards the targets set under the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) and (b) evaluate the impact of initiatives that are put in place.

NTRS 2024 has also attempted to expand the scope of time release study to cover the time taken in release of transit cargo from and to Nepal, cargo release at ICD Garhi and courier cargo handled by ACC Bengaluru. The quantification of time taken in the clearance of import and export cargo at ICD Garhi and courier terminal, ACC Bengaluru has been included in NTRS 2024 with the intention to provide the benchmark data for comparison in future.

The complete findings of the National Time Release Study 2024 can be accessed on the CBIC website (<https://www.cbic.gov.in/>)

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