



Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST)

ENHANCED EXPORT PROCEDURES FOR ABST

The Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST) comes into effect on January 29, 2007. Goods normally subject to ABST are zero-rated when they are exported. Therefore, exports of goods for persons registered for ABST require an additional level of verification to ensure that the goods are accurately declared and that they leave the country. This level of verification will enable the exporter to claim these sales as zero-rated when they file their monthly ABST returns with the Inland Revenue Division.

A person registered for ABST who is exporting goods shall complete the following steps:

Step 1) The exporter contacts the Customs Export Unit at least 24 hours prior to packing their goods for export to ensure that an officer will be present during the entire packing process. In the case of large shipments, the officer can be scheduled to attend at the ABST exporter's premises. Inspection procedures for small export shipments are similar, but can be carried out at the customs office of export when the goods are presented to a Customs officer in unsealed cartons or packing materials.

Step 2) Prior to commencing packing at their premises or presenting the shipment at the customs office of export, the exporter must complete their export declaration in 4 copies and attach commercial invoices that correspond to the information provided on the declaration to the original, duplicate, and triplicate copies of the declaration.

Step 3) When the officer arrives at the exporter's premises, the packing can commence. The officer will verify that the goods on the declaration and invoice are the same goods and in the same quantities as those being packed. Once the packing is complete, the container will be sealed. The officer will certify on the back of the original and exporter's (fourth) copies of the declarations that the goods have been properly packed for export and will include the seal and container numbers in the certification. The goods can now be moved to the place of export. In the case of small shipments, the officer will carry out a similar verification and certification at the customs office of export.

Step 4) The declaration will be processed by the Tariff Section in the normal fashion. The Supervisor will retain the duplicate and triplicate copies of the declaration and return the original and exporter's copies to the trader.

Step 5) In the case of large shipments, a Customs officer will verify that the seals on the container are intact and that it is the same container that was certified by the Customs officer during the packing process at the time the container is ready to be loaded. Once that is verified, the officer will so certify on the back of the original and exporter's copies of the declaration.

Step 6) The shipping agent or Port Authority staff will ensure that the master of the vessel or the commander of the aircraft certifies on the back of the original and exporter's copies of the declaration when the goods have been loaded on the vessel or aircraft. At this point, the original is returned to Customs and the exporter's copy of the declaration will be returned to him or her.

It is very important that exporters retain their certified copy of the export declaration for later verification by officers of the Inland Revenue and/or Customs and Excise Division.

Other requirements that must be met for exports to qualify at the zero-rate are explained in the following extract from Schedule 1 to the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax Act 2006:

SCHEDULE 1

ZERO-RATED SUPPLIES: EXPORTS OF GOODS AND OTHER SUPPLIES OF GOODS FOR CONSUMPTION OUTSIDE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

(1) A taxable supply of goods is zero-rated for the purposes of this Act if it is listed in one of the items below—

1. A supply of goods, if the supplier has entered or will enter the goods for export under the Customs (Control and Management) Act and the goods have been or will be exported.
2. A supply of goods, if the Commissioner is satisfied that the goods have been or will be exported from Antigua and Barbuda by the supplier.
3. A supply of goods, if—
 - (a) the goods are supplied in Antigua and Barbuda to a non-resident recipient who is not a taxable person, or to the agent of that recipient; and
 - (b) the goods are or will be exported without being altered or used in any way between the time they are delivered or made available to the recipient and the time they are exported, except to the extent, if any, necessary to prepare them for export, but only if, within 90 days of the date on which the goods are delivered or made available by the supplier to the recipient, the supplier holds sufficient documentary evidence to establish that the recipient or agent entered the goods for export under the Customs (Control and Management) Act.