

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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