

What is an Importer Number?

Provided by
Trade Risk Guaranty



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The Importer Number is a unique identifier assigned by Customs to the Importer of Record. It is regularly used during the importing process and all importers must have one on file.

An Importer Number is a Customs-assigned identification required to be on file for the Importer of Record of any goods imported into America. An importer will need to use this number during many stages of the importing process as it is the primary way U.S. Customs and Border Protection will identify your entries.

What is the standard form of an Importer Number?

If you are an importer based in a country other than the United States, your number will look a little different than importers based in the United States. This number can take the following standard formats depending on where your company is located:

1. **U.S. Importers:** 12-123456789
2. **Foreign Importers:** 123456-12345

Who needs an Importer Number?

An Importer Number needs to be on file for the final recipient of any goods imported into the U.S. This is typically going to be the importer of record doing business in America. However, foreign companies may also hold a number if they receive goods through the U.S.

It is also common for Freight Forwarders and Customs Brokers to clear goods under their own identifying number before handing them over to the importer. However, they may only do this if the goods are valued under \$2,500.

How do I find my Importer Number?

Finding your Importer Number can be a simple process as there are two main ways it is determined. The first, and most common, method used to identify this number is using your Tax ID Number (also known as your EIN). This number is listed on any W-2 form your company has filed, as well as, many other publically available sources. Your EIN can be easily transformed into an Importer Number by adding two zeros at the end of your Tax ID.

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But what if your company doesn't have a Tax ID?

In the event that your company does not have a Tax ID, or EIN, you will have to utilize the other main method for identifying your company. This method involves using the Social Security Number of the company's founder and is the primary method of identification for Sole Proprietorships. Customs permits the founder's Social Security Number to take the place of the traditional Importer Number format in these cases.

How can I use the 5106 Form to acquire an Importer Number?

A 5106 Form must be filed with Customs and can be used to acquire this identification number in the following of situations:

1. If your number has been voided
2. If you need an additional Importer Number
3. If you do not have one already on file

How long does an Importer Number stay on file with Customs?

Customs will keep this number on file for one year after the last time it was used to import goods into the U.S. So if your company has not imported into the United States in over a year, make sure to check with Customs to ensure that your number has not been voided. If it has, you will need to file a 5106 Form with Customs as mentioned above.

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