

Commercial Bill of Lading – Syncada

The Coast Guard is no longer able to arrange CONUS freight services using a Government Bill of Lading (GBL). Therefore, it became necessary to implement a new automated Transportation of Freight electronic billing system to replace the manual GBL for CONUS freight shipments.

Syncada is a software package developed by U.S. Bank. Working in conjunction with the Department of Defense (DOD) Global Freight Management (GFM)/Electronic Transportation Acquisition (ETA) Freight assignment software, Syncada provides a virtually paperless transaction application that processes Commercial Bills of Lading (CBL) electronically. The various carriers that are registered in Syncada then turn these CBL's into freight invoices. When someone in the Transportation Office approves the electronic invoice, U.S. Bank pays the carrier. At some point during the month, U.S. Bank will invoice the Coast Guard for all of the charges paid during the month. One payment is made from the Coast Guard for the multiple payments made by U.S. Bank.

Syncada facilitates the electronic exchange of transaction information between trading partners. This system combines financial processing and electronic data warehousing capabilities into one comprehensive service. It allows both shippers and carriers to see, in real-time, all the information regarding a transaction. Syncada uses Business Rules to determine which actions are available to the user (submit, approval process, deny, hold, cancel, resume, service completion, e-Bill creation, find potential matches, generate). Syncada offers improved funds control for managers; eliminates paper from the payment process; eliminates manual posting to general ledger accounts; and, provides the Transportation Office (TO) with a powerful electronic pre-payment audit tool.

When the TO requires a shipment, they enter the shipping information into the GFM system. The GFM system responds by providing a list of carriers that deliver to the designation area, as well as providing the cost estimate for the shipment. The TO then selects the carrier and makes the appropriate arrangements to pick up the freight. This process generates a CBL in the system. The CBL has the DODAAC built into the system to identify the location that is requesting the shipment.

Daily, the TO will enter the Syncada system, to review, approve/disapprove those items which have been shipped, receipted for and invoiced by the carrier. They log in the system and approve any invoices that have been married up. This approval is so that U.S. Bank can make payment to the carrier. Carriers receive payment as quickly as 24 hours after delivery. If there is a problem with any of the invoices, the TO does not approve the invoice and works with the carrier to resolve the problem.

U.S. Bank will invoice the Coast Guard for all of the charges paid during the month. Each month (usually the 1st of the month), the Finance Center downloads the Statement/Invoice for payment from the FINCEN Portal application accessed from the intranet website. The data is downloaded into the FINCEN developed application, Commercial Transportation Approval Payment System (CTAPS).

CTAPS is accessed through the FINCEN application portal for users on the CG-WAN. CTAPS was developed by the Coast Guard Finance Center, Accounting Systems Division to process all of the Commercial Bills of Lading created by the Global Freight Management system (GFM) and the U.S. Bank, Syncada system. The URL for the GFM Desk Guide is <https://eta-teams.transport.mil>.

To get into the CTAPS screen, you must first go to the Finance Centers WEB portal applications page. The URL for this link is https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/fincen/SitePages/FINCEN_Application_Portal.aspx There will be a security log-in established by a database of acceptable users. Each PAO will fill out the user request form and mail a signed copy to FINCEN's CTAPS manager who will assign the user log-on password.

Each PAO will receive a formal letter of authorization from FINCEN giving them authority to approve payment of invoices. Point of contact for CTAPS is Crystal.L.Curran@uscg.mil or William.R.Huffman@uscg.mil .

The Finance Center downloads the invoice file, loads it into the CTAPS and sends a notification to the unit Payment Approving Officials (PAO's) telling them that an invoice is available for approval. This process includes correction of bad accounting lines. FINCEN then makes payment to U.S. Bank. The PAO approves the invoice and the charges are distributed to the appropriate accounting lines. The entire process is now complete.