

HIGH SECURITY SEALS FOR OCEAN CARGO

High Security Seals Meeting ISO PAS 17712 Standards

This includes all cargo bound for the US, whether the US is the final destination or the cargo is merely passing through the US to reach the final destination.

High security seals are a security measure aimed at improving cargo protection and increasing security throughout the supply chain.

If a container is found not to be affixed with a high security seal, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) may issue a penalty. CBP recognizes that there are types of containers that cannot be readily secured by use of a high security seal, such as tanks, open top containers or containers that simply cannot accommodate such seals. These will not be subject to the statutory requirements.

The responsible parties for ensuring any containers are sealed properly are shippers, consignees and cargo owners. These parties are liable for all costs incurred in case of any breach.

Information below is from the International Seal Manufacturer's Association.

<http://www.ismasecurity.com>

What is ISO PAS 17712?

International Standard ISO 17712, Freight containers - Mechanical seals, published in September 2010, is the third generation of 17712. The first generation was a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) published in 2003; the second generation was a revision to ISO/PAS 17712 published in 2006. The generations are cumulative except for some fine-tuning of earlier work.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) permits its technical committees to draft and vote on Publicly Available Specifications (PAS) as, in effect, a kind of interim International Standard. A PAS is faster to approve than a formal standard, but it has a limited shelf-life.

The first generation: ISO Technical Committee (TC) 104, Freight Containers, formed Working Group 8 (WG8), Mechanical Seals late in 2002. Industry and government experts concluded that an international standard on mechanical security seals would enhance post-9/11 cargo security. Using ISO's PAS procedures, ISO/PAS 17712 was finished quickly. The PAS focused on the physical parameters of three classes or levels of seal barrier strength: indicative ("I"), security ("S"), and high security ("H"). The barrier strength of a seal was and still is measured with four tests: impact, shear, bend and tensile strength. The test values that distinguished between "I", "S" and "H" classes reflected numbers in use by major customs authorities.

The quality of seals used in international trade improved as trade-related programs encouraged or required use of ISO-compliant "H" seals. Two of the earliest programs were the US Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) and the World

Customs Organization's "Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade."

ISO/PAS 17712:2003's narrow scope reflected the time-urgency of industry stakeholders. It was clear that the seal suppliers' security-related business practises were at least as important as the physical strength of a seal. Seal manufacturers and distributors with immature or careless security-related management practises could effectively compromise the security of the best physical seal before it was shipped out of the door.

The major thrust of second-generation activities produced Annex A (normative), "Seal manufacturers' security-related practises." The purpose of the annex is to raise the quality of security-related practises in the mechanical seal industry and assure a buyer that its supplier conforms to industry best practises. Annex A defines more than two dozen required practices, such as maintenance of quality assurance programs (ISO 9001), facility risk assessment, seven year data retention programs for all seals, and access control to production and storage areas. The annex requires a report of a successful audit (often referred to as a certificate) from an independent auditor accredited under ISO-sanctioned procedures. After a successful international ballot, ISO published the revised PAS 17712 in 2006.

The revision made an important linkage of two features:

- Compliant seals must show a mark to indicate their classification - "H" for high security, "S" for security and "I" for indicative.
- Only manufacturers certified as compliant with the normative annex may put grade marks on seals.