
With the CERS Workbook now an established way of reporting, the MCA have noted a number of common issues that re-occur with Workbook submissions and prevent upload to CERS.

We have compiled a best practice guide that is included here as an Annex, and will also be available on www.gov.uk, to assist with completion and submission of the Workbook.

CERS will now reject any Workbook that has embedded external links, as this causes issues with the uploaded data and poses security risks. External links are caused by the following;

- a. Pasting formulas into the Workbook cells to bypass the validations to import data from another file.
- b. Moving a worksheet from one Workbook into the other, leading to the named ranges within the worksheet still referring to the original Workbook.

Users should avoid pasting data into the Workbook wherever possible. If this is unavoidable, they should ensure they use the 'paste values' function to prevent an external link being copied into the Workbook

While users can add worksheets into the Workbook for port specific uses, they should not move worksheets between two copies of the Workbook.

Solutions to these issue are covered in detail in the best practice guide.

28 July 2017

Maritime Surveillance Team
Navigation Safety Branch

Annex A: Best Practice Guide

This guide documents problems that may be encountered when attempting to use the CERS workbook v1.2.2+. If you are using a pre-v1.2.2 workbook and are experiencing issues, please download the latest version of the workbook at www.gov.uk.

Some specific issues are discussed below, but the general guidance for completing the Workbook is as follows;

Voyage Tab

- POB in this case means the number of people on board
- References to 'next port' mean the port after the current port of call
- As is the case throughout the Workbook, only the fields highlighted in Yellow are mandatory for CERS reporting, and if they are completed correctly the tab will show 'valid'

Waste Tab

- Don't leave empty rows separating the information
- Always enter 0 if the value is 0, rather than leave the field blank
- If the port of retained waste delivery is unknown, leave blank. Do not enter 'ORDER', 'TBC', 'XXXXX' etc

Security Tab

- The Security tab can be left blank if the vessel's last port of call was a GB port
- Do not write anything in the box that says 'Invalid Reason' unless the Certificate is genuinely invalid
- Always complete the Facility Codes in the last 10 port calls

Hazmat Tabs

- Do not delete these tabs, even if your vessel never carries Hazmat; the vessel should select 'no' in the 'Hazmat on board' field and upload the tab with the rest of the Workbook
- Fields such as 'Packing Group' and 'Marpol Code' require specific data to be entered; do not enter anything other than the required values (such as 'no') as this will cause an error
- The consignment reference numbers should be listed numbers from 1 – 999, based on the number of consignments on board, not any sort of transport ID
- The DPG item reference numbers should be listed numbers linking to the consignment, such as the examples below

Row status	Consignment information						DPG Item (1 or more)						
	Consignment reference number	Transport document ID	Port of loading LOCODE	Port of loading name	Port of discharge LOCODE	Port of discharge name	DPG item reference number	DG classification	Textual Reference	IMO Hazard Class	UN Number	Total amount	Net / Gross
Valid	1	CARU215506	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24669	Net	KGM
Valid	1	CARU27280C	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	2	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24694	Net	KGM
Valid	1	CAXU61218C	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	3	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24689	Net	KGM
Valid	1	CAXU64016C	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	4	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24804	Net	KGM
Valid	1	CLHU33419Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	5	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24759	Net	KGM
Valid	1	CLHU337693	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	6	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24674	Net	KGM
Valid	1	CXDU13625Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	7	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24664	Net	KGM
Valid	1	DFSU222727	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	8	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24694	Net	KGM
Valid	1	DFSU237108	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	9	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24674	Net	KGM
Valid	1	FSCU362601	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	10	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24784	Net	KGM
Valid	1	GATU09581E	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	11	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24739	Net	KGM
Valid	1	GLDU222086	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	12	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24709	Net	KGM
Valid	1	GLDU35325E	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	13	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24699	Net	KGM
Valid	1	GLDU366940	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	14	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24769	Net	KGM
Valid	1	IPXU3106260	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	15	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24679	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU10375Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	16	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24699	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU122690	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	17	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24679	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU171898	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	18	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24684	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU178508	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	19	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24694	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU23041Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	20	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24789	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU33315Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	21	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24659	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MEDU390685	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	22	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24684	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MSCU14360E	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	23	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24804	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MSCU35310Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	24	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24674	Net	KGM
Valid	1	MSCU357547	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	25	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24709	Net	KGM

The above image shows a vessel with one Hazmat Consignment containing 25 different items.

Row status	Consignment information						DPG Item (1 or more)						
	Consignment reference number	Transport document ID	Port of loading LOCODE	Port of loading name	Port of discharge LOCODE	Port of discharge name	DPG item reference number	DG classification	Textual Reference	IMO Hazard Class	UN Number	Total amount	Net / Gross
Valid	1	CARU215506	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24669	Net	KGM
Valid	2	CARU27280C	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24694	Net	KGM
Valid	3	CAXU61218C	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24689	Net	KGM
Valid	4	CAXU64016C	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24804	Net	KGM
Valid	5	CLHU33419Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24759	Net	KGM
Valid	6	CLHU337693	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24674	Net	KGM
Valid	7	CXDU13625Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24664	Net	KGM
Valid	8	DFSU222727	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24694	Net	KGM
Valid	9	DFSU237108	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24674	Net	KGM
Valid	10	FSCU362601	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24784	Net	KGM
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Valid	12	GLDU222086	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24709	Net	KGM
Valid	13	GLDU35325E	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24699	Net	KGM
Valid	14	GLDU366940	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24769	Net	KGM
Valid	15	IPXU3106260	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24679	Net	KGM
Valid	16	MEDU10375Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24699	Net	KGM
Valid	17	MEDU122690	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24679	Net	KGM
Valid	18	MEDU171898	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24684	Net	KGM
Valid	19	MEDU178508	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24694	Net	KGM
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Valid	24	MSCU35310Z	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24674	Net	KGM
Valid	25	MSCU357547	AUADL	Adelaide	BEANR	Antwerpen	1	IMDG	Environmentally Haz 9	3077	24709	Net	KGM

The above image shows a vessel with 25 different consignments each containing one item.

If the above guidance is adhered to, there should be no issues with completing and uploading the CERS Workbook. However, some specific issues do sometimes occur and guidance on these is below.

The workbook banner shows “#VALUE”

This is caused by the use of unsupported applications. We recommend the use of an alternative spreadsheet application. Excel for Windows

2013+ is officially supported. There is no fix for this situation, and users should start with a fresh Workbook, using a supported spreadsheet application.

The ISSC expiry date is not being accepted

The standard date format in the United Kingdom is dd/MM/yyyy. Users entering information from a computer with a different date format, may find this causes an error with the ISSC Expiry Date, even if the date is valid. This can generally be resolved by saving the Workbook on a non-affected (i.e. UK based) computer or using the validation override to ensure the workbook is uploaded despite the validations failure.

The Workbook won't upload to CERS

The most common reason for a rejection of the Workbook is the use of external links. CERS will reject any Workbook that has embedded external links, as this causes many issues for the uploaded data and poses security risks. External links are caused by the following;

- a. Pasting formulas into the Workbook cells to bypass the validations to import data from another file.
- b. Moving a worksheet from one Workbook into the other, leading to the named ranges within the worksheet still referring to the original Workbook.

To find and remove any external links within the Workbook, there are two different methods, both of which may need to be used depending on the exact cause of the external links;

- Open the Workbook on an unprotected sheet, such as the "Notes" tab
- Open the "Name manager", by pressing "Ctrl + F3"
- In the 'refers to' column, find and delete any names that link to local locations, such as C:\

If the Workbook will still not upload, the second method is as follows;

- Use the standard 'find' filter (binoculars in the top right of Excel) and search in the formulas for the [character (as any external links will have this). Make sure you search the whole Workbook (you can click the options box to do this).
- For each formula linking to an external reference, select the contents of the cell and copy and paste it back into the same cell using the 'paste values' button instead of normal paste.

If all the above guidance has been followed and the Workbook will still not upload, please contact cers3@mcga.gov.uk and one of the MCA team will assess the issue and provide help.