

# DDSP Improves Service by Using Direct Booking

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*Monda Wickard and Sherri Troup, DDSP Traffic Management Specialists, use Direct Booking.*

Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania (DDSP) has added an important new service for overseas shipping. DDSP Traffic Management Specialists began using a web-based direct booking system this spring called Integrated Booking System. IBS allows DDSP to interact directly with certain shippers without going through the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC). This direct connection saves as much as a full week of scheduling time.

“IBS puts the shipper who has the cargo in direct contact with the steamship line who provides the service with no intermediary organizations,” said Jerri Taylor, DDSP Chief of Transportation.

Material flows through the Consolidation and Containerization Point (CCP) process and is staged in Outloading for specific customers located at specific destinations. When enough material has accumulated for loading to either a 20 ft. or 40 ft. container, or when material has been in the staging area for three to five days, CCP Surface Outloading requests a booking from employees of the Shipment Planning Branch. Having provided the container size/number, and customer unit, Outloading loads the container, but cannot close doors and move it from their loading dock until the booking has been submitted and confirmed. Once confirmed, the Traffic Management Specialist enters the Transportation Control Number (TCN) and booking information into the Distribution Standard System (DSS) which allows Outloading to complete their system processes and move the container from their dock.

CCP Surface OCONUS materials are required to be processed within five days. CCP Processing time begins at time of material receipt and ends at driver sign off just prior to the container departing DDSP. CCP consolidates and containerizes material already ordered, often using cross-loading, or cross-docking, which is the movement of palletized material directly from a receiving dock to shipping dock to eliminate any storage or staging. Moreover, CCP Outloading is to have the material loaded with “Closed Doors” within five days for Surface Outloading (three days for Air Lines of Communication—ALOC). Booking a vessel through the IBS takes an average of two hours, at times it has taken as long as seven days. This one step in Traffic Management significantly improves DDSP’s service to the customer by reducing Customer Wait Time (CWT).



*Material is staged according to customer destinations.*

To date, DDSP is Direct Booking with six different companies, accounting for almost all of DDSP’s bookings to Europe. This saving is passed on to CCP Outloading, and CCP processing times, ultimately improving DDSP’s service to the customer by reducing the holding time of materials. By moving the containers in a more expeditious way, more dock doors are available for additional shipments.

The IBS web site is very user friendly. It allows the shipper to build templates for routine bookings to various locations eliminating a great deal of routine data entry.

“It isn’t just the booking process it is the data transfer and payment process as well,” said Taylor. “The Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) data is moving from DSS into US Bank’s PowerTrack system when we move the cargo, when the container is lifted on a vessel the carrier sends EDI data into PowerTrack. At this point DDSP pays the carrier. The EDI data is also updating the Worldwide Port System, a MTMC system used to document cargo movement.

“Prior to Direct Booking, DDSP had to book containers to vessels at a minimum of three weeks in advance of the ship sailing . . . we guessed at how many containers we might need. We constantly had to change the number of containers booked. This was not only difficult for DDSP but for the container lines and MTMC. With Direct Booking, we book only the containers required on a real time basis. Speed and accuracy have been dramatically improved; it is like going from snail mail to e-mail and horse drawn carriages to jets.”

Most importantly, direct booking helps provide our customer the right material in the fastest time possible. “The real beneficiary is our customer,” said Taylor. “We are moving cargo much faster through the CCP, we are meeting and beating the goal of the five day CCP Surface hold time and the carriers are able to move the cargo faster as well. They have much more accurate data in their computer systems when the container arrives at port.”

DDSP and all DLA distribution centers continue to search out new ways to improve customer service.



*Frank Buttorff, DDSP-E, loads material from staging area into container at shipping dock.*