Seven common errors on Certificates of Origin

1 Poor goods description

Don't – use descriptions that are too vague or general, eg spare parts or brand names

Do – describe your goods in sufficient detail to clearly indicate the nature of the goods

2 Understanding Origin

Ensure you select the correct box on the back of the Certificate of Origin (C/O).

Don't – confuse 'wholly obtained' and 'manufactured' UK goods

Wholly obtained goods – is defined as UK raw materials or items produced from UK raw materials ie vegetables, minerals, animals born and raised in the UK or products derived from them etc.

Manufactured goods – are goods which confer United Kingdom origin because they have gone through a manufacturing process. The simplest test to apply is to check to see if the tariff used for the products being exported is different to the one for the materials used in the manufacturing process.

Imported goods – imported goods must be supported by proof of origin ie copy C/O from the country of supply or the manufacturer's invoice.

3 Failure to declare marks and numbers

This refers to the actual wording or labels stencilled to the outside of the packages being shipped. If you usually just show your customers address then simply state 'fully addressed' in the marks and numbers box.

For containerised goods the container number can be shown.

For goods shipped without marks – 'unmarked' should be shown.

4 Failure to declare packaging details

This relates to the number of cartons, crates, boxes, pallets, bales, rolls etc. that comprise the consignment.

For goods shipped in bulk or unpacked, "unpacked" or "loose" or "in bulk" should be shown.

5 Incorrect designation of country of origin

•   For UK origin goods show 'European Community – United Kingdom'

•   For shipments comprised of UK origin goods and goods originating in other EU countries add the names of the other EU countries after United Kingdom

•   For goods manufactured in EU and non-EU countries list the EU countries first before adding 'and' followed by the non-EU countries e.g. 'European Community – United Kingdom, France, Germany and Thailand, China'

6 No country mentioned in box 1

United Kingdom (in full) should always appear at the end of the UK exporters address.

7 Weights and measures

Do – declare all weights and measures using the metric system

Don't – use the imperial system of weights and measures.

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