

FIJI SUN

TALK TAX & CUSTOMS – FRCA ASSISTANCE ON IMPORTATION OF DONATED GOODS FOR CYCLONE WINSTON RELIEF

FS: Please explain FRCA's role in the assistance for those devastated in the aftermath of Cyclone Winston.

ACEO: Whilst Fiji's well-wishers are throwing in all the support to Fiji to recover from the terrible trail of destruction left by Tropical Cyclone Winston, FRCA as guardians of border for trade and travel, is working tirelessly in these trying times, to do all that is required of it, to enable relief efforts reach the needy at the earliest. FRCA at the border, in its efforts to ensure necessary compliance to customs laws, is putting in extra efforts to facilitate all assistance flowing through our borders as soon as possible in fact, instantaneously, for the rehabilitation process. Where needed, FRCA have considered risk management and have facilitated accordingly.

FS: Are all donated goods for relief free from duty and taxes?

ACEO: Yes, all donated goods from religious and charitable organization that have been sent in for the relief have been given duty and VAT exemption. Donors have obtained approval for the same from the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) for ease of clearance. Fiji Procurement Office has been clearing these consignments and FRCA Officers are assisting them with customs entries etc. to fast track the processing.

FS: Are there assistance on temporary goods brought in for the Cyclone relief e.g. machineries etc. ?

ACEO: Yes, all goods and equipment brought in as Temporary Imports for the cyclone relief have been granted waiver on the procedural importation requirements such as deposit by bond or cash, IM5 SAD, import license and the like for this State of Emergency period. We have applied the "check-in/check-out" process and account for all goods on registers.

FS: How about donations individuals for those affected by Cyclone Winston?

ACEO: Imported goods by individual for assistance towards Cyclone Winston victims have been cleared free of Fiscal Duty, Import Excise and VAT. This was effective from 20th February and ends on the 21st March 2016 unless extended by the Minister of Finance.

FS: What is the process and requirements of getting these donated goods free of duties and taxes?

ACEO: As FRCA facilitates, it applies due diligence as well as exercise reasonableness and common sense to ensure that goods being imported relate to the relief and the needs of those affected in this natural disaster.

Process

1. Individuals or Donors will request for duty and VAT exemption for the disaster relief goods to the Minister for Finance. The goods imported must provide immediate relief and help

rebuild a household. Please note that the duty exemption does not include jewelry, luxury items, and vehicles, prohibited or restricted items.

2. The Minister of Finance upon receipt of request from individuals or donors will issue a letter of approval to the individual or donors.

3. The individual will produce the approval letter from the Ministry of Finance to Customs at the border.

4. FRCA officers will assist the consignee's in filling the attached 'Declaration Form' for post clearance profiling and audit checks if needed.

FS: How long will the process take?

ACEO: Provided all documentation is in order, processing and clearance is given the same day.