HM Revenue & Customs

Customer Support Model, Business Continuity Plan and Contingency Plan

29/12/21

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Introduction

From 1 January 2022, full customs controls will apply to all goods moving between the European Union (EU) and Great Britain (GB) (excluding goods moving from NI/RoI to GB).

HMRC continues to undertake a wide variety of engagement activity with stakeholders to ensure they understand the new obligations and processes which will be in place from January 2022.

There is plenty of support available to ensure you and your customers are well positioned to comply with the new UK border processes and this guide will provide you or your customers with the appropriate channels to direct any issues you may have.

Customer Support Model (CSM)

Customs & International Trade helpline (CIT)

The Customs & International Trade helpline **offers 24/7 help for urgent issues preventing goods progressing through the border** (Telephone: 0300 322 9434) and is the main route in for customers with general customs queries including:

- help moving goods at all border locations
- general advice on the Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS)
- problems registering for GVMS
- error messages when creating Goods Movement Reference (GMR)

We have increased our capacity to ensure we are able to handle many operational queries including general calls about GVMS.

Government Gateway credentials lost or reset

The Government Gateway platform is a vital part of accessing on our IT systems. If you have lost credentials or need them reset, you can call us (Telephone 0300 200 3600).

Deskpro

You can use this service to raise any issues you may have with GOV.UK service webpages or the GVMS web interface. You can raise a support ticket by selecting the "Get Help with this page" link at the bottom of each screen.

You will be asked to provide your name and email address to ensure we can contact you back.

HMRC service availability and issues

We will always try to minimise disruption for businesses and individuals wherever possible, but due to the complexity of our IT systems we sometimes need to have downtime to make these changes. This is a normal approach to updating systems and you will need to plan around this downtime.

Visit our service availability GOV.UK page for more information.

Customer Support Model (CSM) – Visual Summary

HM Revenue & Customs

CIT Helpline
Telephone: 03000 322 9434
08:00 – 22:00 Monday to Friday
08:00 – 16:00 Weekends
08:00 – 16:00 1, 2 & 3 January 2022 (bank holiday weekend) Option 1 outside of these hours for urgent issues

- Help moving goods at all border locations
- General advice on GVMS
- Problems registering for GVMS
- Error messages when creating GMRs
- 24/7 help with urgent issues preventing goods progressing through the border

Online Service Helpdesk
Telephone: 0300 200 3600
08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday

- Government Gateway credential loss or reset

DeskPro
Links from gov.uk pages 24/7
Staffed 08:00 – 20:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 – 16:00 Weekends & Bank Holidays (excluding Christmas and New Year)

- Issues with gov.uk webpages
- Issues with GVMS Web User Interface

GVMS availability and future planned downtime available on gov.uk

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

We regularly manage updates to our IT systems to ensure they perform as expected and will always try to minimise disruption for businesses and individuals wherever possible.

Business Continuity Planning (BCP) will ensure goods can continue to move in the unlikely event of system downtime or technical issues.

In event of BCP being invoked we will communicate to key groups affected including businesses representative bodies to make them aware of fall-back processes they need to implement.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure they understand the steps they need to take to move goods through border locations in all scenarios.

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

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Hauliers

Hauliers moving goods through a location that uses the Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS) will need to get a Goods Movement Reference (GMR) to move goods.

Hauliers should not travel to the port without a finalised GMR.

As soon as an outage occurs goods without a GMR will not be allowed to embark, unless further instruction has been explicitly issued by HMRC.

Once an outage has been confirmed, HMRC will aim to repair the service urgently but if this is not possible and the IT outage has persisted for 1 hour, HMRC will;

- Issue a service availability update on the Gov.UK service availability page
- Permit hauliers to progress to Port with alternative documentation, for example this could be the Transit Accompanying Document (TAD), Movement Reference Number (MRN), Entry Reference Number (ERN) or Declaration Unique Consignment Reference (DUCR)
- Provide further guidance to carriers.

Transit Movements

In the event of an NCTS outage (but GVMS is working) traders will need to switch to a manual paper Single Administrative Document (SAD), (providing they have lodged official copies of their Guarantee Certificate at the Office of Departure(s) for outward Transit movements).
Hauliers should select the "declaration by conduct" GMR option and continue their Transit movements. The SAD should be carried at all times throughout the movement.

CHIEF / CDS Outages

Declarations should be pre-lodged, therefore enabling finalisation of the GMR. In the event of a prolonged CHIEF or CDS outage where declarations have not been lodged before the outage occurred, HMRC will issue further guidance on actions for traders and hauliers.

Any instance of unscheduled service downtime will be monitored by HMRC, and further instructions will be issued if required, to minimise disruption of trade whilst work is completed to repair the system. If the IT outage has persisted for 1 hour HMRC will issue instructions advising hauliers to select the "declaration by conduct" GMR option and continue their movements if they need to move goods during the outage. In these circumstances HMRC will also issue instructions to declarants confirming the requirements for submitting their electronic customs declaration once the CHIEF/ CDS outage is resolved.

Notification of downtime

There is a live service page on GOV.UK that is available to view the status of the service. It can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-for-the-goods-vehicle-movement-service-service-availability-and-issues

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

HM Revenue & Customs

Carriers

This document details the actions to be taken by carriers in the event of any unscheduled HMRC IT service downtime affecting Goods Movement References (GMRs) and sets out the contact point that should be used in the event of a system issue.

Any instance of unscheduled service downtime will be monitored by HMRC, and further instructions will be issued if required, to minimise disruption of trade whilst work is completed to repair the system. Messages will be cascaded via email.

Pre-departure

In the event of a system issue meaning that GMRs are unable to be validated with the GVMS system at the point of check-in, a carrier may choose to start the process of disabling GMR validation - **but only if one of the following specific criteria have been met and not in any other circumstances:**

- System errors have been returned on all GMR validation attempts across five or more movements
- System errors have been returned on all GMR validation attempts within a fifteen-minute period

The carrier should continue to try and validate GMRs while validation is being switched off and must immediately stop activity to switch validation off if any of these attempts are successful.

If the decision is taken to switch off the GMR validation step of the check in process, HMRC must be informed immediately by email. The email address to use is GVMS.Carrier.Urgent@hmrc.gov.uk. The email should set out the criteria that has been met to invoke the decision and the routes impacted.

Please also include the most appropriate contact details for us to use to keep in touch regarding the situation.
Once the validation step of the check-in process has been switched off, carriers should only allow vehicles that require a GMR to embark if a GMR has been collected for that movement, and the carrier has reasonable belief that the GMR collected is valid. All GMRs should continue to be collected and included in the embarkation notification sent to GVMS at the point of departure.

Goods without a GMR should not be allowed to embark, unless this instruction has been explicitly issued by HMRC.
Communications have been provided to hauliers to inform them that they should only proceed to the point of departure if they have a finalised GMR. In the event of a prolonged outage where the IT issue has not been resolved within 1 hour, HMRC will inform carriers that hauliers who need to move goods during the outage are now permitted to proceed without a GMR.

HMRC will email carriers once the service has resumed operation. From this point, standard procedures will resume and must be adhered to.

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Carriers

In the event that unscheduled system downtime continues for a prolonged period of time, HMRC will provide further guidance to carriers via email.

Retrospective activity by carriers
Where validation has been switched off and then subsequently reactivated, the carriers should carry out retrospective action to check in and validate the GMRs that were not actioned during the period of IT outage.

Post-departure and pre-arrival at border location
As part of the regular process, you are required to send the GMRs to the Goods Vehicle Movement Service (GVMS) via the API once the vessel has passed the point of no return. If you receive an error message during this process, you should continue to attempt to send the GMRs to GVMS during the crossing, leaving 15 minutes between each attempt.

Retrospective activity by carriers
When the service is restored, the carriers should commence retrospective action to embark the GMRs that were not actioned during the period of IT outage.

Notification of downtime
There is a live service page on GOV.UK that is available to view the status of the service. It can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-for-the-goods-vehicle-movement-service-service-availability-and-issues
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customs-handling-of-import-export-freight-chief-service-availability-and-issues
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/customs-declaration-service-service-availability-and-issues

Use of Email Address
The email address provided within this guidance should only be used in the scenarios outlined. Emails regarding anything else will not be progressed or responded to. Please also be aware that this email address will not be used to reply to emails. We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure they understand the steps they need to take to move goods through border locations in all scenarios. Please visit the live service page on GOV.UK for updates.

Full Controls Readiness Monitoring

Requirements from 1 January 2022

To mitigate the need for contingencies, we want to ensure that as many preventative steps are taken as possible, and that our resources are appropriately directed towards the source of issues. With that aim, we are seeking a daily report of data from carriers, so that we can monitor the situation at each location.

HMRC have requested that all carriers provide data on the number of vehicles being turned away due to lack of readiness for GVMS. If possible, HMRC have also requested this includes the reason for those turn-backs; however, this is not essential.

Name of Border Location:	
Route:	
Number of vehicles that have boarded vessel/train (per day)	
Number of Turn-backs (Total)	

GVMS Contingency Plan

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Contingency Invocation Process

Carriers who are facing unmanageable congestion or other disruption at a border location in January, will need to contact HMRC to request approval to invoke contingency. The following steps should be followed:

1. Carriers must contact the HMRC decision maker by telephone on 03000 590418, who will be operating a 24/7 on call service, to report disruption and request approval to invoke contingency. This telephone number must only be used in these circumstances.

2. The HMRC decision maker will walk-through the following questions on the phone to understand the level of disruption the carrier is facing:

    - Which route(s) are you operating where you are facing disruption?
    - When is your next crossing and do you have the resource to deal with the backlog of movements?
    - If possible, please provide your latest position on the number or proportion of turn-backs?
    - Please set out any wider issues including:
        - congestion around the port which is overwhelming your BAU processes?
        - delayed or cancelled crossings?
        - disruption to traffic management around the port or the local area?
        - any other substantive issue which you need to make us aware of?
    - Do you think this is a short term or longer-term issue and why? How long do you expect the disruption to last?

3. The HMRC decision maker will review the information provided by the carrier and confirm to the carrier on the phone whether contingency can be invoked.

4. Carriers must email FreightMTRequest@hmrc.gov.uk within 12 hours of contingency being invoked, to provide the audit trail for needing to invoke contingency. HMRC will acknowledge this email.

5. a) HMRC will email other carriers operating out of the same location to alert them that contingencies have been invoked and inform them they can also invoke the contingency, if required. Carriers must respond to confirm if they have invoked contingency, including responses to the pre-agreed questions listed at step 2, for the audit trail, within 12 hours. HMRC will arrange a call within the next 24 hours.
5. b) HMRC will email other carriers operating at nearby locations to alert them that contingencies have been invoked and arrange a call within the next 24 hours to understand how movements are operating for them. Carriers operating at nearby locations will not be permitted to start using the contingency and are expected to follow the invocation process as set out in these slides if required.

GVMS Contingency Plan

Operating Contingency

Once HMRC have agreed carrier(s) can invoke contingency, carriers must continue to check-in GMRs where possible, as per BAU processes. However, unready hauliers (without a GMR/invalid GMR) will now be permitted to board.

HMRC will be in contact with the carrier over the first 24 – 48 hours to determine the length of time contingency is in place. HMRC will continue to engage daily to monitor the latest position.

HMRC has requested carriers provide data on the usage of the contingency whilst it is in use, as set out on the next page.

GVMS Contingency Plan

Data Requirements during Contingency

HMRC have requested that carriers provide the numbers of drivers who have used the contingency on a daily basis to HMRC via FreightMTRequest@hmrc.gov.uk.

In addition to this, on a weekly basis, HMRC have requested that carriers provide more granular information on drivers who have used the contingency including Vehicle Registration Number/Container Registration Number and Haulier Company / Account name (table B below), which we understand is routinely collected. HMRC recognise the commercial sensitivities around providing identifiable data, and to ensure tight control of the data, we would request this information is provided in a password encrypted zip file, with the password supplied in a separate email which will be shared on a controlled basis with named officials only.

Whilst HMRC appreciate gathering this data will put additional burdens on carriers, this will help us build a detailed understanding of readiness so ministers and HMRC Commissioners can make effective decisions to protect supply chains, should it be required**.** HMRC will work together with carriers to agree what data can be provided in the most efficient way.

Please note that HMRC may share summary statistics from the data provided with Other Government Departments to support central Government planning.

Table A - Daily

Name of Border Location:	
Route:	
Number of vehicles that have boarded vessel/train (per day):	
Number of unready vehicles allowed to proceed (Total):	

Table B - Weekly

Name of Border Location:	
Route:	
Identifiable data on **unready** movements, namely*:	
o Vehicle Registration Number;* o Haulier Company or Account name.*	

*This would ideally be in a format that is accessible for analysis (e.g. excel spreadsheet) sent password protected. If your ferry manifest provides this evidence, we would accept a copy of manifests for relevant sailings to meet this requirement.

GVMS Contingency Plan – GVMS Contingency Trigger Process

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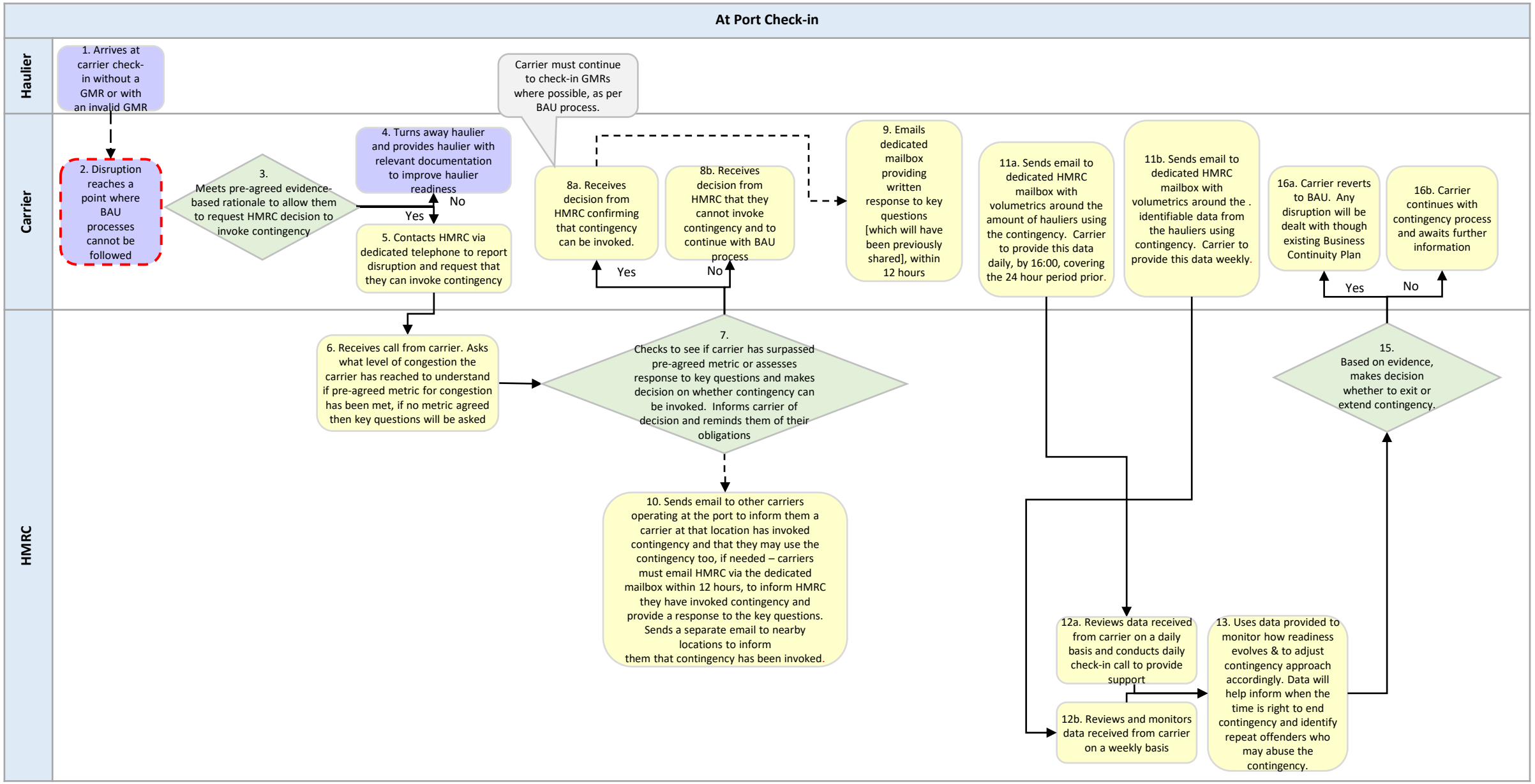

Key: BAU | CONTINGENCY | DECISION

Temporary Storage Contingency Plan

HM Revenue & Customs

Contingency Invocation Process

Ports / Carriers who are facing unmanageable congestion or other disruption at a border location with a temporary storage facility in January, will need to contact HMRC to request approval to invoke contingency. The following steps should be followed:

1. Ports / Carriers must contact the HMRC decision maker by telephone on 03000 590418, who will be operating a 24/7 on call service, to report disruption and request approval to invoke contingency. This telephone number must only be used in these circumstances.

2. The HMRC decision maker will walk-through the following questions on the phone to understand the level of disruption the carrier is facing:

    - Name, Role, Contact Number
    - Which border location or port is facing difficulties/issues due to TS facilities reaching or having reached capacity?
    - When is your next crossing and do you have the resource to deal with the backlog of goods?
    - Please set out any wider issues including:
        - congestion around the port which is overwhelming your BAU processes?
        - delayed or cancelled crossings?
        - disruption to traffic management around the port or the local area?
        - any other substantive issue which you need to make us aware of?
    - Do you think this is a short term or longer-term issue and why? How long do you expect the disruption to last?

3. The HMRC decision maker will review the information provided by the carrier and confirm to the carrier on the phone whether contingency can be invoked.

4. Ports / Carriers must email FreightMTRequest@hmrc.gov.uk within 12 hours of contingency being invoked, to provide the audit trail for needing to invoke contingency. HMRC will acknowledge this email.

5. a) HMRC will email other carriers operating out of the same location to alert them that contingencies have been invoked and inform them they can also invoke the contingency, if required. Carriers must respond to confirm if they have invoked contingency, including responses to the pre-agreed questions listed at step 2, for the audit trail, within 12 hours.
5. b) HMRC will email other carriers operating at nearby locations to alert them that contingencies have been invoked and arrange a call within the next 24 hours to understand how movements are operating for them. Carriers operating at nearby locations will not be permitted to start using the contingency and are expected to follow the invocation process as set out in these slides if required.

Temporary Storage Contingency Plan

Temporary Storage Operating Contingency

Once HMRC agrees you will be permitted to clear non-controlled goods from the EU from the inventory without a declaration. You can allow carriers and / or agents to use existing functionality available under staged customs controls for non-controlled EU goods to enable automatic clearance of the goods.

Temporary Storage with GVMS Ports

Following industry feedback, we have included an additional process map (slide 19) clarifying the contingency process at Temporary Storage ports with GVMS.

Temporary Storage Contingency Plan

Data Requirements during Contingency

Once the contingency has been invoked, HMRC requires the declarant name and address for all goods released under contingency to be sent to HMRC weekly via FreightMTRequest@hmrc.gov.uk. If this data is not available, HMRC will accept the Haulier name and address.

Following industry feedback, we will be working together with CSPs to collect this data using inventory systems. However, where this information cannot be provided through inventories, HMRC requests that carriers will provide the information in Table A on a weekly basis.

Whilst HMRC appreciate gathering this data will put additional burdens on carriers, this will help us build a detailed understanding of readiness so ministers and HMRC Commissioners can make effective decisions to protect supply chains, should it be required**.** HMRC will continue to work together with ports, carriers and CSPs to agree what data can be provided in the most efficient way.

Please note that HMRC may share summary statistics from the data provided with Other Government Departments to support central Government planning.

Table A

Name of Border Location	
Route	
Goods released under contingency	
Where available, declarant name & address	
Where available Haulier Name and address (if declarant details are not available)	

Temporary Storage Contingency Plan – Temporary Storage Contingency Trigger Process

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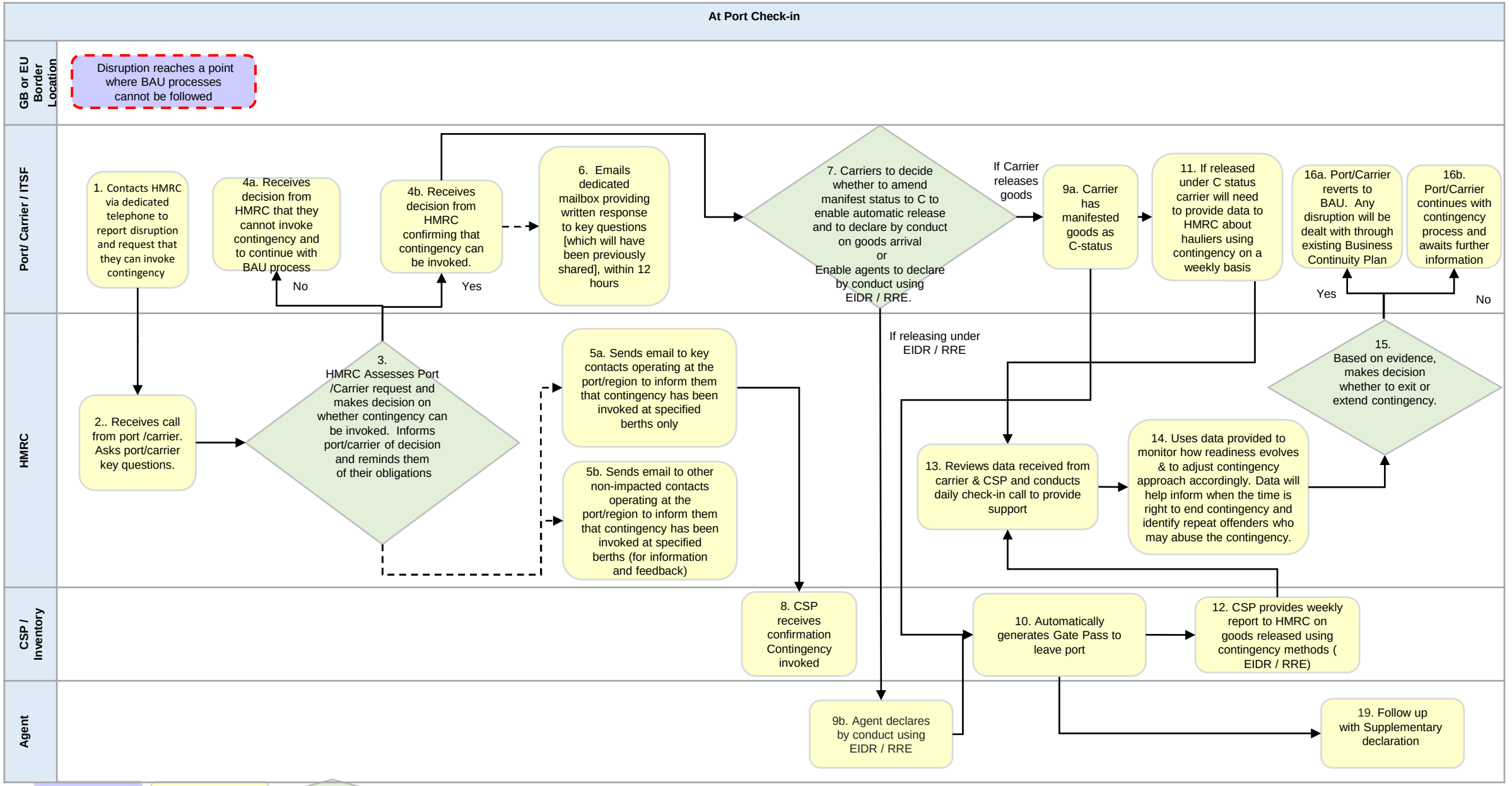

Temporary Storage Ports with GVMS

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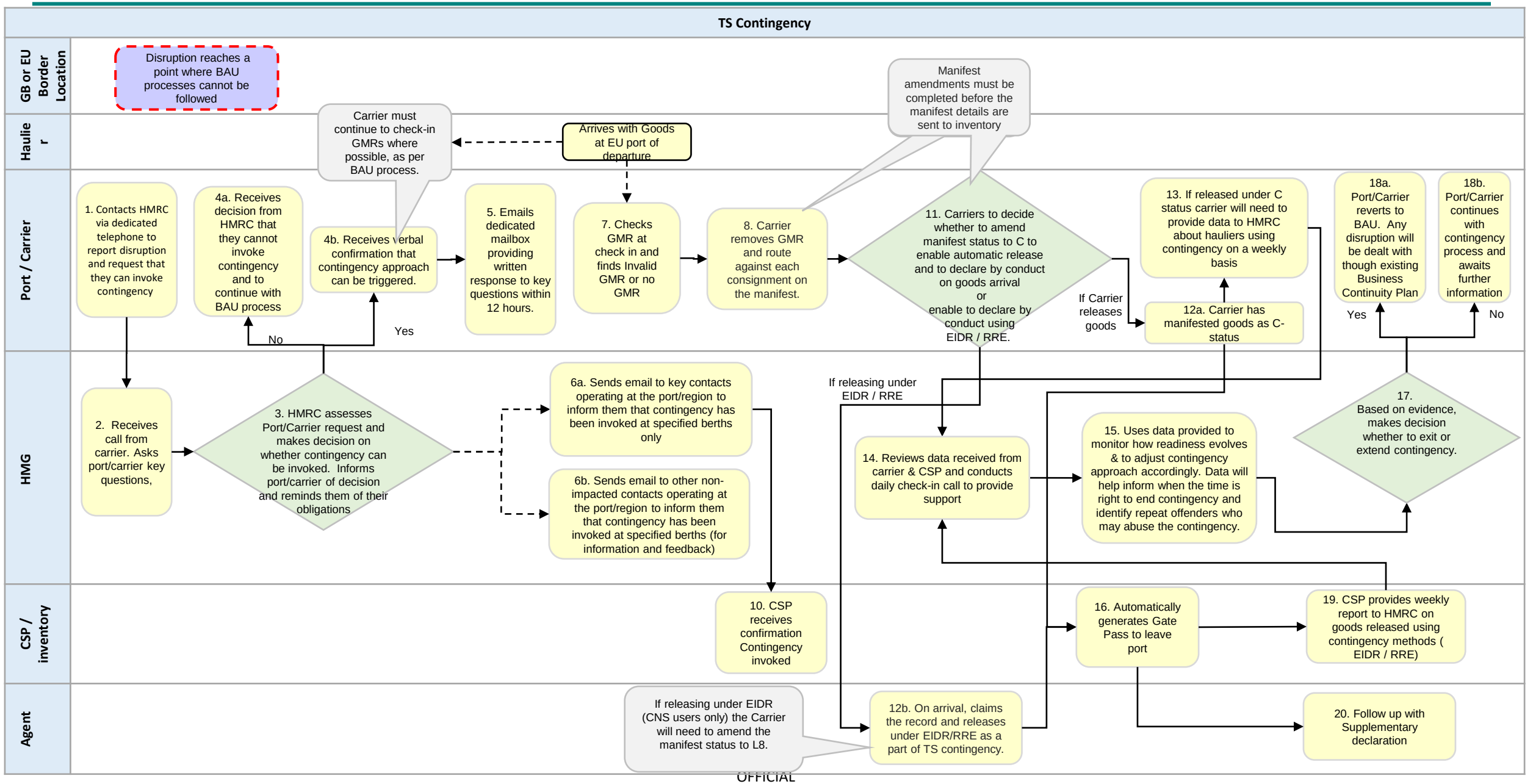

Sensitive goods Contingency Plan

We have developed a contingency to allow sensitive goods being imported to GB to board even if a haulier arrives at the EU port of departure without a valid GMR. This contingency would only be deployed to support hauliers carrying Category 1 goods that are **critical to the preservation of human or animal welfare and/or UK national security**.

We do not expect this contingency to be widely deployed as hauliers carrying sensitive consignments are likely to be prepared and have the documentation they need to board.

This approach would only be deployed to respond to individual issues that may arise whilst a location is operating a fully functioning border under BAU processes and should be considered as a standalone solution from others previously discussed.

In this scenario, a haulier would make a carrier aware that they were carrying sensitive goods if they faced being turned around due to GMR issues. Carriers will consider whether or not the goods are included on a pre-agreed list of sensitive goods which can use the contingency, and if they are, the contingency can be invoked.

Sensitive Goods - Operational Process Action Plan to Invoke Contingency

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1. Haulier moving goods to GB without a valid GMR informs carrier that they are carrying sensitive goods. There is no requirement for carriers to verify that the consignment contains sensitive goods, but they should ask the haulier for a description of the goods.
2. The carrier must review sensitive goods list and decides if the goods as described are covered by the contingency. This list has been included on **slide 22**.
3. If the goods/haulier meets the criteria, they should be allowed to board. If they do not meet the criteria, they should be turned around. If you have reasonable belief that they are carrying sensitive goods (i.e. the driver tells you that they are carrying sensitive goods and you believe they fall within one of the categories on the list) you may allow the vehicle to be checked-in without a GMR. There is no requirement for carriers to verify that the consignment contains sensitive goods.
4. You must provide details to HMRC **within 12 hours** of invoking the contingency. The following details should be provided to FreightMTRequest@hmrc.gov.uk:
    - Date and time contingency was invoked
    - Name of haulage company
    - Port of destination
    - Goods carried by haulier

List of Sensitive goods

This lists covers Category 1 goods, **those which are critical to preservation of human or animal welfare and/or national security:**

- Human medicines, covering prescription-only, pharmacy and general sales list medicines, clinical trials and children's vitamins,
- Medical devices and clinical consumables,
- Vaccines,
- Nutritional specialist feeds, including infant milk formula
- Biological materials such as blood, organs, tissues and cells
- All veterinary medicines authorised under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013', including finished and un-finished products, and active pharmaceutical ingredients
- Unauthorised medicines permitted for import under the 'Veterinary Medicines Directorate's Special Import Scheme
- Essential veterinary clinical consumables
- Critical food chain dependencies, e.g. chemicals and key additives used within the food supply chain
- Chemicals for water purification and treatment
- Critical chemicals or consumables used within the energy sector
- Critical spare parts for the energy sector
- Items required for military or national security purposes
- EU origin fresh fruit where they are not in a mixed load with **any** animal product
- EU origin fresh vegetables where they are not in a mixed load with **any** animal product
- EU origin cut flowers where they are not in a mixed load with **any** animal product

Sensitive Goods Contingency Plan

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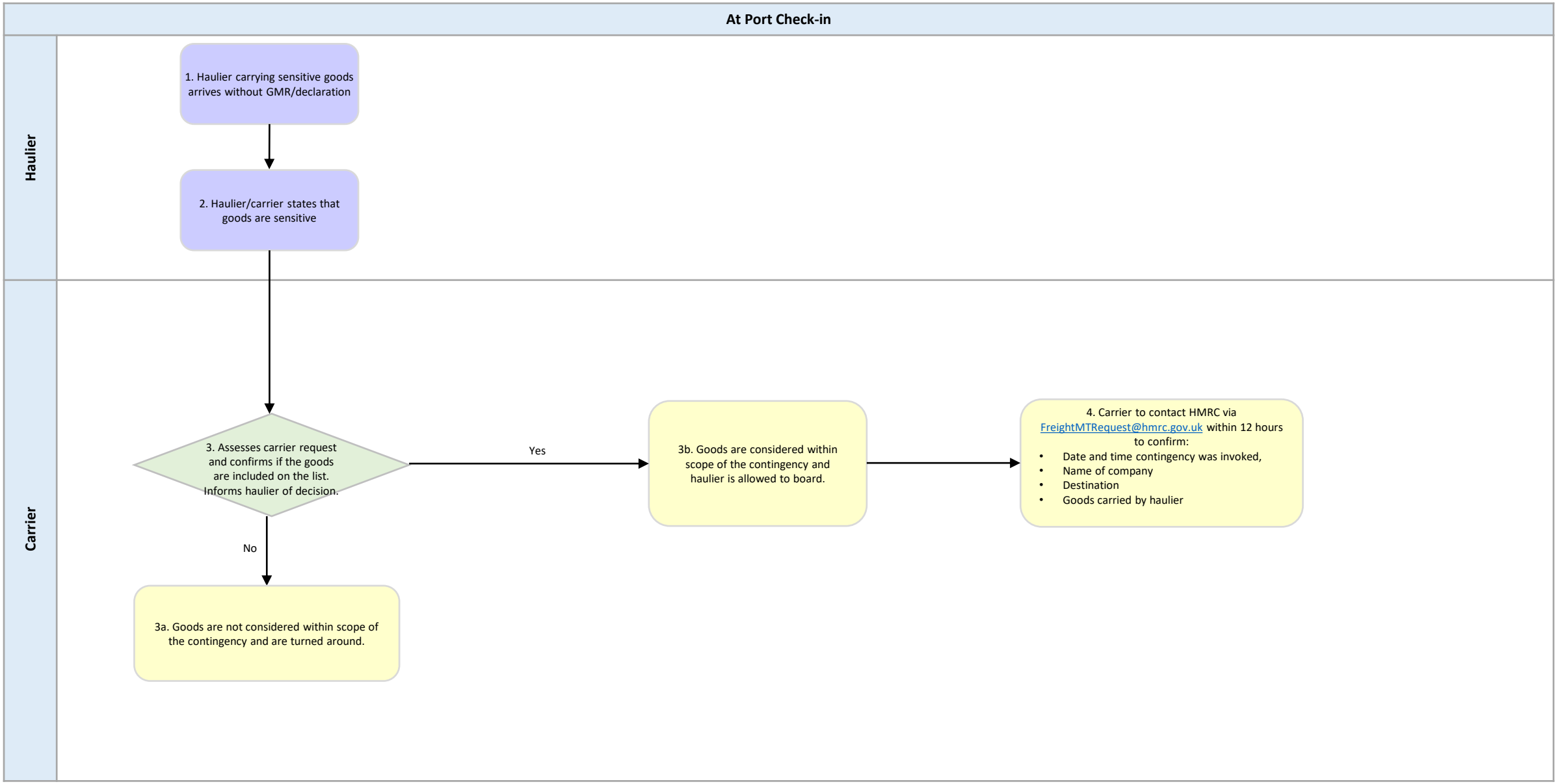

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