

Welcome to *AESPcLink* – Your Desktop Connection to *AESDirect*

AESPcLink – the latest of a series of enhancements to the U.S. Census Bureau's Internet filing site, *AESDirect* – lets you manage your SED filings locally from your desktop computer. It has been designed as an integral component of *AESDirect*.

Using *AESPcLink*, you can:

- Complete SEDs at your own pace, without tying up your phone line or incurring the additional expense of extensive telephone connections.
- Save SEDs as templates on your desktop (even if they are incomplete) and never lose any information you have entered.
- Save USPPI, Consignee, and Freight Forwarder profiles as well as SED templates to eliminate re-keying information for shipments to your regular customers.
- Eliminate the need to create USPPI profiles for new customers because they are automatically created and assigned codes by *AESDirect* when you submit an SED.
- File your SEDs in batches, not one at a time.
- Retrieve, amend, and delete shipments from *AESDirect*.
- Access the Shipment Reporting section of *AESDirect* to review the status of all your SED filings.

Plus, when you used *AESPcLink* you have the same security about the accuracy of your filings as when you use *AESDirect*.

*Your SED is checked for accuracy by *AESPcLink* before it is saved and put in a queue to send to *AESDirect*. That means that once *AESPcLink* has sent your SED to *AESDirect*, you are free to move your cargo.*

This guide will give you a brief overview of *AESPcLink* and all the information you need to get started

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Overview: Using AESPcLink

AESPcLink is the desktop component of AESDirect. It is designed to let AESDirect certified filers* work offline to create their SEDs and then submit them electronically.

Here's how it works:

1. You complete one or more SEDs on your desktop computer using AESPcLink.
2. Before your shipment is saved, AESPcLink verifies that all data elements are correct and then puts the shipment in your Send to AESDirect queue.
3. When connected to the Internet, you submit one or more of the SEDs saved in your queue to AESDirect.
4. AESDirect verifies and accepts your shipments.
5. AESPcLink notifies you immediately that your SEDs have been successfully sent to AESDirect. AESDirect then sends a confirming message to your email address, including the exemption statement to use on the shipping documents for each filed SED.
6. AESDirect submits your SEDs to the U.S. Customs AES computer. You receive an additional email confirming that your shipments have been processed and accepted by AES.

Note: *Certified filers have registered with AESDirect, have been issued a username and password, have passed the tutorial quiz, and had their AESDirect account verified for production filing. If you have not been certified, please go to the AESDirect web site shown below to complete this process:*

<http://www.aesdirect.gov>

Registration and Login

To begin using *AESPcLink*, you will need to register with the username and password you were issued by *AESDirect*. You must be connected to the Internet to register.

Note: *If your Internet connection is through a proxy server, you will need to log into it before registering as explained on page 5.*

When your *AESPcLink* registration has been confirmed, you will be prompted to download the SED code tables from *AESDirect*. This process can take up to 30 minutes depending on the speed of your connection. If you choose not to proceed, you will have to repeat the registration process and download the tables at a later date to use *AESPcLink*.

Once you have downloaded the code tables, you can launch *AESPcLink* from your desktop when you are offline.

Multiple Accounts

If you have multiple *AESPcLink* accounts, you may register any or all of them for use with *AESPcLink*. Each account you register sets up a separate database of profiles, templates, and shipments within *AESPcLink*. Each is linked to the appropriate *AESDirect* filing account. You can register a new account in two ways:

- Quit *AESPcLink*, relaunch, and log in with the new information.
- Use the “*AESDirect* Accounts” option in “Tools”.

You must be connected to the Internet for both options, but you may switch between registered usernames while offline in *AESPcLink* Accounts.

Changing Your Password

If you enter an incorrect password when you start up *AESPcLink* you will be unable to use the functions that require *AESPcLink* to communicate to *AESDirect*. If this occurs you can either:

- Quit from *AESPcLink* and start it again, making sure to enter the correct password when requested, or
- Go to the Tools menu, select *AESDirect* Accounts, then highlight the username you logged in with (the username displayed at the top of the *AESPcLink* screen) and select Change Current User

You will then be requested to enter the password for your username. Enter the correct password and click OK.

Proxy Server Access

If you access the Internet through a proxy server and it has authentication turned on you will need to log into it before being able to use these *AESPcLink* functions:

- Register an AESDirect Account
- Submit to AESDirect
- Retrieve Shipment
- Delete Shipment
- Shipment Status
- Software Updates

When you attempt to initiate any of these functions, *AESPcLink* will detect the need to log in and will prompt you for your proxy server username and password.

If these are accepted by the proxy server, you will be connected to *AESDirect*. However, if the proxy server does not accept the username and password you entered, *AESPcLink* will prompt you to reenter it.

If your attempt to login into your proxy server is being rejected, you should click "Cancel" instead of re-entering the username and password. You will need to contact your company's network administrator to resolve your access to the proxy server.

Note: *You may keep using AESPcLink locally, but you will not be able to connect to AESDirect until you resolve your proxy server login problem.*

Tools and Help

From the gray application control menu at the top of your screen, you can access these two options from any part of *AESDirect*.

Tools

Tools has four utilities that help you manage your *AESPcLink* accounts:

- ***AESPcLink* Software Update.** From time to time the *AESPcLink* software will be updated to include new features and to reflect changes in AES. This function allows you to download and install these new releases. When you select this option *AESPcLink* will compare your installed version with the latest version available on *AESDirect*. If your software need updating you will be offered the choice to download and install the latest version. You will need to be connected to the Internet to use this function.
- ***AESDirect* Accounts** lets you switch been registered accounts or change your default email address from your desktop. To register a new account, you must be connected to the Internet.
- ***AESDirect* Code Tables** lets you review and update the tables *AESPcLink* uses to validate your entries. You may update offline from a CD-ROM or from the *AESDirect* web site when you are online.
- ***View Log*** gives you a two-week record of your shipment transmissions to *AESDirect*.
- ***Clean Files*** lets you compact the profile and template databases resident on your hard drive as well as the shipments in your “Send to *AESDirect*” queue.

Help

The “Contents” section of Help gives you a complete description of all *AESPcLink* functions and how to use them. You may click on an outline topic and/or use the back and forth arrows to move though Help. There is also an Index of topics to search on.

New Shipments

To create a shipment, click on “Create New Shipment” on the main menu. Be aware that when you complete your SED information you will notice some differences from *AESDirect*. These are summarized below:

All Sections

- To access the Help screen for the section, press <F1> in any field.
- To use “Lookup” click on the Lookup button. You will not be able to enter <?><Tab> to access Lookup for a field. (See page 16 for details on using *AESPcLink* Lookup.)
- To move between fields, use <Enter> or <Tab> or position your cursor in the field using your mouse. Alternately, you can hold down the <Alt> key and press the underlined letter to move to that field or button.
- The tabs on the top of the screen allow you to move quickly from one section of the SED to another with only one mouse click.
- There is a “Clear Section” button at the bottom of the data entry screen for each section.
- No matter what section of the SED you are working on, you have the following four options:

Save Shipment

You can save a shipment at any time. When you select this option, *AESPcLink* checks your SED information for accuracy and completeness.

If there are problems with the data you entered, the *AESPcLink* error message will tell you exactly which fields need to be corrected and why.

All validated shipments are saved in the “Send to *AESDirect*” queue. The blue box in the lower left-hand corner of the screen below the main menu displays the number of SEDs in the queue ready to be sent to *AESDirect*.

Note: *If you do not save a shipment, all the information you have entered will be lost. If you do not know all the information for a shipment you are creating, save it as a template so you can complete the missing data fields later.*

Save As Template

You can save any completed or partially completed shipment as a template at any time. See “Shipment Templates” on page 11 for full details.

Load Template

From any section of the SED you may load a template to avoid re-keying data. See “List Searches” on page 17 for details on how to retrieve and select templates.

Print SED

You can print a hard copy of your SED for your files or to use for State Department licensing requirements. The copy cannot be used as an original SED for filing with U.S. Customs. Only complete shipments can be printed.

***Note:** You may print a complete shipment before it is validated or you can save the shipment, retrieve it from your queue, and then print.*

Shipment Information

- If searching for an IATA code, you need to select the IATA radio button at the top of the screen. The default for this search is the SCAC code table.
- You can access the lower part of the section, by using the arrow keys or the vertical scrollbar on the left of the screen.

USPPI, Consignees, Freight Forwarder

- When you have completed one of these data screens, you have the option of loading the information into your “Company Profiles” database by clicking on the “Create Profile” button.
- Alternately, you can complete these sections with an already saved profile by clicking the “Load Profile” button in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. See “List Searches” on page 16 for details on how to retrieve and select profiles.

Commodities

- When the Schedule B number is entered, the appropriate units of measure are automatically entered in the 1st and 2nd Quantity fields.

Note: *You cannot enter the HTS number for shipments submitted through AESPcLink. To use HTS, you must file through the AESDirect web site.*

- If the commodity is a used vehicle, click on the “Add/Edit Used Vehicle” button to display the fields you need to complete.

Company Profiles

Creating Profiles

You can create profiles for USPPIs, Consignees, and Freight Forwarders and then retrieve them into an SED you are completing or changing.

When you have finished entering the profile information, click on the “Save Profile” button in the lower right-hand corner. If any mandatory fields are incomplete or inaccurate, you will be prompted to correct them.

To create another profile, click on the button in the upper right-hand corner. To delete a profile, click on the button in the lower right-hand corner.

Note: *Profiles are resident on your hard drive, so, if you are using AESPcLink on more than one computer, you may have to recreate a profile that is resident on another machine.*

When you submit your SEDs to AESDirect, profiles will be created automatically for retrieval on the web site. This eliminates the need to create a USPPi profile on AESDirect before submitting a shipment through AESPcLink. The USPPi code will be the same as if you had created it online, i.e., a 4-digit alpha and the 9- or 11-digit ID Number.

Retrieving Profiles

Each time you click on a profile type from the main menu, you have the option to retrieve an already saved profile. See “List Searches” on page 16 for details on how to retrieve and select profiles.

Shipment Templates

AES*PcLink* allows you to create and save up to 1,000 shipment templates on your desktop. Templates are created by selecting “Save as Template” in the “Create New Shipment” function.

You may save an incomplete shipment as a template, as long as at least one data field has been completed (option buttons are not counted).

Note: *Data in the “Shipment #” and “Departure Date” fields are not saved so that you will not inadvertently overwrite an existing shipment in AESDirect with a retrieved template.*

When you save a template, you will be asked to name it so it can be easily identified when you want to retrieve or delete it. You may use any alphanumeric up to 18 characters.

Selecting “Shipment Templates” from the main menu will display all your templates in alphanumeric order. Clicking on the “Template Name” field will reverse the order of the displayed templates.

Double click on a template name to retrieve it. This opens the “Edit Shipment” function with all the information in the template loaded in the appropriate data fields.

Templates are stored within AES*PcLink* until you delete them. To delete, highlight the template(s) following the “Item Selection” process on page 17 and click “Delete Selected Templates”. Click “Clear Selection” to deselect all selected templates.

Sending Shipments to AESDirect

When you select “Send to AESDirect” from the main menu, a list of all the shipments in your queue will be displayed. Refer to the box on the bottom left-hand side of the screen, to see the number of SEDs you have waiting in the queue. AESPcLink will allow up to 2,000 shipments to be saved in the queue at any one time.

You do not need to be connected to the Internet to retrieve a shipment from your queue. Use the “List Searches” process explained on page 17. You may edit, delete, or print a retrieved shipment, or you can save it as a template. However, be aware that when you delete a shipment it is erased from your hard drive and cannot be restored.

You have four options on your “Send Shipments to AES” screen. Based on the detail below, click the button that describes the action you wish to take:

Send All SEDs

When you select this option, all the SEDs in your queue will be sent to AESDirect if you are connected to the Internet.

***Note:** If you wish to save any of these SEDs as templates, you must do so before you submit them to AESDirect. Once they have been uploaded, they are no longer resident on your hard drive. They will, however, be available permanently on AESDirect for retrieval.*

Send Selected SEDs

AESPcLink lets you to highlight* the files you wish to process. Any files you highlight will be uploaded to AESDirect when you select this option while you are online.

Clear Selection

You can deselect* a file by highlighting it and clicking “Clear Selection.”

Delete Selected SEDs

If you decide to remove a shipment from the queue, highlight* it and select this option. Be aware as noted above that unless you first save it as a template, it will be deleted from your AESPcLink files and cannot be restored.

**For complete details on highlighting and selecting/deselecting files, see “Item Selection” on page 17.*

Shipment Submission Status

AES*PcLink* will display a continuously updated progress report window while sending your shipments. Depending on the number of shipments you are sending and the speed of your Internet connection, data transmission may take some time. If you wish to stop the upload, click "Cancel".

When you submit your shipment(s) to AES*Direct*, you will receive an immediate confirmation message from AES*PcLink* stating the number of shipments sent successfully and the number of shipments remaining to be set. If a shipment cannot be uploaded to AES*Direct* for any reason, it will remain in your AES*PcLink* queue and uploading will stop.

To review the record of your transmission session, click "View Log".

Transmission Problems

If you used the "Send All SEDs" option and some of your shipments were not sent, follow this procedure:

- Check your Internet connection.
- Reconnect if necessary and resubmit your outstanding shipments.

If you still have a problem uploading shipments to AES*Direct*, call the toll free help line (800-549-0595).

Deleting and Retrieving Shipments from *AESDirect*

Delete Shipment

To delete a shipment from *AESDirect*, access this function from the main menu and enter the USPPI code and shipment number. If the shipment is found, it will be deleted from AES and shown as “Deleted” on *AESDirect*. If it is not found, you will receive an error message.

Retrieve Shipment

Access this function from the main menu to retrieve either:

- A shipment that has been accepted by *AESDirect*
- The “USCS Status” message for that shipment

If you are retrieving a shipment, you may make any corrections needed and then save the shipment and/or load it as a template.

Accessing AESDirect Shipment Status

This option lets you view the status of your company's AESDirect account(s). All shipments for an account are displayed, not just those filed through AESPcLink

Note: You cannot retrieve a shipment or open a "USCS Status" message from within the "Shipment Status" function. You must use "Retrieve Shipment" instead.

When you click on "Shipment Status", the AESDirect Shipment Reporting screen will open in your AESPcLink window and display the shipments for your default USPPI for the current day. If you are a USPPI, these will be your shipments. If you are a forwarder, these will be the shipments for your default USPPI.

To view another pre-set report, select from the options shown on the control panel in the lower left-hand corner of the screen. These are the four options you have selected as your pre-set reports. Simply click on the report you wish to review, and the shipments for that time period will be displayed.

You can create custom reports for all the USPPIs linked to your account by entering a date range. If you wish to see a report for a particular USPPI, select this option and enter their 9- or 11-digit USPPI ID #. Click on "Submit" to retrieve a custom report from AESDirect.

Shipment Display Limitations

AESPcLink imposes two restrictions on the amount and type of shipment information that can be displayed in any report.

Amount of Data Displayed

The maximum number of shipments that can be displayed is 100. To ensure that the shipments you want to review are shown, create a custom report for one USPPI or enter a narrow date range.

Type of Data Displayed

AESPcLink displays only the AESDirect "Shipment Status" report. You must use AESDirect to view the "Shipment History", "Detail", or "Booking" reports for these accounts.

Other Features

Internet Links

AES*PcLink* provides convenient links to three AES-related web sites: AES*Direct*, AES, and Census. To active a link, make sure you are connected to the Internet and then select from the main menu. The AES*Direct* link opens in a separate browser window independent from AES*PcLink*. The AES and Census links open within the AES*PcLink* window.

Color Coding

AES*PcLink* follows the same color-coding system as AES*Direct* for data entry fields: mandatory fields are red, conditional fields in blue, and optional fields in black.

Field-Specific Help

To access Help for any field press <F1>.

Navigating

To move between fields, use <Enter> or <Tab> or position your cursor in the field using your mouse. Alternately, you can hold down the <Alt> key and press the underlined letter to move to that field or button.

Lookups

When searching for a code using Lookup, be aware that AES*PcLink* will **not** recognize <?> <Tab> in the data field. You must click on the “Lookup” button next to the data field to search a table.

Enter the word or alpha string to wish to search on in the search box. AES*PcLink* will search the first letters of the table based on the letters you entered.

Note: *Unlike AESDirect, AESPcLink will not search all words in the table unless you follow a “wildcard” as explained on the next page.*

List Searches

List searches work like Lookups. When prompted, enter an alphanumeric string for template or profile you wish to retrieve. You may use a “wildcard” to search. When you click “Search”, a list of all matching entries will be displayed.

Alternately, do not enter any data in the search box, click “Search”, and a list of all entries will be displayed in alphanumeric order. To reverse the order of a display, click on the first field heading. To load an entry, double click on it.

Wildcards

To use a wildcard to search a table or list, simply enter an asterisk (*) before or in the alpha string you wish to search on in the search box. *AESPCLink* will display all entries in the table that include those letters. You do not have to enter the asterisk after the string because *AESPCLink* does it automatically.

Note: *Using a wildcard is important when searching the Schedule B table, because the first alpha string in an entry is usually not the one you will want to search on.*

When the matching list is displayed, double click on the entry you wish to select and the code will be automatically entered in the data field.

You may also use a wildcard when using search to retrieve a template or profile list.

Item Selection

To select or deselect entries, follow the procedures below:

- **Select a single entry**
Left click with your mouse on the desired entry.
- **Deselect a single entry**
Left click on a previously selected item while holding down the <Control> key.
- **Select multiple contiguous entries**
Hold down the <Shift> key, and click on the first entry to highlight it. Keep <Shift> pressed and click on the last item you wish to select to highlight the entire list.
- **Select a single entry, without deselecting highlighted entries**
Left click on the new item while pressing <Control>.