New Sars initiative should bring greater efficiency to road hauliers

The roll-out this year by Sars of its Customs Modernisation initiative to the land-based border posts with Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland should bring greater efficiency to the road transporters who have the appropriate systems in place, says Core Freight Systems' Glenn Lawson.

Not only will it involve change to the back-end computer system employed by Customs for the processing of import and export declarations in this environment, but also to the procedures applicable at the border post itself.

Lawson explains: "Effectively all cross-border commercial cargo declarations will have to be submitted electronically, including supporting documentation when required, via the Sars EDI facility prior to the truck arriving at the border. Processing of these declarations by Sars must be finalised up to the "Proceed to Port" status before a truck will be allowed to enter the border post.

"Upon arrival at the border the truck driver will present the Customs officer with the road manifest covering the declarations previously submitted via EDI and the officer will confirm the release of the consignment or arrange inspection if necessary by reference to the Sars computer system. A CN1 form will be produced as per declaration as evidence of the release of goods and a second form, a CN2, will be issued to the driver as a gate pass to proceed through the border."

Lawson points out that Sars will no longer stamp SAD forms. In addition, manual clearances by Customs agents will no longer be processed by Sars at the border and no further transactions under code 70707070 will be allowed. All importers and exporters will have to be registered with Sars.

The initial exercise was launched at the Kopfontein border post. Other points of exit and entry will follow.

Glenn Lawson … 'Effectively all cross-border commercial cargo declarations will have to be submitted electronically.'