

The Frugal Classifier

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Those of you who know me also know that I am a frugal individual. Some might go so far as to call me cheap. Why should I pay full price when I can get a better deal on Craigslist or EBay? And the best deal? Well that is the one that has little or no cost at all. I get satisfaction out of a good curbside find or when I can repurpose or repair something.

I guess I am the same way when it comes to classification resources. Why pay good money for resources that are freely available?

Consider the following:

Harmonized Tariff Schedule:

<https://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/index.htm>

There's no reason to pay for a printed copy of the HTS when a PDF version is available for free online from the U.S. International Trade Commission.

Schedule B

<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/schedules/b/index.html>

The same is true of the Schedule B issued by the folks at Census Foreign Trade.

Schedule B Search Engine

<https://uscensus.prod.3ceonline.com/>

The folks at Census have even developed a search engine that helps you navigate the Schedule B. Caution, however. If you input the wrong search criteria, you might get a wrong answer. Nevertheless, this is a great tool for discovering areas of the tariff you might otherwise not have considered.

CUSTOMS Info:

<http://export.customsinfo.com/Default.aspx>

The U.S. International Trade Administration has an agreement with CUSTOMS Info that provides free limited access to that service. Registered users can look up other countries' specific tariff information including duties for shipments originating in the United States.

EU Explanatory Notes

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:133:0001:0402:EN:PDF>

The Europeans have created a set of explanatory notes for their 8-digit common tariff. This document is intended to be used in concert with the WCO Explanatory Notes but may be read independently. The low price of free is unbeatable.

CROSS

<http://rulings.cbp.gov/>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has authority in the United States to issue classification rulings to applicants. These rulings are publicly available at the Customs Ruling Online Search System. Both importers and exporters may rely on them to inform their own classifications.

U.S. Informed Compliance Publications

<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/rulings/informed-compliance-publications>

CBP also issues position papers regarding classification of within challenging areas of the tariff.

The above are but a few resources that are available to you.

Now don't get me wrong. I am not penny wise and pound foolish. The free resources above only go so far. There is a time when paying money makes sense. For example, the CUSTOMS Info link above provides limited access to their service. A full subscription may be well worth it to you to gain access to their full suite of information.

For my purposes, I find a subscription to the World Customs Organization explanatory notes to be invaluable.

Now back to surfing Craigslist for my next bargain.