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Baggage examination at the border (s186 Customs Act)

Procedural Instruction

This procedural instruction applies to baggage examinations conducted by Australian Border Force (ABF) officers at the border.

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s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47E(d)

4.11. Copying of documents during a baggage examination

Section 186A of the Customs Act, provides ABF officers with the power to copy documents found during an examination of goods subject to Customs control in certain circumstances.

A 'document' is defined in section 4 of the Customs Act and includes but is not restricted to mobile and other phones, sim cards for such phones, all forms of personal electronic recording apparatus, computers of all kinds, as well as written material and photographic images.


To copy a document, the ABF officer must be satisfied that the document, or part of it, may contain information relevant to:

- an importation or exportation, or a proposed importation or exportation, of prohibited goods; or
- the commission or attempted commission of any other offence against the Customs Act or any offence against a prescribed Act; or
- the performance of functions under section 6 of the Intelligence Services Act 2001; or
- the performance of functions under section 17 of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act; or
- security (within the meaning of section 4 of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act).


s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47E(d)

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s. 22(1)(a)(ii)



s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47E(d)



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s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47E(d)



s. 22(1)(a)(ii)



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