

Commodity codes and the customs tariff – how a product becomes a number

Upcoming episode

The customs tariff explained: what a commodity code is, why the first six digits are the same worldwide, what the two Norwegian digits do, why classification is hard – and what the code actually decides.

MAIN TOPICS

- What a commodity code is, and who decides it
- The HS nomenclature, and the six international digits
- The two Norwegian digits at the end
- How the tariff is structured
- Why classification is harder than it looks
- What the code actually decides
- The revisions, and why they move goods around
- What to do when you are unsure

QUESTIONS THIS EPISODE ANSWERS

- What is a commodity code?
- What is the HS nomenclature?
- Why does Norway use eight digits when HS has six?
- Who decides which code a product gets?
- What does the commodity code decide in practice?
- How often does the customs tariff change?
- What do I do if I am unsure about the classification?

KEY POINTS

- The first six digits are international and come from the HS nomenclature.
- The last two digits are Norwegian – the seventh relates to the duty rate, the eighth to statistics.
- HS is maintained by the World Customs Organization, and the convention dates from 1983.
- Classification is the importer's responsibility, not the customs authority's.
- The code decides the duty rate, but also whether the goods need a permit or face restrictions.
- HS is revised roughly every five years. The next revision applies in the Norwegian tariff from 1 January 2028.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Norwegian Customs – The customs tariff and classification
<https://www.toll.no/no/bedrift/tolltariffen-og-klassifisering>

- Norwegian Customs – Tariff structure
<https://www.toll.no/no/bedrift/tolltariffen-og-klassifisering/om-tolltariffen/tariffutforming/>
- Norwegian Customs – Finding the right commodity code
<https://www.toll.no/no/bedrift/tolltariffen-og-klassifisering/finn-riktig-varenummer-i-tolltariffen>

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