



## WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN SELECTING A FOREIGN-TRADE ZONE

Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZ) are federally designated areas considered to be outside of the U.S. Customs territory, allowing companies to operate under ultimate savings and flexibility when handling bonded or in-transit merchandise. For businesses in international trade, choosing an FTZ seems like a no-brainer, however, not all FTZs are the same (...in fact, far from it.) Consider the following key recommendations when choosing an FTZ facility for your business.

**1. Experience:** Whether you are a small business or an experienced import/export operation in need of FTZ benefits, support and experience is key. Look for a highly experienced FTZ site or FTZ operator with the necessary background to help you fully maximize your savings and make your company's' FTZ transition seamless, simple, and cost effective.

**2. Security:** Always choose an FTZ where security is a high priority. All FTZs are federally designated areas, but only some offer quality security measures. Look for things like: control and monitoring of shipments and visitors, 24-hour patrol and supervision, and experienced on-site security staff.

**3. Location and accessibility:** A great location should be both accessible and attractive. Clients, business partners, and visitors (local and foreign,) appreciate ample business-friendly spaces with close proximity to ports, highways, and cargo hubs. Other ideal perks for visitors include free parking, access to meeting rooms, and food vendors.

**4. Resources and added value:** Businesses in import/export are looking for one-stop locations for international trade with resources ranging from logistics providers to showrooms. In contrast to most FTZs which consist mainly of warehousing, specialized locations like Miami Free Zone offer an integrated international business center concept where visitors have access to CBP, customs brokers, freight forwarders, chambers of commerce, trade promotion agencies, business consultants, showrooms, and wholesale products. Some facilities even hold regular business networking events fostering a sense of community around international trade.

**5. Operations Support:** Overseeing a compliant international trade operation requires extensive knowledge, so joining an established FTZ facility providing operations or systems support will help ensure your business is in track with all rules and regulations. However, if you are considering activating and operating your own FTZ site, keep in mind you will be accountable to CBP (U.S. Customs) for keeping a compliant operation. Best compliance practices include investment in software systems and security and keeping up with the latest regulations. In this case, working with a knowledgeable FTZ consultant or operator, is the best way to protect your time and investment.

In conclusion, choosing a well-rounded FTZ facility including the above qualities or a knowledgeable FTZ consultant may be your best bet for running an efficient and successful FTZ operation. Regardless of what your specific business needs may be, make sure you do your research before committing to any one option. You can find more information on FTZ at [www.naftz.org](http://www.naftz.org), [www.trade.gov/ftz](http://www.trade.gov/ftz), [www.miamifreezone.com](http://www.miamifreezone.com), and [www.ftzworld.com](http://www.ftzworld.com).

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