Importing Personal Property Into The United States

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:
Shipments must clear at first port of entry unless arrangements have been made to move shipments inbound to a port of entry. Used household goods, personal effects and tools of trade/occupation are duty-free if items have been used for at least one year. Items CAN NOT be sold or given to another person. ORIGINAL COPIES OF THE COMPLETED, SIGNED, AND DATED CUSTOMS FORM 3299 AND SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION WILL BE REQUIRED AT THE PORT OF ENTRY FOR EACH SHIPMENT INTO THE UNITED STATES. THEREFORE, IF YOU MAKING A SEA FREIGHT AND A SEPARATE AIR FREIGHT SHIPMENT, SEPARATE FORMS AND DECLARATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR EACH.

The forms and declarations should be completed prior to the departure of your effects from your origin residence and should preferably be surrendered to the agent that has packed and containerized the effects. The Origin Agent will follow the standing instructions of the International forwarder involved for transmission of the documents to the appropriate seaports or airports in the United States.

NOTE: Items in shipments on the “Restricted/Dutiable” list will cause significant delays and additional charges which will be billed to customer’s account.

False statements made to a U.S. Customs Officer are punishable by Law.

Required Documents:

✓ Passport (copy) including photo & personal data pages
✓ Visa (copy)
✓ Customs Form 3299 “Declaration for Free Entry of Unaccompanied Articles”
✓ Supplemental Declaration “Unaccompanied Personal and Household Effects
✓ Power of Attorney Form – Authorizing Destination Agent to clear shipments through Customs
✓ Informal Entry – Form 5119-A (if applicable)
✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill
✓ Comprehensive inventory list in English

Diplomat Status:

Foreign officials who are traveling to the United States on official business must obtain an A visa prior to their entry. They cannot travel on tourist's visas, or visa free under the Visa Waiver Program. Please note that U.S. visa law indicates that if a visa applicant is entitled to an A visa as a principal or dependent, he or she must receive an A visa. The exceptions to this rule are extremely limited.

Qualified A visa applicants traveling to the United States for assignments of less than 90 days will be issued visas annotated "TDY" (temporary duty).

Required Documents:

✓ Passport copy
✓ Visa – either A-1 or A-2
✓ Diplomatic Note - Written confirmation by the sending government of the applicant’s status. A-3 applicants must also have a diplomatic note to confirm the official status of employers
✓ A-3 Visa - for staff members of Diplomat
✓ Form DS-160
✓ Comprehensive inventory list in English

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RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

✓ Tobacco products
✓ New items less than 1 year, inheritance items and gifts are dutiable and may require receipts
✓ Antiques require a Certificate of Authenticity
✓ Biological materials- require an Import Permit
✓ Medication- Require a physicians statement attesting to the need of the prescription, must be in original containers, and must not exceed prescribed quantity of the medication. Only medications that are also prescribed in the US (approved by the FDA) are allowed entry.

*Shipping alcoholic beverages in household goods shipments is discouraged as only some states allow the importation of alcohol. If alcohol is in the shipment it must clearly marked on the inventory, loaded by the door for easy inspection. Inventory must list name, quantity, size, alcoholic content, date purchased and value of each bottle. **Alcohol Control Boards by state:** [http://www.ttb.gov/wine/control_board.shtml](http://www.ttb.gov/wine/control_board.shtml)

PROHIBITED ITEMS

✓ Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind – Violations result in severe penalties
✓ Cuban cigars – Brought from any country, violations result in severe fines & penalties
✓ Foodstuff including liquor filled candy is strictly controlled and subject to inspection and confiscation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
✓ Pornography, obscene materials, unlawful, treasonable and subversive material
✓ Animals or plants including furs, skins, tusks, shells & wood carvings. Subject to the US Endangered Species Act.
✓ Pirated books, tapes, CD’s, DVD’s computer programs etc will be confiscated and destroyed
✓ Lottery tickets, gaming equipment
✓ Hazardous materials including fireworks, combustible, corrosive, flammable, toxic or poisonous substances
✓ Explosives, ammunitions, knives, switchblades and heavy or automatic weapons are strictly prohibited:
  - Firearms and hunting rifles require a permit, proof of ownership, & registration.
  - The types of licenses and certificates vary according to the type of firearm, immigration status of the owner, port of entry and destination.
  - If weapon was originally purchased & owned by the customer in the US, Proof of Sale and Date of Sale is required

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Importation of pets is regulated by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), US Public Health Service and US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). Quarantine is generally not required for cats or dogs. All pets are subject to inspection at ports of entry for evidence of infectious diseases. Pets being imported into Hawaii are subject to 30 day quarantine.

**NOTE:** The USDA has restrictions on the importation of breeds utilized for herding livestock unless originating from Canada, Mexico, Central America, and West Indies. These dogs must be inspected and quarantined at port of entry. Pets coming from a country where screwworm is known to exist must be inspected by a licensed veterinary official with in 5 days prior to shipment to the US. The pet must be accompanied with a health certificate attesting the pet is free of screwworm or was found to be infested, treated and quarantined until free of screwworm.
Required Documents:
- ✔ Certificate of Vaccination – Original, including rabies, dated more than 30 days, but less than 180 days prior to arrival
- ✔ Health Certificate - Issued 5-10 days prior to departure, from a licensed Veterinarian

Birds: Only one or two personally owned pet birds may be brought into the United States. All pet birds (with certain exceptions for Canadian-origin birds) must be accompanied with a Health Certificate and are subject to a minimum 30 day isolation period at a USDA operated quarantine facility. Animal Import Centers that contain quarantine facilities for pet birds are located at the following ports: Alaska (transit only); Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Mission, TX (only for abandoned or smuggled birds); New York JFK, NY. An advance reservation must be obtained from the quarantine facility and a deposit of $40.00USD - must be paid prior to import. Full details should be obtained well in advance of travel from a U.S. consulate.

Warning: Unauthorized importation of birds can result in seizure.

Required Documents:
- ✔ Health Certificate - Issued 30 days prior to entry, from national government veterinary office
- ✔ Import Permit – Obtained from the USDA, VS Form 17-129

Pet birds originally obtained in the U.S.A. and returning to the U.S.A. with the owner are allowed to re-enter without a USDA import permit. The pet bird may be quarantined in the owner's home for the 30-day quarantine period. Poultry including pigeons and doves are NOT considered pets.

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles are subject to import taxes and duties unless previously exported from the US and customer can supply the Export BOL and can prove that no modifications had been made during stay abroad. All imported vehicles must meet both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements. If required conversions are not performed in the country of origin, Customer must post a bond, typically 50% of the value, in order to have the necessary conversions performed in the US. If conversions are not made the vehicle must be exported or destroyed. All costs for exams, testing or modifications are made payable by the Customer.

Required Documents:
- ✔ Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
- ✔ Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original
- ✔ EPA Form 3520-1
- ✔ Drivers License copy
- ✔ Make, model and year of vehicle must also be provided

NOTES:

Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials: As of July 5, 2006 the United States exercises Full Enforcement on all articles of regulated wood packaging material (WPM) to ISPM 15 standards. Non compliant Regulated WPM will not be allowed entry.
*Canada is exempt from the regulation of the United States.

Importation of Unapproved Medication Exception: The FDA has developed guidance entitled “Coverage of Personal Importations” which sets forth the FDA enforcement priorities with respect to the personal importation of unapproved new drugs by individuals for their personal use. Under this guidance, the FDA may allow an individual entering the United States to import a three month supply of an unapproved drug if all of the following conditions are met:

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The intended use of the drug is for a serious condition for which effective treatment may not be available domestically;

1. The drug will not be distributed commercially by the importer;
2. The product is considered not to represent an unreasonable risk;
3. The individual seeking to import the product affirms in writing that the drug is for the patient’s own use and provides the name and address of the doctor licensed in the United States responsible for his or her treatment with the product, or provides evidence that the product is for the continuation of a treatment begun in a foreign country.

For further clarification contact the Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Diversion Control, International Drug Unit, at (202) 305-8800

**Merchandise from embargoed countries is prohibited:** As of this printing those countries are: Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Serbia & Montenegro and Sudan; information materials (pamphlets, books, tapes, films and recordings) are permitted, except from Iraq.

Some art and artifacts (such as Pre-Columbian monumental and architectural sculptures and murals from South America) and imports from Iran and leather souvenirs from Haiti (e.g. drums) are also prohibited.

**US Territories:** U.S. residents returning from the U.S. possessions of American Samoa, Guam or the U.S. Virgin Islands may apply their personal duty-free exemption to articles acquired in, and sent directly from, these islands

**Note:** Gold coins, medals and bullion, formerly prohibited, may be brought into the USA, except from embargoed countries (see above). They must be declared upon arrival.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

US Department of State- [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_2637.html#how](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_2637.html#how)


Customs and Border Control: [http://www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)

Environmental Protection Agency: [http://www.epa.gov/otaq/imports/](http://www.epa.gov/otaq/imports/)

IATA Travel Centre

The information presented herein is based on customs data available at the time of printing and is frequently subject to change without notice. It is the responsibility of the owner or importer of the household goods to comply with the current customs restrictions, regulations, and duties of the country to which the goods are imported. We strongly advise customers to contact the consulate or embassy of the destination country for the most current information on customs regulations, restrictions and duties for importing household goods, personal effects and vehicles.