

# Guide to Importation of Personal & Household Effects into the United States of America



## TO QUALIFY FOR DUTY FREE ENTRY

Migrants may import used personal and household effects and professional equipment (eg tools of trade) which have been in the owner's use and possession overseas for at least one year and are for the continued use of the owner. The year of use need not be continuous nor does it need to be the year immediately preceding the date of importation. Articles valued at US\$300 or more and passed free of duty under your personal customs exemption cannot be sold within 3 years, unless duty is paid.

Returning US citizen may re-import all personal belonging and tools of trade, which were exported by from the US, known as "American Goods Returned". Returning US citizens may also import free of duty household effects acquired abroad as long as they are not imported for another person or for sale and have been used overseas for at least one year. This privilege does not include articles place in storage outside the home.

Original Works of Art by recognized artists, owned and used for at least one year imported as part of household removal and not for resale or disposal. US Customs will require itemised invoices indicating the name of the artist and may also require a biography of the artist and list of exhibitions held if the artist is not on Custom's list. Invoices referring to sculptures must specifically state that the item is an original. An additional customs entry fee may apply at destination (approx. \$100).

Antiques, which are over one hundred years old at the date of export US Customs will require itemised invoices indicating year of production and an antiquity statement from either the seller or the importer, certifying that the items declared are over 100 years old. An additional Customs entry fee may apply at destination (approx. \$100).

Silverware and ornaments when imported as part of normal household goods.

Unless the above criteria are satisfied import duty is payable. After deducting your exemptions and the value of any free articles, a flat rate of duty of 10% will be applied to the first \$1000 worth of merchandise. Various rate of duty apply then on merchandise over \$1000.

## INHERITED GOODS

Inheritance bequests, wedding trousseaux and computers are liable to assessment for duty. If inheritance bequests were used by the inheritor as a child in the deceased's home and are not intended for re-sale, a letter of circumstance to this effect can often duty free entry. US Customs will required a relevant extract of the will or copy of probate from court if the deceased died interstate.

Visitors should beware of sending goods in advance. Customs may require a copy of the 194 immigration form (as completed on the plane by non US nationals) which will be available after you arrive. Customs require copies of valid visas where applicable.

## CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

We will supply US Customs Form 3299, Declaration for Free Entry of Unaccompanied Articles, which should be completed and returned to us and returned to us with a full descriptive inventory on the form provided prior to shipment. These documents will be forwarded to our US destination representative and presented to US Customs. All shipments must be customs cleared within 5 working days of arrival, failing which the goods will be transferred to a Customs warehouse for storage until custom clearance can be made (minimum charge approximately \$200 for the first month). With the advent of 9/11 US Customs in line with others US government agencies are continually employing new & more stringent initiatives to improve security.

The main point noted by our US representatives are: The picture in copies of passports must clearly show facial features. A valid address in the US must be supplied (PO Box Addresses are unacceptable). If you have no permanent address the address of where you will be residing with a friend or relative, or a hotel address must be provided.

Locked Items - please provide our representative with keys for inspection by Customs or send written approval for locks to be broken (Customs has the power to break locks in the absence of the above approval). A physical examination by Customs is more likely for shipments cleared by others on your behalf. Please note in the event of an examination you may be liable for customs examination charges, payable to our destination representative (charges on request).

## WOOD PACKAGING

Any wood packaging used in personal effects consignments (crates, pallets etc) must be constructed of approved treated timber and must be stamped with the internationally recognized ISPM symbol verifying this. Any non-complaint timber may be destroyed, treated or re-exported to the country of origin at the owner's expense. Export crates supplied by King & Wilson are complaint, embossed ISPM15 certified.

## RESTRICTED ITEMS/PROHIBITED ARTICLES

The following articles either restricted and require an import permit from the relevant authority, or are prohibited by US Customs:

- Wood or wood products use in supporting, protecting or carrying a commodity, such as crates constructed of timber, excluding manufactured wood materials such as fiber boards, plywood whisky and wine barrels and veneer, Lose wood packing materials, sawdust, Pieces of wood That are less than 6 mm thick in any dimensions.
- Firearms and ammunition (other than those intended for legitimate hunting or lawful sporting proposes) are subject to restrictions and import permits approved by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). For further information contact the AFT at Department Of Treasury, Washington, D.C.20226 Tel 202 927 8320
- Hunting trophies generally require a Fish and Wildlife Service Import licence
- Pornographic materials
- Switch blades
- Seditious and treasonable material
- Certain foodstuffs and plants
- Items made from animals on the endangered species list
- Importation of ivory is prohibited
- Hazardous items (eg fireworks, toxic or poisonous substances)
- Narcotic drugs
- Unprocessed furs and skins
- Merchandise from embargoed countries e.g. Cuba, Libya, Iraq, Iran, N.Korea

This information is not definitive and is intended as guide only. Destination regulations can change without notice and for specific guidance we strongly recommend that you obtain direct rulings from the relevant authorities. Please visit the US Customs Service website at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)