



## *Importing Personal Property Into El Salvador*

### **CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

#### **Customs Regulations:**

Foreign and returning citizens are subject to Customs inspection of their household goods and effects. Clients must be in the country at the time of the clearance process. Used household goods and personal effects are duty free provided goods have been owned and used by the customer for a minimum of six months. The shipment must arrive within 90 days of the client's arrival into El Salvador. Items can not be sold, lent or otherwise disposed of during stay. Items left behind will be subject to duties, payable by the client upon departure.

**Returning Salvadorians** must provide proof of living abroad of at least 3 years to be allowed duty free entry of household goods up to \$15,000 of CIF value. In excess of this amount will draw taxes. To retain the right to import their household goods, Salvadoran citizens cannot stay for more than 30 consecutive days during any of their visits of the last 3 years prior to returning to El Salvador.

#### **Required Documents:** ✓Passport -

- original and copy
- ✓Residence Permit or Work Permit & Visa
- ✓NIT (Numero de Identificacion) – obtained at the Ministry of Finance in El Salvador: register as “importer”
- ✓Certificate of Migratory Movement – obtained at the Immigration General Office after arrival into El Salvador
- ✓Temporary Import Permit
- ✓Bank Guaranty – if applicable or client will incur import duties; renewed every six months
- ✓Certificate of Change of Residence – obtained from police station at origin
- ✓Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original, and copy, Express Release not allowed ✓Comprehensive Valued Inventory – original & copy in Spanish, dated & signed by owner; values can be 1/3 of the stated values for insurance purposes; ex; 20 pairs of shoes, 10 lbs, \$500.00
- ✓Pack List – original & copy in Spanish, state exact description; ex: dining table w/6 chairs
- ✓Power of Attorney – giving authority for Destination Agent to arrange customs clearance
- ✓Letter from Employer –attesting to client's employment contract

#### **Returning Salvadorans:** additional document

- ✓Certificate of Residence Abroad – obtained from Salvadoran Consulate attesting to residency abroad and length of stay at origin where shipment originates from

### **Diplomat Status:**

Foreign diplomats, members of government or international organizations are granted duty free entry and are not subject to an inspection. All documents must arrive to the Destination Agent 15 days prior to arrival to obtain free entry from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓Diplomatic Franchise & Passport (original)
- ✓Comprehensive Inventory – dated & signed by owner
- ✓NIT (Numero de Identificacion) – obtained at the Ministry of Finance in El Salvador: register as “importer”
- ✓Power of Attorney – giving authority for Destination Agent to arrange customs clearance
- ✓Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original & copy in Spanish, Express Release not allowed; large appliances must state make, model & serial number

### **RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS**

- ✓Appliances/Electronics – must have invoices; state serial number, make & model on inventory
- ✓Prescription medications – require a permit from the local drug administration
- ✓Firearms & ammunition- requires a permit from local police
- ✓New items (less than 6 months) & furniture - must have receipts
- ✓Food, including canned food – require certificates they are for human consumption
- ✓Tobacco – 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars; in excess of these amounts incurs duty
- ✓Alcohol – requires an import permit, subject to additional charges; causes clearance delays
- ✓Works of Art, Antiques, Coins & Precious Jewelry - must have original receipts
  
- ✓Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- ✓Pornography and subversive material
- ✓Firearms, explosives, ammunitions & other weapons without approval by the Ministry of Defense
- ✓Military clothing & equipment
- ✓Cleaning chemicals and supplies

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, less than 6 months prior to arrival
  - ✓Health Certificate - issued no more than 15 days prior to arrival, by a Veterinarian at origin
  - ✓Import Permit – obtained from Animal Quarantine at the Int'l airport prior to or upon arrival

**Diplomats** can import vehicles tax and duty free.

**Foreigners & returning citizens** are subject to tax and duties. Amount to be paid is based on value, model, year, cubic centimeters and accessories. Vehicles over eight (8) years old are prohibited.

**New vehicles** require a Certificate of Compliance with anti-pollution standards issued by the manufacturer and authenticated by the Salvadoran Embassy/Consultant at origin, translated into Spanish.

**Used vehicles** require a Certificate of Emissions authorized by a mechanic and authenticated by the Salvadoran Embassy/Consultant at origin, translated into Spanish.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓Passport – original
- ✓Diplomatic franchise – original (for diplomats)
- ✓Driver's License
- ✓Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
- ✓Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original
- ✓OBL – original & a copy, separate from household goods; must show chassis & engine numbers, cubic capacity, year of manufacture, brand and model
- ✓Certificate from DMV or Police Department confirming vehicle is not stolen

### **NOTES:**

**Entry & Exit Requirements:** In June 2006, El Salvador entered into the “Central America-4 (CA-4) Border Control Agreement” with Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. U.S. citizens and other eligible foreign nationals, who legally enter any of the four countries, may similarly travel among the four without obtaining additional visas or tourist entry permits for the other three countries. The U.S. Embassy in El Salvador reminds U.S. citizen travelers that their activities in El Salvador are governed by Salvadoran law and the type of visa they are issued. Under Salvadoran law, all foreigners who participate directly or indirectly in the internal political affairs of the country (i.e. political rallies, protests) lose the right to remain in El Salvador, regardless of visa status or residency in El Salvador.

**Volunteers, Mission Groups and Non-Profits:** Groups bringing donated supplies, equipment and medicine may experience difficulties with customs. To avoid potential problems, all donated material should be cleared with the appropriate office well **before** traveling to El Salvador.

**Safety & Security:** US citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, to stay up to date with the latest safety and security announcements dispersed by the Embassy in your area. Your enrollment can also help the Department of State reach your family and friends in case of emergency. Random and organized violent crime is endemic throughout El Salvador. U.S. citizens have not been singled out by reason of their nationality, but are subject to the same threat as all other persons in El Salvador.

**Crime:** The State Department considers El Salvador a critical-crime-threat country. El Salvador has one of the highest homicide rates in the world. Criminals have been known to follow travelers from the international airport to private residences or secluded stretches of road where they carry out assaults and robberies. Armed robbers are known to shoot if the vehicle does not come to a stop. Criminals often become violent quickly, especially when victims fail to cooperate immediately in surrendering valuables. Frequently, victims who argue with assailants or refuse to give up their valuables are shot. The U.S. Embassy warns its personnel to drive with their doors locked and windows raised, to avoid travel outside of major metropolitan areas after dark, and to avoid travel on unpaved roads at all times

**Health:** Typhoid is common and vaccination against typhoid and polio is advised. Hepatitis A occurs and

precautions should be taken. Rabies is widespread, particularly in dogs and bats. For persons at high risk of exposure on a continuing basis, it may be advisable to have a course of rabies vaccine. The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS restrictions for temporary visitors. Salvadoran Immigration Law does not specifically refer to HIV/AIDS but persons wishing to apply for residency must undergo a medical exam and be certified free of communicable diseases.

**Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials:** As of this posting El Salvador does not impose ISPM15 regulations for wood packaging material (WPM).

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

Embassy of El Salvador: <http://www.elsalvador.org/embajadas/eeuu/home.nsf/home>  
Department of State: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1109.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1109.html)  
Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>  
FIDI Global Alliance  
TransWorld Moving  
USDA: [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov)  
IATA Travel Centre  
Visa HQ.com

**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.**