



## *Importing Personal Property Into Switzerland*

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

#### **Customs Regulations:**

Client must be in Switzerland and take up residence prior to customs clearance in order to be eligible to import household goods and personal effects duty-free. All articles must be used at least six (6) months prior to importer's departure from a foreign country. The importation of used goods and personal effects into Switzerland is usually duty and tax free. Goods must arrive within 24 months from “change of residence” to Switzerland.

2<sup>nd</sup> or additional shipments must be announced upon the arrival of the 1<sup>st</sup> shipment.

All documents must be presented at point of arrival. Should any required documents be missing, Customs Authority will arrange importation of HHG on a temporary basis. In these circumstances, Swiss Customs will ask for a deposit according to the volume of the goods.

Due to landlocked location, all surface freight shipments will arrive via Antwerp, Belgium or Rotterdam, Netherlands. The Swiss destination agent will move the shipment in bond to Switzerland for customs clearance. **Under NO circumstances is the description “Packed by Owner” (PBO) allowed.**

#### **Required Documents: Swiss and EU Citizens and Foreign Citizens**

- ✓ Passport – copy (first 3 pages) including photo page and expiry date
  - ✓ Customs Form 18.44 – provided by Destination Agent; in duplicate, original signed by client (photocopies, fax or e-mail copies are not accepted) 2<sup>nd</sup> shipment must be noted on the form if applicable
  - ✓ Supplemental Declaration for alcoholic products: provided by service agent
  - ✓ Comprehensive Inventory – 3 copies in French, Italian, German or English, dated and signed by client showing:
    - Full contents and any other shipments planned
    - Appliances notated with serial numbers, make and model
  - ✓ Residence Permit “Zusicherung Aufenthaltsbewilligung “ – copy or approval letter from the local immigration department
  - ✓ Work Permit - issued by local authorities
  - ✓ Client Declaration “Erklärung/Abfertigungsantrag für Libersiedlungsgur“ of Household Goods
- Those in the European Community moving to Switzerland can submit a copy of their Swiss employment contract in lieu of a Residence Permit or Approval Letter

### Returning Nationals

- ✓ Attestation of Residence issued by local authorities
- ✓ Lease contract copy for apartment or house
- ✓ Excerpt of Land Registry Office: Required for Swiss citizen who owns his/her residence

### Diplomat Status:

Foreign diplomats are granted duty free entry. Diplomat's presence is not required. Usually Customs Authority does not inspect diplomatic goods. Requests should be made only by the foreign Consulate of Embassy in Switzerland

#### Required Documents:

- ✓ Diplomatic Franchise
- ✓ Passport - copy
- ✓ Customs Form 14.60 – original, stamped and signed by the appropriate Consulate/Embassy in Switzerland with the Inventory List submitted to Customs Authority, preferably prior to the arrival of the shipment
- ✓ Comprehensive Inventory - in French, Italian, German or English

### RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

Appliances and all other “Restricted Items” should be loaded near the container doors for easy access by Customs Authority. Must submit a confirmation that the shipment does not include original paintings, new household good or personal effects.

- ✓ New furniture (less than 6 months old) - require an invoice, must be listed separately; incur VAT at 8% and duty is charged by weight
  - ✓ Foodstuffs - in a limited quantity for personal use
  - ✓ Alcohol - must be declared & stated on a separate inventory; loaded near container door for easy inspection; in excess of below quantities incurs tax & duty of 50.00 SFr each
    - Maximum 12 liters of hard liquor over 25% vol.
    - Maximum 200 liters of red, white wine or Champagne
  - ✓ Firearms – make, model, caliber; some guns require an import permit obtained from Federal Authorities in Bern, Switzerland;; loaded near container door for easy inspection
  - ✓ Art/Antiques – artist/author, year, name of art piece & value, if known; duty free if with HHG shipment otherwise subject to taxation similar to new furniture
  - ✓ Wedding Trousseaux – Customs Form 18.45, marriage certificate, list of items Residence Permit for both partners. Shipment must occur within 3 months of the civil marriage
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- ✓ Controlled narcotics, Psychotropic Substances
  - ✓ Ammunitions, Weapons (hunting /sporting rifles allowed with a permit ✓Skins, furs tusks etc from any animal mentioned on the Endangered Species List ✓Exotic pets and endangered animals
  - ✓ Anti-radar equipment, cleaning fluids
  - ✓ Intellectual property, precious metals
  - ✓ Dairy and white meat products

Quarantine may be required, Dogs with docked tails and/or ears require Customs form 18.44 and supporting documents as per household goods.

Birds: Requirements can be found at <http://www.bvet.admin.ch/themen/01614/01884/>

**Required Documents:**

- ✓Certificate of Vaccinations – Rabies shot must be given at least 21 days but not more than 1 year prior to importation
- ✓Health Certificate – Attestation from a veterinarian to good health
- ✓Microchip – 15 digit ISO microchip
- ✓

Vehicles can be imported duty-free if owned and used over six months. Owner signs declaration not to re-sell the vehicle for a minimum of 12 months of import. All cars must comply with Swiss government regulations and import is granted on a case by case basis.

**Required Documents:**

- ✓Passport and the Inventory List stating the vehicle
- ✓Certificate of Title and Registration - original
- ✓Work Permit & Proof of Residency
- ✓Purchase Invoice, Foreign Registration Card ✓Driver's license, vehicle license from previous country
- ✓Form 18.44 & Swiss Insurance Receipt – 3<sup>rd</sup> party liability insurance is mandatory

**NOTES:**

**Entry & Exit Requirements:** Switzerland extends visa-free entry to U.S. citizens staying in Switzerland for up to 90 days (consecutive or combined, within a six-month period) for tourist or business purposes. The passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the period of stay.

**Safety & Security:** US citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, to stay current 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.

**Crime:** Pick-pocketing and purse snatching are the most common and frequently occur in the vicinity of train and bus stations, airports, and some public parks. Be especially vigilant in the airports and railway stations in both Zurich and Geneva.

**Criminal Penalties:** The United States and Switzerland do not have a bilateral agreement requiring mandatory notification of a U.S. citizen arrest to the U.S. embassy. If you are arrested and concerned that the Department of State may not be aware of your situation, you should request the police or prison officials to notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate of your arrest. In Switzerland it is expected that citizens and visitors carry an I.D. and/or a passport. Should the police stop you, and you are without an I.D., it is possible that you may be taken in for questioning. Swiss law only allows up to 0.05% blood alcohol content. Driving under the influence of alcohol can lead to heavy fines and/or a ban from driving

or a jail sentence, depending on the percentage of alcohol in the blood. Driving speeds in Switzerland are also much slower than in the rest of Europe. Traffic fines are costly and vary according to where the infraction occurs and by how much one exceeds the speed limit.

**Health:** Medical care is excellent; however in many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Verify that your medical insurance policy is valid overseas.

**Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials:** Switzerland imposes ISPM15 regulations for wood packaging material (WPM). Controls are carried out by the Federal Plant Health Service on goods from China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, USA, Canada and Mexico. More details can be found at: [www.spedlogswiss.com](http://www.spedlogswiss.com)

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

Embassy of Switzerland: <http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/rep/nameri/vusa/wasemb.html>

Department of State: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1034.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1034.html)

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

USDA: [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov)

FIDI Global Alliance

**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.**