



Importing Personal Property Into Panama

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:

Client must be in the country at time of clearance. Household goods and personal effects are duty free. All shipments are physically inspected at port of entry. Inspection can be done at the client's residence at the time of delivery. This option incurs additional charges paid directly to the Panamanian government. Shipments must arrive within six (6) months of the client. Customs inspection, Customs charges and Customs Broker's fees are all payable by the client at the time of clearance. Any additional charges incurred for storage, demurrage or delays will also be charged to the clients account. Recommended to use of waterproof liftvans to avoid potential water damage.

Returning Panamanians must have lived abroad for a period of at least 2 years to import their household goods tax and duty-free.

All Diplomats, public officials or those with a government contract have diplomatic exemption privileges and are not subject to examination of household goods.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Passport – original
- ✓ Residence Visa – or Letter from lawyer & copy of the Visa Application
- ✓ Work Permit - or Letter from lawyer & copy of the Visa Application
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill - 2 original sets, Express Release B/L is acceptable
- ✓ Comprehensive Inventory List – original or copy sent via E-mail in Spanish or English
- ✓ Letter from employer in Panama confirming employment
- ✓ Change of Residence Certificate

Returning Panamanian Nationals - In addition to the above documentation must also provide:

- ✓ Proof of Residency abroad for a period of at least two years
- ✓ Lease/rental agreement, telephone, water, and electricity invoices.

Foreign Investors – Must obtain either a Work Visa or a Permanent Visa from the Immigration Office prior to arriving to port. All the above documents are required in addition to:

- ✓ Social contract of the company founded in Panama, Deed of Investments in the country or properties acquired in Panama
- ✓ Bank reference letter
- ✓ Notarized copy of Resident Card

Businesspersons who earn \$1000.00USD or more per month can apply for a provisional visa allowing for additional privileges:

- Tax exemption for one shipment of household goods and personal effects.
- Tax exemption for one vehicle every 2 years for family use.
- Exoneration from payment of taxes or migratory rights

Retired (Pensionado) Foreign Citizen

- ✓ Must have their passports (original or copy) notarized in Panama
 - ✓ Must have the Retired ID i.e. Turista Pensionado ID (original or copy) notarized in Panama
 - ✓ Bank Reference Letter of the retired Foreign Citizen's account opened in Panama. This letter must be requested to the bank in Panama and directed to Direccion Nacional de Aduanas de Panama.
 - ✓ 2 original Bill of Ladings/Air Waybill or Express Release B/L is also acceptable
 - ✓ Original Inventory List or copy sent via E-mail in Spanish or English
- *If the shipper does not have the Turista Pensionado ID a letter from a lawyer directed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduana indicating the process has begun to acquire the ID.

Diplomat Status: Foreign diplomats are granted duty free entry

Required Documents:

- ✓ Passport - original
- ✓ Bill of Ladings/Air Waybill - 2 original sets; Express Release B/L is also acceptable
- ✓ Delivery instructions
- ✓ Inventory List - original, or copy sent via E-mail in Spanish or English
- ✓ Accredited letter from the Embassy or International Organization
- ✓ Entrance Allowance from the Foreign Relations Ministry

RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

- ✓ New items – subject to duties of 20% of CIF value
- ✓ Jewelry and coins
- ✓ Food and beverages will be allowed with the following documentation.
 - Sanitary Certificate
 - Quarantine Allowance for each product
 - Bill of Lading, airway bill, transit letter
 - Commercial invoice

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ✓ Straw or hay packing in lift-vans
- ✓ Narcotics, alcoholic beverages
- ✓ Weapons, swords, firearms including air guns, and ammunitions
- ✓ Plants, fruits, raw foodstuffs and meats
- ✓ New electronic appliances

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Dogs and cats are subjected to a 40 day “in-home” quarantine period. Those with Diplomat status are waived of the requirement. Pets must arrive during the week before 4:00PM to be received by a veterinarian. Required documents are to be attached to the outside of the pet’s cage.

Advise Destination Agent at least 10 days in advance of pets’ arrival to prepare the Import Permit.

Import requirements may change without notice. Check with your service agent prior to shipping especially if importing birds or other pets as there are additional requirements.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies certificate
- ✓ Health Certificate - from a certified Veterinarian, valid for 10 days from date of issuance
- ✓ Copy of client/owner’s travel itinerary
- ✓ Import Permit – obtained by service agent or pet broker from the Health Ministry, Panama

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles are subject to taxes and duties of approximately 27-30% of CIF value. Clearance is lengthy and demurrage is likely to be incurred. Only one vehicle or motorcycle is allowed. Vehicles require a separate Bill of Lading. **Diplomats**, members of international organizations, persons with Retiree status, and US contractors can bring ONE car free of duties and taxes. Any other additional car will be assessed duties and taxes. Vehicles can be sold or replaced in Panama after 2 years. Vehicles cannot be sold for more than original price.

Persons entering with “Visa de Retirado Pensionado” must be aware of the following requirements:

- Customs has strictly prohibited the issue of Vehicles Temporary Circulation Permits, as of January 2008
- Every vehicle arriving into Panama, owned by a client with “Pensionado Permanente” visa will stay on a Customs Bond or a Fiscal bond, designed by Customs until the definitive Exoneration process for Retirees with “Pensionado Permanente” ID is completed and the ITBM tax of 5% on the Customs valuation is paid.
- The exoneration process will take between three (3) and five (5) months to complete
- During this period the Use of Bond and Retention charges will be assumed by the client
- Once the process is completed and the charges are paid, the client will be allowed to pick up the vehicle.

Vehicles of Retirees with Temporary Permission:

- Every vehicle that previously received a temporary must be delivered to the “Departamento de Control Vehicular” (Vehicle Controls Department) before the expiration date of the Temporary Permit, and will stay there until the Exoneration process for Retirees with “Pensionado Permanente” ID and the ITBM tax of 5% on the Customs valuation is paid.
- If the vehicle is not delivered on time, a fine of \$250.00 will be applied; otherwise Customs will apply sanctions, fines and/or deny the exoneration.
- The exoneration process will take between three (3) and five (5) months to complete
- During this period the Use of Bond and Retention charges will be assumed by the client
- Once the process is completed and the charges are paid, the client will be allowed to pick up the vehicle.

Duty on a vehicle for all other clients is approximately 27%-30% of CIF value. Customs clearance is lengthy and demurrage is also likely. Third party Liability Insurance is mandatory. Vehicles cannot be registered without it.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Bill of Lading, Air Waybill or transit letter – must include freight charges, send a copy to Destination Agent to commence clearance process
- ✓ Property Letter
- ✓ Certificate of Title and Registration – original or copy, hand carry if possible
- ✓ Commercial Invoice/Purchase invoice - original
- ✓ Certificate of Environmental Control & Pollution Certificate

NOTES:

Entry & Exit Requirements: Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of Panama. Panamanian immigration does not require an HIV/AIDS test, but Panamanian law does allow for deportation upon discovery by immigration.

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. U.S. citizens are warned not to travel to remote areas of the Darien and San Blas Provinces. Embassy personnel are only allowed to travel to these areas on official business with prior approval of the Embassy's Regional Security Officer and Deputy Chief of Mission. The Foreign Terrorist Organizations The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) operates in Panama's Darien Province, and surrounding areas of the Panamanian-Colombian border. U.S. citizens, other foreign nationals and Panamanian citizens are potentially at risk of violent crime, kidnapping and murder in this general area.

On the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, boaters should be wary of vessels that may be transporting narcotics, illicit materials, and illegal immigrants to and from Colombia. Bales and specially wrapped packages containing narcotics have been found floating in the ocean or lying on remote beaches. Boaters and beachgoers are warned to steer clear of these items, to not pick up or move these packages and to immediately report their location to the Panamanian authorities.

Currency: the US dollar is the paper currency of Panama, also referred to as the Panama Balboa. Panama mints its own coinage, though U.S. coins are also accepted.

Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials: Panama has stringent regulations regarding wood packing materials (WPM). All wood packing materials must meet ISPM15 standards. All household goods shipments having wood furniture or any wooden articles are subject to a Quarantine Import Permit which must be requested prior to shipments arrival into Panama.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_994.html

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

Embassy of Panama: <http://www.embassyofpanama.org/cms/index3.php>

Migration Service of Panama: http://www.migracion.gob.pa/?pag=PagePermits_Services

Panama International Packers

International Association of Movers

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 clients 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.