



Importing Personal Property Into China

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:

Client must arrive into China before shipment in order to complete import formalities. Client must be present during Customs clearance process. All shipments undergo an X-ray inspection and approximately 20% of shipments are physically inspected by Customs Authority. If importing more than one (1) shipment, shipments must be declared together; otherwise the second shipment will be fully dutiable. Personal registration of owner of the goods and employer's registration must be approved before arrival of the shipment. Used household goods and personal effects are dutiable for Chinese persons holding a foreign passport and foreigners entering China for an extended period (not holding a Residence Card). For foreigners without a 1 year Work Permit & Residence Permit shipment cannot be cleared and will incur storage and demurrage. Those who have the permits but are less than 1 year will be charged full duties on entire shipment.

It is critical to have accurate packing and inventory lists. Imprecise lists create a long delay and potential financial penalties. Additional costs due to delays, destruction or return of shipment due to not adhering to Customs Regulations will be charged to the client or booking agent.

Customs Permit and Inventory List must be identical

Immigration Requirement changes - Effective 1 March 2011

Beijing & Shanghai: An Appointment Letter issued from the head office at origin, (notarized by a foreign notary public bureau and legalized by the Chinese embassy at origin) along with applicant's passport copy also notarized by foreign notary public bureau and legalized by the Chinese embassy is required for the Representative Certificate for foreign employees who are assigned to work in a Representative Office.

Representative Offices will go through an annual inspection process between 1 March – 30 June every year through the Beijing/Shanghai Administration & Industry Bureau.

Shenzhen: Applicants are required to be physically present with a Destination Agent representative at the Public Security Bureau when submitting the residency application forms provided by the agent and one's original passport. The client will be issued a receipt. The process takes 6-12 working days. Once complete the client, accompanied with a Destination Agent representative will exchange the receipt for the Residency License and passport. This policy change affects initial and renewal applications.

Consult your Destination Agent for further details regarding this new requirement.

VAT of approximately 6% will be incurred on shipments into and out of Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuchan, Chongqing ports.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Passport and Authorization letter – Original
- ✓ Identity Card
- ✓ Residence Card/Permit- Original, valid for 1 year
- ✓ Work Visa – Original, valid for 1 year
- ✓ Employment Certification (preferable in Chinese) from employer's registered office or Chinese host organization attesting that customer will be either personnel of Foreign Resident Office or Foreign Expert
- ✓ Appointment Letter – obtained from Representative Office at origin, notarized
- ✓ Customs Permit (must be approved prior to arrival of goods)

- Customs Permit and Inventory list must match exactly!
- ✓ Application for Customs Sealed Letter - three copies
- ✓ Import Permit of Personal Effects
 - List of goods and quantity to be imported must be in Chinese
 - Must list ALL items planned for import within six (6) months from the date of approval of the application, even if not contained in the first shipment
- ✓ Ocean bill of Lading/Air Way Bill – Prepaid and fax copy in advance to Destination Agent
- ✓ Health Certificate – Full examination with blood tests to prove absence of communicable diseases
- ✓ Detailed Inventory – in English or Chinese - “PBO” and “Misc.” are not acceptable. Fax a copy to service agent in advance
- ✓ Arrival Customs Declaration – to be completed by client upon arrival at port of entry
- ✓ Certificate of Origin - may be required

Diplomat Status:

Household goods, automobiles and motorcycles may be imported duty and tax-free and without inspection. Diplomats must be physically present in China prior to their shipment’s arrival to process Customs clearance. Clearance takes approximately 10 working days.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Letter from the Embassy certifying diplomatic status
- ✓ Diplomatic Passport or China Diplomatic Card
- ✓ Import Permit - obtained from the Embassy
- ✓ Notification Letter from the steamship line (available once the vessel arrives in port)
- ✓ Ocean Bill of Lading and/or Airway bill - original
- ✓ Detailed Inventory - in English or Chinese

Returning Chinese Citizen:

Must have visa from origin country. Must have worked abroad at least 6 months to import household goods duty free. Must not have visited China more than once within 15 days of return or be subject to pay Customs duty on entire shipment

- ✓ Chinese Residence Certificate
- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Visa – verifying residency abroad for a minimum of 12 months
- ✓ Baggage Declaration Form – obtained upon arrival, stamped

RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

- ✓ Grand Pianos are dutiable in Beijing, but the 1st upright is duty free. In Shanghai
- ✓ Tobacco products – 600 cigarettes allowed duty free; in excess is subject to duty
- ✓ Furniture & Golf clubs
- ✓ Perfume – “reasonable quantity” for personal use only
- ✓ Books – duty free only if Residence and Work Permits are valid for 1 year
- ✓ CD’s and DVD’s – the first 200 of each is duty free
- ✓ Appliances & Electronics either new or used – must state make & model: 1 each video camera, video recorder & portable word processor; excess amount is subject to tax & duties
- ✓ Computers, printers, fax machines & lighting equipment
- ✓ Portable & cordless phones – require an Import Permit
- ✓ Photocopiers must be sent separately
- ✓ Food /beverages including alcohol– strongly discouraged; each port has different regulations

NOTE: Tax and duty rates are subject to change and often vary depending on port of entry and the Customs officer handling the shipment. All Restricted /Dutiable item must be loaded near the container doors for easy inspection. Antiques must be declared upon arrival.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ✓ Firearms & Ammunition of any kind including Firecrackers and toy guns
- ✓ Narcotics, Psychotropic substances, medication & anesthetics
- ✓ Pornography, obscene materials, publications, videos & software
- ✓ Reproductions of copyright publications & videos
- ✓ Seditious & treasonable materials, anti-communist/anti-China paraphernalia
- ✓ Cigarette lighters of pistol or revolver shape
- ✓ Chewing tobacco & imitation tobacco products
- ✓ Chewing gum, toy coins & toy currency notes such as Monopoly money
- ✓ Live animals on Endangered Species List
- ✓ Hides, horns, skins, furs, fossils, corals and items made from the Endangered Species List in accordance with the CITES convention
- ✓ Grand pianos, copy machines & radio transmitters
- ✓ Exposed, undeveloped film

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Only dogs and cats are allowed importation into China. One pet is allowed per passport holder.. Veterinary exam must be arranged by the owner upon arrival. Pets are subject to a quarantine period of 30 - 45 days depending on airport of entry.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Health – 7 days before departure
- ✓ Vaccination Records – including rabies vaccine, must be over 30 days and under 1 year
- ✓ Entry Recorder – within 2 weeks

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Privately owned vehicles incur tax and duties. Restrictions and taxes depend on size and type of vehicle. Documentation must prove age and value of the automobile.
Diplomatic Status: Allowed to import a vehicle duty and tax free including motorcycles
Vehicles manufactured prior to 1 January 2005 will not be registered without undergoing a rigorous exam costing about 1,200.00USD. All vehicles being registered in Beijing for the first time must meet EURO IV standards. Diesel vehicles are prohibited.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Written application to Customs Office
- ✓ Import Permit – approved by Customs prior to importation into China
- ✓ Invoice, Registration & Title – Any other documents supporting age & value

NOTES:

Entry & Exit Requirements: Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of China. Please verify the restrictions with the [Embassy of China](#) before you travel. Chinese law requires foreign citizens living in China to carry their Residence Permit with them at all times. If you are found not to be in compliance, you will be subject to fines and/or deportation. You must obtain an exit visa to leave China. If you have overstayed your visa, you must apply for an extension from [the Police](#)

[Security Bureau](#) before flying out. If you are a U.S. Lawful Permanent Resident, make sure you have up-to-date U.S. residence documentation, especially your valid Permanent Resident Card ("Green Card"), to avoid any delays when leaving China or re-entering the United States.

China considers a child born in China to hold Chinese citizenship if one parent is a Chinese national, even if the child applies for and receives a U.S. passport while in China. In such cases, when you want to travel out of China with your child, you should contact the local Public Security Bureau for information on obtaining a travel document (*lu xing zheng*).

Crime: U.S. citizens have been detained and expelled for distributing religious literature. Sentences range from three to five years' imprisonment, if convicted. Chinese customs authorities have enforced strict regulations concerning the importation of religious literature, including Bibles. Foreigners may bring only a "reasonable" amount of religious literature for personal use. Larger quantities will likely be confiscated, and other penalties may apply.

Health: Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of China. Please verify the restrictions with the [Embassy of China](#) prior to departure. Hepatitis E is prevalent in northeastern and northwestern China and hepatitis A is common across the country. Hepatitis B is highly endemic. Haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome is endemic. Precautions should be taken against Japanese encephalitis, particularly in rural areas. There are still habitual occurrences of avian influenza (bird flu) and the SARS virus.

Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials: The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China published requirements adopting ISPM 15 for wood packaging material (WPM). The regulation was implemented June 1, 2005.

Improperly certified shipments are subject to one of three actions

- The shipment can be returned to origin.
- The shipment can be separated from the packing material, at the importer's expense. The packing material would be destroyed.
- If the shipment cannot be separated from the packing material and is not returned to origin, then both the shipment and packing material would be destroyed.

Xingang Port Notice: All household goods shipments transiting through Xingang port must ensure the container seal marks on the Bill of Lading MUST be identical to the marks on the containers seal; including all numbers and letters. Any omissions may result in the container being detained and possibly sent to the Chinese Anti-Smuggling unit of Customs and may take up to two months before the container is released. Additional costs and possible fines will be incurred.

Example: Seal – ABC123456

Bill of Lading: ABC123456 = correct status **Bill of Lading:** 123456 = incorrect status

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

AGS Four Winds: Shanghai, China

Santa Fe Relocation Services: Wanchai, Hong Kong

Embassy of China: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/>

Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1089.html

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

US Embassy; Beijing, China: <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/>

U.S. Consulate General; Shanghai: <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/>

U.S. Consulate General; Shenyang: <http://shenyang.usembassy-china.org.cn/>

U.S. Consulate General; Chengdu: <http://chengdu.usembassy-china.org.cn/>

U.S. Consulate General; Guangzhou: <http://guangzhou.usembassy-china.org.cn/>

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.