



# Importing Personal Property Into SOUTH AFRICA

## HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

### DUTY-FREE ENTRY IS PERMITTED IF THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:

- The household goods/effects are used.
- The shipper has had possession of the goods for at least one year.
- Items considered inheritance or antique must be accompanied by the proper documentation.
- **First time immigrants** must possess a valid Permanent Residence Permit.
- **Returning residents** must have resided outside of South Africa for at least six consecutive months before they are entitled to duty-free importation of household goods purchased outside of South Africa. Customs requires the following documentation to prove that the shipper has resided outside of South Africa for at least 6 months and has established a temporary residence abroad during this time: passport pages with initial exit date stamp from South Africa with re-entry stamp; and an affidavit from shipper to South African Customs verifying stay abroad.
- **Temporary residents** must have a temporary work permit, valid for at least six months.

### Required Documents:

- ✓ Original Ocean Bill of Lading
- ✓ Letter from employer verifying customer is moving to South Africa on contract
- ✓ Customs Form P 1.160 - in triplicate
- ✓ Customs Form D.A.304 - in triplicate
- ✓ Detailed, comprehensive inventory is required for clearance
- ✓ Original Passport
- ✓ Valid Residence Permit or Work Permit, as applicable
- ✓ Settler's Declaration Forms (in triplicate), completed upon arrival

**Note:** Shipper must be in South Africa at least 10 days before the goods arrive to attend to customs formalities for clearance. All documentation must be given to the agent at least 7 working days before the arrival of the vessel so he/she can pass it through customs to prevent the consignment from being bonded.

### FOREIGN DIPLOMATS:

- Can import their household goods and personal effects, duty-free, into South Africa.

### Required Documents:

- ✓ Diplomatic Customs Clearance Certificate A or B obtained by the shipper's Embassy from the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria
- ✓ Bill of lading
- ✓ Packing List

## **HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS (Continued from p.1)**

### **VACATION HOME IN SOUTH AFRICA:**

- Household good and personal effects imported for a vacation home in South Africa are subject to VAT and duty between 25%-45%.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Valued packing list
- ✓ Import Permit obtained from the Department of Trade & Industry, Pretoria
- ✓ Bill of Lading

### **PERSONAL EFFECTS SHIPMENT:**

- This consignment must consist of clothing only. Shipment is always stopped for customs examination.
- Items marked as "PBO" (packed by owner) or "Misc." are not acceptable.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ P 1.160 in triplicate
- ✓ List of Contents
- ✓ Original Bill of Lading

### **INHERITED GOODS:**

- Inherited household goods and personal effects may be imported duty-free.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Certified copy of the Last Will and Testament with imported items bequeathed to the customer
- ✓ Import Permit obtained from the Department of Trade & Industry, Pretoria
- ✓ Packing list
- ✓ Bill of lading

**Note:** Inherited motor vehicles are subject to VAT and duty and require the following additional documents: original purchase invoice or 3 independent valuations; original registration certificate; Letter of Authority obtained from the South African Bureau of Standards, Pretoria; and a Compliance Certificate stating that EEC/ECU/EU was required by the original motor vehicle manufacturer for all motor vehicles manufactured after 1997.

### **IMPORT PERMITS:**

- Import permits should be obtained from the Director of Imports and Exports, Private Bag X192, Pretoria 0001 Transvaal, South Africa at least two months in advance before emigration to South Africa.

### **AD VALOREM WHARFAGE:**

- This is a harbor charge that is applicable to all imports. It is the value you declare to customs, calculated at 1.958%. If the shipper is not in South Africa at the time of a shipment's arrival, the consignment will be bonded. Bond charges are additional and can be very costly. Also, the shipment will not clear customs until the shipper is present in South Africa.

## PROHIBITED ITEMS

- Firearms and ammunition (See firearms section for further information.)
- Fully automatic, military and unnumbered weapons
- Explosives and fireworks
- Narcotics, drugs and paraphernalia
- Poison and other toxic substances
- Pornographic or “objectionable” items
- Uncooked meat/poultry, dairy products, butter, eggs, etc.
- Uncut diamonds
- Unwrought gold, South African bank notes in excess of R5000, gold coins, and coin and stamp collections are subject to currency control.
- Honey, beeswax, bees and their larvae or eggs, used beehive appliances
- Walkie-talkies
- Counterfeit items
- Unlawful reproductions of items protected by copyright
- Goods made in a prison or penitentiary
- Cigarettes weighing over 2 kilograms per 1,000 cigarettes

## RESTRICTED ITEMS

- Tobacco products
- New items, including new furniture
- Alcohol (must be easily accessible)
- Antiques
- Plants, seeds and/or bulbs require an Import Permit issued by the Department of Agriculture (see contact information below) and a Phytosanitary Certificate issued by the appropriate authorities in the country of origin.
  - Department of Agriculture
  - Division of Plant and Seed Control
  - Private Bag X179
  - Pretoria, 0001
- Medicines must be accompanied by prescriptions.
- Endangered species of plants or wildlife (alive or dead) or products made from such species require special permits.

## MOTOR VEHICLES

- Left-hand drive vehicles purchased or registered on or after January 1, 2000 are prohibited. For more information regarding statutory requirements, contact SABS at 0027 12 428 6279.

### First Time Immigrants:

- Duty-free import is allowed if the following conditions are met:
- One motor vehicle per family
- Vehicle was owned and used by the shipper for at least one year prior to arrival.
- Once imported, the vehicle must not be sold or otherwise disposed of for 2 years.
- **A Compliance Certificate/ Letter of Authority and an Import Permit must be obtained prior to export from origin.** For the Compliance Certificate/Letter of Authority, contact the South African Bureau of Standards, Pretoria, Mr. P. Snyman or Mr. Allan Cohen, email [mpsnyman@thedti.gov.za](mailto:mpsnyman@thedti.gov.za), telephone: 2712 428 6276 or fax: 2712 428 6565. For the Import Permit contact the Department of Trade and Industry, Pretoria, Mrs. Van Vuuren, telephone: 2712 428 7793 or fax: 2712 428 7799.
- Along with the Compliance Certificate/Letter of Authority and Import Permit, the following documents are required:
  - ✓ Attested form DA304a
  - ✓ Registration documents
  - ✓ Proof of value, such as a purchase invoice

**Note:** VAT of 14% is applicable.

### Returning Residents:

- Full duty and taxes are applicable unless the shipper can provide sufficient proof to the South African Customs that he/she had no intention of ever returning to South Africa. Shippers who left on temporary work contracts, extended holidays, etc. are not permitted duty-free importation of a motor vehicle.

### Temporary Residents:

- Cash payment covering full duties and taxes (approximately 105%) must be provided to South African Customs and is refundable at time of departure.
- A Valid Temporary Residence Permit and a purchase invoice are required. A Compliance Certificate is not required.

**Note:** Cars must be steam-cleaned prior to arrival. Inspectors may order additional cleaning.

### Foreign Diplomats:

- Diplomatic Certificate completed and signed by local Embassy/Consulate and countersigned by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs and proof of value must be provided.
- No duties or taxes are applicable.
- A Letter of Authority must be obtained prior to the vehicle being exported from origin. See contact information on page 2 under *First Time Immigrants*.

## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- Alcohol will be assessed duty and VAT at rates between 35%-45%. This type of importation will always be stopped for customs examination.

### Required Documents:

- ✓ Alcohol Exemption Certificate from Department of Agriculture, Directorate Plant Health and Quality, Telephone#: 27 11 970 31310/1, Fax#: 27 11 970 3132.
- ✓ A detailed list including each bottle's type, volume, alcohol content and value

## DOGS AND CATS

- An **Import Permit** must be obtained prior to importing animals. A fee of R100.00 must accompany the application for the import permit. Contact information is:  
**The Director of Animal Health**  
Import/Export Control  
Private Bag X138  
Pretoria, 0001, South Africa  
Telephone: 2712 319 7514  
    or: 2712 319 7414  
    or: 2712 319 7415  
Fax: 2712 329 8292  
Website: [www.nda.agric.za/vetweb](http://www.nda.agric.za/vetweb)
- The import fee of R100.00 may be made in one of the following ways:
  - By check on a South African bank account, in the amount of R1, made out to the **Director General of Agriculture**
  - A credit transfer from any commercial bank in the US into the Department of Agriculture's bank account: **S A Reserve Bank, Account#: 8033-212-9; Branch Code: 910145.** (Transfer fees may apply.) A copy of the deposit slip should accompany the application form.
  - Customers have experienced difficulties when transferring the fee, so a **money order**, in the amount of \$18.00, made out to The **South African Consulate General in New York** and sent to: South African Consulate General, 333 East 38<sup>th</sup> St, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10016, Attn: G. Sikweza. The receipt you receive from the consulate should accompany your application form when you mail in the form. If you fax the form, include a copy of the receipt.

**Note:** Import Permits are valid for a limited amount of time.

- A **Veterinarian Health Certificate** must be completed in English and signed by a government veterinarian within 10 days of the pet's departure. Contact Dr. Huntly (State Veterinarian) in Albany at 518-457-3502 or the USDA Vet at Kennedy Airport 718-553-1727 for more information. A valid rabies certificate must be obtained at least 30 days prior to (but no more than 12 month) prior to exporting. The rabies vaccine must be a strain that conforms to a potency standard recognized by the World Health Organization. If the certificate does not comply with regulations, the animal may be returned to origin or placed in quarantine for 60 days.
- Quarantine required for animals arriving from: South America, the Middle and Far East (except Israel), Russia, Turkey and all African countries except those bordering South Africa
- Cats and dogs must be booked as "manifested cargo" and not as "excess baggage."
- Dogs and cats must be older than 8 weeks.
- Book with the airline well in advance and contact the airline for specific requirements.

### **Required Documents for Cat and Dogs:**

- ✓ Original Veterinary Health Certificate (obtained from the Director of Animal Health) completed in English, signed by a Government Veterinarian within ten days of your pet's departure.
- ✓ Veterinary Import Permit
- ✓ Valid rabies certificate obtained at least 30 days prior to your departure.

## **FIREARMS & AMMUNITION**

- Firearms and ammunition are prohibited unless the shipper obtains an import permit and a competence certificate issued by the South African Police (SAPS). Customer must complete SAPS form 520 and 517 and provide the required documentation to the local police state at his/her destination in South Africa. For further information, refer to: [www.saps.gov.za/crime\\_prevention/firearms/import\\_info.htm](http://www.saps.gov.za/crime_prevention/firearms/import_info.htm), or contact The Head, Central Firearms Register, Private Bag X 811, Pretoria, South Africa 0001, fax: 27 012 3536041 or email: [cfr.imports@saps.org.za](mailto:cfr.imports@saps.org.za).
- Shipment will be stopped for a customs exam and should therefore be packed in an identifiable package and placed in an easily accessible area of the storage container. Duty and VAT will be applicable.

**Note:** Application for importation of firearms cannot be done in advance and can only occur once the shipper has arrived at his/her final residential destination in South Africa.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Certified copy of Passport
- ✓ Original Bill of Lading
- ✓ Form SAPS 520
- ✓ Form SAPS 517
- ✓ Proof of ownership (e.g. a certified copy of license, permit, etc.)
- ✓ Other documents may be required, depending on customer's circumstances

## **NEW FURNITURE / ANTIQUES**

### **IMPORTATION OF NEW FURNITURE**

- Duties, surcharges, excise, VAT, etc., are payable. A shipment including new furniture will be stopped for a customs examination. The agent must have all of the required documentation before importation to properly proceed with the clearance.

### **IMPORTATION OF ANTIQUES:**

- Duty-free if the agent has all of the necessary documentation prior to importation. Works of art and antiques must have been in the possession of the shipper for at least 12 months or be over 100 years old. Shipments including antiques will not always be stopped for a customs examination.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Sales invoice
- ✓ Import Permit
- ✓ Original Ocean Bill of Lading
- ✓ Antique Dealers Certificate - for antiques

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Elliott International, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2007.
- South Africa Police Services, [http://www.saps.gov.za/crime\\_prevention/firearms.htm](http://www.saps.gov.za/crime_prevention/firearms.htm), 2007.
- South African Consulate General, New York, [www.southafrica-newyork.net](http://www.southafrica-newyork.net) 2005-2006.
- Veterinarian Services, *How to Apply to Import and Move for Own Use*, <http://www.nda.agric.za/vetweb/>.
- South African Revenue Service, [www.sars.gov.za](http://www.sars.gov.za)

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.