

PANAMA

This guide is compiled from the FIDI Customs Guide for reference only. Customs regulations change frequently; please consult your Seapoe relocation consultant for the latest requirements before shipping.

Updated 2026

General

Documents Required

- For Air Shipments only – WORK VISA:
- Immigration Register Stamp on passport is mandatory.
- Original passport is mandatory.
- Notarized work contract is mandatory.
- Original letter of employment addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Notarized copy of VISA ID (both sides).
- If VISA ID is not ready, original letter from the attorney stating that the visa is in process.
- Copy of Immigration Resolution Form if available.
- For LCL Shipments only – WORK VISA:
- Original passport is mandatory.
- Notarized copy of passport (all pages).
- Original letter of employment addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Notarized Final visa ID copy is mandatory (For place of delivery at Colon Bonded Warehouse). Better to ask Final Place of Delivery – Panama City Terminal
- If VISA ID is not ready, original letter from the attorney stating the visa is in process.
- Copy of Immigration Resolution Form if available.
- Tools are subjected to pay import duties and taxes as they are not considered as used personal effects.

Customs Prescriptions

- Customs authorities in Panama are requesting that all Ocean Bills of Lading (OBL), Air Waybills (AWB), Land Waybills (LWB) be rated (show cost).
- If the OBL / AWB / LWB have already been issued without the cost shown, you must request origin SS line / air & land carrier to authorize their representative in Panama a freight rate certification.
- Customs authorities in Panama are requesting Spanish Inventory List.
- For all visa types, shippers must validate to Customs that immigration process has started by presenting the stamped admission receipt from immigration office.
- Duties and taxes apply if required visa documents cannot be submitted to Customs.
- For tools duties and taxes calculation, a valued inventory list is required.

Remarks

- As per Panamanian Laws, shipments must arrive at Panama maximum 6 months since the last entry date stamped on the passport.
- All shipments must be inspected at port of entry, but this is usually done at a Customs bonded warehouse (Panama City Limits).
- Inspection at residence is no longer available.
- Tools will pay approx. 17% CIF value.

Diplomats & NGO removals

Documents Required

- Copy of passport.
- Rated Express Release.
- Spanish Inventory.
- Original letter from the Embassy in Panama requesting Previous Permit addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Letter of employment by employer in Panama addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas (for Non-Governmental Organizations).

Customs Prescriptions

- Preferably pack into liftvans.

Remarks

- All shipments must be inspected at port of entry.
- Quarantine Personnel is entitled to cut the Steamship line seals.
- Inspection at residence is no longer available.

Household Goods & Personal Effects

Documents Required

- There are multiple visas in Panama, each one has its own required documents:
- RETURNING CITIZENS
- Original or notarized passport in Panama - all pages.
- Notarized copy of Panamanian Cedula.
- Copy of carnets and IDs from abroad.
- Copy of utility bills from abroad dated over 2 years ago from their arrival date into Panama.
- Rated Original OBL / Express Release.
- Spanish Inventory.
- FRIENDLY NATIONS VISA
- Original or notarized passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp.
- Copy of Visa Carnet or Original Letter from attorney in Panama addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas stating visa is in process
- Rated Express Release and Spanish Inventory.
- WORKING VISA
- Original or Notarized passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp.
- Original Letter of employment in Panama addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Copy of Visa Carnet or work permit (if available) or
- Original Letter from attorney stating visa is in process addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Rated Original OBL.
- Spanish Inventory.
- SELF SOLVENCY VISA
- Original or notarized passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp.
- Rated Express Release.
- Spanish Inventory.
- Copy of Visa Carnet or Original Letter from the attorney addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas
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- Original Letter from the bank in Panama addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas
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- PENSIONADO VISA
- Original or notarized passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp.
- Rated Express Release
- Spanish Inventory.
- Pensionado Carnet or Original Letter from the attorney addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.

Customs Prescriptions

- Panamanian citizens returning to the country after a time of no less than 2 years being out of Panama, can import tax-free all used items.
- Effects should arrive no later than 6 months after shipper's arrival into Panama.
- For Air Shipments only – WORK VISA:
- Immigration Register Stamp on passport is mandatory.
- Original passport is mandatory.
- Notarized work contract is mandatory.
- Original letter of employment addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Final VISA ID.
- If VISA ID is not ready, original letter from the attorney stating that the visa is in process.
- Copy of Immigration Resolution Form if available.
- For LCL Shipments only – WORK VISA:
- Original passport is mandatory.
- Notarized copy of passport (all pages).
- Original letter of employment addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas.
- Notarized Final VISA ID copy is mandatory (Place of delivery Colon Bonded Warehouse). Better to ask Final Place of Delivery – Panama City Terminal
- If VISA ID is not ready, original letter from the attorney stating the visa is in process.
- Copy of Immigration Resolution Form if available.

Remarks

- All shipments must be inspected at port of entry, but this is usually done at a Customs bonded warehouse (Panama City Limits).
- Notes:
- If Visa is not ready, then an original letter from attorney must be submitted to customs.
- If visa ID carnet is ready the letter from attorney is no longer required.
- Original Letter from the bank in Panama stating the information of shipper's account. The minimum is FIVE figures.
- Inspection at residence is no longer available.

New furniture

Documents Required

- Original Commercial or purchase invoice.
- Copy of passport.
- Rated Express Release and Spanish Inventory.

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to import duties and taxes. It is the Appraisal Department at Customs who determines the amount to be paid.
- All shipments must be inspected at port of entry, but this is usually done at a Customs bonded warehouse Panama City.

Remarks

- No import duties and taxes apply when shipped along with used household goods.
- Must submit commercial invoices.
- Must submit two packing lists (used and new items).

Vehicles

Documents Required

- Original owner's certificate.
- Commercial or purchase invoice.
- Copy of passport.
- Rated Original OBL / Express Release.
- Fill vehicle questionnaire.
- If shipper has Pensionado Visa and wants to apply to tax exemption on duties, the pensionado Carnet must be ready since it is mandatory.
- If the carnet has not been obtained by the client, vehicle will pay full duties and taxes – approx. 35% CIF value.
- Shipper can only apply for tax free for 1 vehicle.
- If Permanent Pensionado Visa is ready, required documents will be:
- Notarized Copy of "Pensionado ID card".
- Notarized passport copy (ID page and last entry stamp page).
- Original "Carta de Pensión" in Spanish or authenticated by "relaciones exteriores". (Incomes letter monthly social security over \$500.00).
- If the customer does not have this letter, should request it to the lawyer who did the paperwork for the visa or request a copy of the letter to migration office and then authenticate it.
- "Paz y Salvo" certification from Ministry of Incomes.
- Commercial Invoice.
- Original title of the vehicle.
- Vehicle details.
- Rated Express release BL.

Customs Prescriptions

- Subject to import duties and taxes, based upon appraisal by Panama Customs.
- Vehicle Gas Inspection will take place at bonded warehouse during the custom clearance process.
- Right hand steering wheel vehicles are NOT allowed to be imported into Panama.
- Electric vehicles are subject to pay import taxes 7% CIF value.

Remarks

- If engine number is unknown, shipper must take the vehicle to a workshop to obtain this number, and customs document will be amended. Engine number is required for license plate process.
- Neither electric vehicle nor motorcycle requires gas Inspection test.

Alcohol, perfume, gifts

Customs Prescriptions

- Import of: (maximum)
- Alcohol: 1 - 10 bottles.
- Perfume: for personal use.
- Gifts: valued PAB 50.

Remarks

- Regarding the importation of alcohol, the Panamanian Authority for Food Safety (AUPSA), along with the National Customs Authority, provides the authorization of alcoholic beverages based on a standard of personal consumption of 1 - 10 bottles per shipment.
- It is subject to an administrative payment for the issuance of liquor import license, according to the degree of alcohol and commercial value.
- The conditions that must exist are:
- The product must have sanitary registration.
- You must notify the Panamanian
- Authority of Food Safety (AUPSA) about the introduction of the wines to the national territory (minimum 48 hours) before arrival, through the Food Entry Notification Form, for this, the client must have an account Otherwise you must register as a client in AUPSA.
- Must have a letter from the shipper stating the information of the product, for what purpose it will be imported, including AWB number / BL number, quantity, value, etc.

Prohibited items

Customs Prescriptions

- Firearms, ammunitions, and weapons.
- Pharmaceuticals and medicine.
- Any kind of food.
- Psychotropic drugs.
- Toxic waste.
- Fertilizer.
- Tools.