Country Guide (IAM)

Afghanistan

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

Updated 2026-09-05

Documents

Documents required for importing used household goods, personal effects, and related shipments.

For Afghan Nationals

- Copy of passport
- Original bill of lading (OBL) or air waybill (AWB)
- Packing list with comprehensive inventory including declared values
- Resident visa issued by the Ministry of the Interior (if returning from abroad)

For Foreign Citizens

- Copy of passport
- Original bill of lading (OBL) or air waybill (AWB)
- Packing list with comprehensive inventory including declared values
- Tax exemption form
- Letter of request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for customs clearance permission
- Work permit or working visa
- Resident visa issued by the Ministry of the Interior

For Diplomats

- Copy of passport
- Original bill of lading (OBL) or air waybill (AWB)
- Packing list
- Tax exemption form
- Letter of request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for customs clearance permission
- Note Verbale (memo letter) from the Embassy or international organisation

Specific Information

Bank guarantee / deposit: Not typically required for personal effects. However, all shipments are subject to customs inspection and valuation. Customs may reassess duties if goods are found to be inconsistent with declared values.

Tax registration / EORI: Afghanistan does not use an EORI system. Importers of record must either enter into a contract with an Afghan entity or register as a legal person operating in Afghanistan.

ISPM 15 (wood packaging): Afghanistan does not currently require the fumigation of wood packaging materials (WPM) with ISPM 15. However, movers should confirm this at the time of shipment, as regulations may change.

Resale / disposal restrictions: Goods imported duty-free as personal effects should not be resold or disposed of commercially. Goods found in commercial quantities may be subject to duties and penalties.

Loading / packing notes: A detailed, valued inventory is required. The bill of lading or air waybill must be clearly labelled "In transit to Afghanistan via [transit country]" when routing through a third country. All foreign currency must be declared upon arrival.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free conditions: Used household goods and personal effects are duty-free for returning Afghan nationals and for foreign citizens with a valid work permit/working visa, provided all required documentation is submitted. Foreign diplomats, members of government, and staff of international organisations are granted tax- and duty-free entry of their personal effects and household items, whether new or used. Items intended for personal use by foreigners working in Afghanistan are exempt under the terms and conditions of their contract (per Article 43 of the Afghan Customs Law). New goods, goods in commercial quantities, and goods intended for resale are not eligible for duty-free import and may attract customs duty at rates averaging 10–16% depending on the item category.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Firearms, explosives, and daggers RESTRICTED — Weapons of all kinds are prohibited for civilian import
- Alcohol and foodstuffs RESTRICTED — Alcohol is prohibited except for the 2-litre personal-use exception for air passengers; foodstuffs in commercial quantities are prohibited
- Pornography and obscene materials — Strictly prohibited
- Anti-Islamic materials and literature — Strictly prohibited
- Narcotics — Strictly prohibited
- Recorded media (CDs, DVDs, audiotapes, videotapes) PERMIT REQUIRED — Require Ministry of Culture approval; content deemed contrary to Islam or Afghan culture is banned under the 2021 guidance and the 2024 PVPV law
- Parlour video games or parts thereof — Prohibited
- Goods in commercial quantities — Prohibited within personal effects shipments
- Certain rare bird species CITES — Transport of some species of rare birds is prohibited; check CITES listings
- Content depicting women or containing music RESTRICTED — Under the August 2024 Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) law, media content showing women or containing music is subject to prohibition; this may affect items within household shipments such as artwork, photographs, and recorded media

Restricted / Dutiable Items

International Imports (All Modes)

- Alcohol: 2 litres permitted for personal use for commercial air passengers only. Alcohol is otherwise prohibited.
- Tobacco: A reasonable amount of tobacco products for personal use (no specific quantity published).
- Perfume: Any amount of perfume is permitted for personal use.
- Accompanied luggage: The total value of accompanied luggage should not exceed USD $500.
- Antiques, carpets, furs, and camera film: Permit required for both import and export.
- Film cameras and film: Require an import permit.
- Currency: All foreign currency must be declared upon arrival. Foreign currencies taken out must equal the amount imported and declared. Up to AFN 50,000 in local currency may be exported. An "Ansari Application Form" is required for amounts over AFN 100,000.
- Communication equipment: Requires approval from the Ministry of Communications.

- Medicines: Require certification from the Ministry of Public Health.
- Armoured vehicles: Require Ministry of Interior certification.

Exports (for reference)

- Permits are required for the export of furs, carpets, antiquities, and camera film.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea / road shipments.

Inventory requirements: A comprehensive, detailed inventory with declared values is required. Documentation should be in English or accompanied by an English translation.

Inspection: All shipments are subject to inspection by Afghan customs.

Timing / shipment arrival: The owner should be present at the destination when the shipment arrives. There is no published deadline for shipment arrival relative to the owner's arrival, but clearance cannot proceed without the owner or an authorised representative present.

Owner presence: Yes — the owner or their authorised agent must be present for customs clearance.

Routing / transit: Afghanistan is landlocked and has no seaport of its own. Shipments have traditionally been routed via the Port of Karachi, Pakistan (approximately 1,400 km from Kabul, 3–4 days transit, ~$2,000 per 40-foot container under normal conditions). Air shipments arrive via Hamid Karzai International Airport (Kabul), Mawlana Jalaluddin Mohammad Balkhi International Airport (Mazar-i-Sharif), Khwaja Abdullah Ansari International Airport (Herat), or Ahmad Shah Baba International Airport (Kandahar).

CRITICAL TRANSIT ALERT (April 2026): The Pakistan–Afghanistan border has been closed since October 2025 following military clashes between Taliban forces and Pakistani security forces. As of late February 2026, all major border crossings — including Torkham, Spin Boldak/Chaman, and Ghulam Khan — remain closed indefinitely to commercial and pedestrian traffic. Thousands of transit containers are stranded at Karachi Port and at border crossing points. Pakistan's Federal Board of Revenue has allowed re-export of stranded Afghan transit cargo from border points back to Karachi for re-routing. Alternative routes: Iran's Chabahar Port has been used as an alternative (developed with Indian investment), but regional conflict involving Iran has severely disrupted this corridor as well. Northern overland routes via Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan) are available but significantly more expensive ($4,500–$7,200 per container) and slower (15–25 days). Until the security situation stabilises, all shipments to Afghanistan should be coordinated closely with the destination agent, and air freight should be considered where feasible. The situation is highly fluid and changes frequently.

Demurrage / detention: All surface shipments will incur container detention and demurrage on average of 30 days. The average detention period is 60 days. Detention can be avoided by using a shipper-owned container (SOC). During border closures, detention periods are indefinite and costs escalate rapidly.

Special territories: Afghanistan does not have overseas territories or autonomous regions with separate customs regimes.

Unpredictable expenses: Container detention and demurrage fees, storage charges during border closures, re-routing costs via alternative corridors, customs inspection fees, and currency declaration-related issues. Afghan customs procedures and charges can be inconsistent and non-transparent, and informal fees may be encountered.

Regulatory Updates

- March 2026: The Taliban government extended its policy allowing temporary documentation for undocumented ("one-key") vehicles through the end of Afghan solar year 1405 (~March 2027).
- October 2025 – present: All Pakistan–Afghanistan border crossings closed due to military

hostilities. Commercial transit via Karachi is effectively suspended. Re-export of stranded cargo authorised by Pakistan's FBR.

- August 2024: The Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) law was enacted, introducing additional restrictions on media content, women's public presence, and items deemed contrary to Islamic values. This may affect customs inspection of household goods containing music, films, artwork, or photographs.
- 2024–2025: UNCTAD's ASYCUDA digital customs system significantly reduced documentation requirements for exempted goods from 14 forms to 1 form, and reduced clearance times at customs headquarters.