

Cameroon

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.

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Documents

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

Required Documents

- Copy of passport
- Packing list
- Original bill of lading (OBL) — no express release accepted — or air waybill (AWB)
- Original valued inventory in French, dated and signed by the owner
- Purchase invoice for all electrical items less than 6 months old
- Certificate of change of residence
- Residence permit / work permit / letter of employment
- BESC (Bordereau Electronique de Suivi des Cargaisons) / Electronic Cargo Tracking Note (ECTN)
- For diplomats: diplomatic exemption documentation

Specific Information

Mandatory local insurance: 1% of the value of goods.

BESC / ECTN: Any cargo loaded in or bound for Cameroon ports must be covered by an Electronic Cargo Tracking Note (ECTN/BESC) validated by the Cameroon National Shippers' Council (CNSC) or its representative. The BESC must be obtained before loading and attached to export customs documents. If obtained after the vessel sails (within 5 days), a penalty applies, which may rise to 50% of the original BESC cost.

Express release not accepted: Only original bills of lading are accepted.

Document language: The valued inventory must be in French.

Pre-shipment inspection (SGS): Imports valued at XAF 2 million or more are subject to the Programme for Guaranteeing Customs Revenue (PSRD) and must be inspected by SGS (Société Générale de Surveillance) before shipment. For household goods shipments, confirm with the destination agent whether SGS pre-inspection applies.

Attestation of Verification to Import (AVI): Required from SGS. The request must be submitted no later than when the manifest is validated, accompanied by: bill of lading/AWB, final invoice, packing list, local insurance certificate, customs clearance, manifest number, and any exemption voucher.

GUCE one-stop-shop: All import procedures are handled through the Guichet Unique des Opérations du Commerce Extérieur (GUCE) at the Port of Douala.

Duties & Taxes

Statistics levy (applies to all shipments):

- Non-diplomatic shipments: 11% statistics levy assessed by customs
- Diplomatic shipments: 0.7% statistics levy

New items (less than 6 months old): Dutiable at 64-71% of CIF value. Purchase invoices required.
CEMAC membership: Cameroon is a member of CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa). The CEMAC Common External Tariff (CET) applies to goods from outside CEMAC. Goods from within CEMAC (Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Chad) are exempt from customs duties.

CET tariff categories:

- Category I (primary necessary goods): 0%
- Category II (raw materials and equipment): 10%
- Category III (intermediary/miscellaneous goods): 20%
- Category IV (consumer goods): 30%

VAT: 19.25% (total including surcharges).

Additional taxes: African Integration Contribution (AIC) at 0.2% on goods from non-AU countries. Computer fee at 0.45%.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Weapons and ammunition without authorisation — Prohibited
- Knives and dangerous weapons — Prohibited
- Narcotics and illegal drugs — Strictly prohibited
- Alcohol — Listed as prohibited by VisaHQ (likely refers to unlicensed/unregulated imports; commercial quantities require licensing)
- Big monkeys, lemurs, pandas, South American monkeys — Prohibited CITES
- Big cats (cheetahs, leopards, tigers) — Prohibited CITES
- Elephants, rhinoceros, cranes, snakes, parrots, marine turtles — Prohibited CITES
- Counterfeit money and goods — Prohibited
- Pornographic material — Prohibited
- Certain sanitary products, chemicals, toxic waste, some cosmetics, and some food items — Prohibited

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Duty-Free Traveller Allowances

- 400 cigarettes, or 50 cigars, or 5 packets of tobacco
- 1 bottle of alcoholic beverage
- 5 bottles of perfume
- Gifts and souvenirs worth up to XAF 200,000

Restricted Items

- TV, laptops, DVD players, and electrical goods less than 6 months old — Subject to customs duties and taxes (64-71% CIF)
- Firearms and ammunition PERMIT REQUIRED — Authorisation from territorial administration
- Plants and plant products PERMIT REQUIRED — Phytosanitary certificate required
- Meat and meat products PERMIT REQUIRED — Health certificate required
- Pharmaceuticals PERMIT REQUIRED — Licence required
- Arms of Chapter 93 CEMAC Code — Subject to 25% excise duty when imported by persons not governed by public law
- Currency: Amounts over XAF 5 million must be declared upon arrival. Unlimited import of local and foreign currency.

Consignment Instructions

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

BESC/ECTN: Must be obtained before loading. Penalty for late obtainment (up to 50% of BESC cost).

SGS pre-inspection: May be required for shipments valued over XAF 2 million (approximately USD 3,100).

AVI from SGS: Required for customs clearance. Issued within 8 hours of submission.

Express release: Not accepted. Original OBLs required.

Documentation: Must be received by the destination agent prior to import.

GUCE: All import procedures handled through the single window at Douala port.

Routing / port of entry: Port of Douala (primary seaport and Cameroon's economic capital). Kribi Deep Sea Port (newer facility, operational since 2018). Douala International Airport and Yaoundé Nsimalen International Airport for air freight. Cameroon also serves as a transit country for landlocked neighbours (Chad, Central African Republic).

GPS tracking: Cameroon Customs and SGS use GPS to track goods in transit to neighbouring countries.

Clearance time: Allow at least 2 weeks for customs clearance.

Currency: Central African CFA franc (XAF), pegged to the euro at XAF 655.957 = EUR 1. Cameroon is a member of CEMAC and uses the Central African CFA franc (different institution from the West African CFA franc but same exchange rate).

Regulatory Updates

- 2018: Kribi Deep Sea Port became operational, providing an alternative to the congested Port of Douala.
- 2018: Late payment interest at 1.5% per month (capped at 50%) instituted for unpaid duties 30 days after declaration.
- 2018: ECCAS Preferential Tariff entered force — zero-rate customs duty on goods from ECCAS member states.
- 2000: GUCE single window established at Douala port. Implementation ongoing.
- Ongoing: SGS pre-shipment inspection continues as the primary verification mechanism. GPS tracking for transit goods.