

Egypt

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 returning Egyptian citizens / foreign citizens

- Original passport with Egyptian resident/work permit (returning citizens: entry stamp dated within the last 6 months; foreign citizens: valid residency visa for minimum 3 months)
- Original bill of lading (OBL) / air waybill (AWB) with the proper name of the consignee (as written on the passport) c/o Egyptian employer/authority name and address
- Detailed inventory, valued, typed, dated, and signed in English (handwritten inventories are not accepted)
- Packing list
- Authorization letters to handle the shipment, locally issued in Egypt
- Letter of guarantee provided by employer approving the import and stating the shipment will be re-exported upon end of work contract (for expatriates seeking duty-free temporary admission)
- Authorization letter authorizing the destination agent to clear the shipment, stamped by the client's Egyptian bank where they hold an account
- Keys for automobiles and any locked items or baggage

For diplomats

- Sea waybill or original bill of lading and air waybill with proper consignee name c/o Egyptian employer/authority
- Egyptian Diplomatic ID (for full/1st degree diplomats; takes approximately 2 weeks to issue)
- Authorization letters from the diplomat's embassy, issued in Egypt
- Clearing letter issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Egypt
- Form 4DE (protocol exemption form)

Specific Information

Egypt is NOT a duty-free destination for household goods. This is the most critical fact for movers to understand. All used household goods and personal effects are subject to import taxes, duties, and VAT, including consumables. This applies to Egyptian citizens, private shippers, and most foreign citizens.

Egyptian citizens always pay full duties. All shipments belonging to Egyptian citizens are subject to full duty and tax regardless of how long they have been abroad or whether they hold dual nationality.

Foreign citizens without a work visa: Must pay full duties at 60% plus VAT at 14% plus 8% service fee.

Letter of guarantee system: The guarantee states an amount corresponding to estimated duties and taxes. Funds are placed into a bank account and released when the shipper leaves Egypt

and re-exports all items. Any missing items at the time of departure incur duties, taxes, and fines. The guarantee can only be obtained with a work permit and work visa. Since recent rule changes, some items cannot be covered by the letter of guarantee and duties will apply regardless. The letter of guarantee results in very thorough inspection by customs and often causes damage to the shipment.

All items subject to taxes: Including consumables (toiletries, foodstuffs, detergents, cosmetics, tissues). For half-diplomats (2nd degree), consumable items are dutiable at 60% of value plus 14% VAT.

Packing list requirements: Must be clear and legible (will be translated into Arabic). Do not indicate "miscellaneous," "packed by owner," or "PBO." The inventory must state the model, brand, size, and content for all electrical and electronic items (e.g., "Sony 40-inch television").

Audio-visual goods: Tapes, videos, books, DVDs, CD-ROMs, etc. will be inspected, viewed, and read by customs. They will not be released sooner than 3 weeks after import. They must be loaded at the door of the container for easy access.

Instruction manuals: Must be attached to printers and fax machines.

Consignee must be present in Egypt: The client must be in Egypt during customs clearance, although physical attendance during the inspection is not required.

Clearing time: 14-21 business days for private/foreign citizen shipments (due to tripartite committee requirements during inspection). 3-9 working days for diplomatic shipments.

Nafeza single window system (2021 update): Egypt launched the Nafeza electronic single window customs system. All consignment documentation must be submitted through this platform 48 hours prior to shipment arrival. This system uses Advanced Cargo Information (ACI) identification numbers (ACID) that must be referenced on all documentation. Contact the destination agent for current Nafeza procedures.

ISPM 15: Wood packaging must be treated and stamped as per ISPM 15 standards.

Currency: Egyptian pound (EGP). The exchange rate has been volatile, ranging roughly between 46.6 and 54.9 EGP per USD over the past year; as of late June 2026, approximately 1 USD = 49 EGP. Duties and taxes must be paid in cash if no letter of guarantee is available.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free entry is extremely limited. Only the following categories qualify for duty-free temporary admission:

- Expatriates working within governmental or private sectors under the terms of temporary admission, who provide a Ministry guarantee or bank guarantee (letter of guarantee). This requires a work visa valid for a minimum of 3 months. All items must be re-exported when the contract ends.
- Full/1st degree diplomats (permanent duty-free entry).
- Expatriates who own or are partners in a private company/project in Egypt (duty covered with local bank guarantee; proof of ownership from Egyptian Investment Authority required).

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

The prohibited items list for Egypt is extensive and strictly enforced:

- Alcoholic beverages of any kind (in non-diplomatic shipments) — severe penalties and criminal charges
- Pornographic materials — strictly prohibited
- Anti-Islamic religious materials — prohibited
- Unlawful drugs and narcotics — strictly prohibited
- Gold and silver jewelry and ornaments (tableware permitted; jewelry prohibited)

- Bank notes and coins — prohibited within shipments
- Seeds and trees — prohibited
- Any types of phones — prohibited
- Wireless phones — prohibited
- Radio devices with high frequency that intercept other transmissions; wireless transceiver devices (walkie-talkies) — prohibited
- Binoculars and telescopes — prohibited
- Toy drones and helicopters — prohibited
- Recording camera pocket pens — prohibited
- Tracking and surveillance devices — prohibited
- Modern GPS devices with high specs — prohibited
- High-resolution color laser jet printers — prohibited
- Brand new furniture — prohibited within household goods shipments
- Cotton — prohibited
- Perishable foods — prohibited
- Firearms, ammunition, pocketknives, daggers, and swords (even decorative) — prohibited without authorization; non-compliance could result in confiscation of the entire shipment and legal issues PERMIT REQUIRED
- Satellite receivers — subject to censorship by Ministry of Interior

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Traveler Allowances

Per VisaHQ:

- 200 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 200g tobacco
- 1 litre of alcoholic beverages
- Personal effects in reasonable quantities
- Gifts up to EGP 1,500 in value

Restricted Items

- Scanners, printers, phones, and faxes — agreement by Egyptian authorities required; subject to censorship by the Ministry of Interior; subject to approval or refusal; brand and model number must be on the inventory; owner manuals assist clearance
- Laser jet color printers — prohibited for personal use
- Office jets / workstations — subject to approval or refusal
- Perfume — for personal use only
- Tobacco — dutiable
- Alcohol — strictly prohibited for non-diplomats in shipments (see Prohibited Items); for diplomats, free import with embassy-approved quota
- Consumable items (toiletries, foodstuffs, detergents, cosmetics, tissues) — dutiable regardless of the consignee's status, at 60% plus 14% VAT for half-diplomats; higher duties for private shippers
- Video tapes, computer disks, cassette tapes, CDs, DVDs, records, slides — subject to censorship authority approval; subject to confiscation if they fall into prohibited categories
- High-value works of art, statues, paintings — examined by a special committee for evaluation; time-consuming and costly, delaying customs clearance
- Food and medicine — examined by health authorities
- Firearms and ammunition — authorization from local administration required PERMIT REQUIRED
- More than two items of the same product — prohibited (duplicate items)

Alcohol Duty for Non-Diplomats

Alcohol is strictly prohibited in non-diplomatic shipments; contravening this regulation carries severe penalties and criminal charges for the customer and employer. Do not include alcohol in

non-diplomatic shipments to Egypt.

Consignment Instructions

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

Alcohol is absolutely prohibited in non-diplomatic shipments. This cannot be overstated. Violations carry serious consequences for the removal company and the freight forwarder, in addition to criminal charges for the customer and employer.

Loading order matters: Vehicles and all audio-visual goods must be loaded at the door of the container for easy access during inspection.

No handwritten inventories. All inventories must be typed. No "miscellaneous," "PBO," or "packed by owner" designations.

Keys required: Keys for automobiles and any locked items must be provided to customs officers during inspection.

Nafeza system: Since 2021, all consignment documentation must be submitted through Egypt's Nafeza single window customs platform 48 hours before arrival. An ACID number must be obtained and referenced on all documentation. The destination agent will coordinate this.

Clearing times: 14-21 business days for standard shipments; 3-9 business days for diplomatic shipments; 7-21 business days for diplomatic duty exemption applications.

Consignee must be in Egypt. The consignee must be present in the country during customs clearance (though not required during physical inspection).

No duty-free entry for Egyptian citizens. Regardless of time abroad, dual nationality, or circumstances, Egyptian citizens pay full duty and tax.

Letter of guarantee risks: The guarantee system results in very thorough inspection and often causes damage to shipments. Some items can no longer be covered by the guarantee. Discuss the trade-offs with customers before choosing this option.

Port congestion: Egypt's ports (particularly Alexandria) experience congestion that can extend clearing times beyond the standard estimates.