

# Kuwait

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 2026-08-20

## Documents

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

### Sea Freight (Expatriates / Work Permit Holders)

- Original bill of lading / express release / seaway bill
- Packing list
- Copy of passport (picture and signature page)
- Valid Kuwaiti residence copy (stamped in passport; must have minimum 12 months validity)
- Temporary Work Entry Visa / NOC copy (A4 size, duly stamped by Kuwait Immigration upon arrival)
- Kuwait Civil ID copy
- Work permit copy / "Izanal" (in Arabic)
- Company authorization letter from employer confirming employment (2 copies, in Arabic, on company letterhead, signed by authorized signatory and stamped by the company; format provided by destination agent)
- "Itimad towkia" copy from local sponsor company (scanned copy of authorized signature in Arabic, required for signature verification at customs)
- Delivery order from shipping line
- Temporary import licence

### Air Freight (Expatriates / Work Permit Holders)

- Air waybill
- Packing list
- Copy of passport (picture page)
- Temporary Work Entry Visa / NOC copy (duly stamped by Kuwait Immigration)
- Kuwait Civil ID

### Diplomats

- Bill of lading / AWB
- Packing list
- Copy of passport
- Copy of Kuwait personal identity card
- Copy of diplomatic identity card issued by embassy
- Exemption certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait
- Authorization letter from the diplomatic mission in Arabic, on mission letterhead, signed and stamped by authorized signatory, naming the destination agent appointed for clearance

## Specific Information

Temporary import licence: Required for clearance. Can only be obtained after all required

documents are available at destination, at least 5 days before the shipment arrives. The destination agent handles this process.

Consignee presence is mandatory during clearance of all inbound shipments.

Shipment consignment: All documents must show the shipment consigned in the name of the owner.

New electronic items should not be included in household goods shipments.

## Duties & Taxes

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5% customs duty on all non-diplomatic sea imports. Kuwait applies a flat 5% customs duty on the CIF value of all non-diplomatic sea freight shipments. Kuwait Customs will determine further charges depending on the weight, volume, and type of household goods.

No VAT. Kuwait has not implemented a Value Added Tax. Customs duty is the primary import cost.

Duty-free threshold: Duty-free entry is allowed only for shipments with a total C&F value not exceeding USD 1,000 as estimated by Customs.

Diplomats receive duty-free entry with proper documentation and an exemption certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

GCC-origin goods are generally exempt from customs duties under the GCC Customs Union framework.

## Prohibited & Restricted Items

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### Prohibited Items

- Alcohol of any kind (liquors, wine, beer), including alcohol-producing kits and machinery
- Pork products
- "Walkie-talkie" type radios
- Narcotics, drugs, and stimulants
- Pornographic books, magazines, and other media
- Weapons, including antique weapons, firearms, and ammunition
- All materials and products connected with or manufactured by Israel
- Statues, artwork, and literature defined as offensive to Islamic teachings and principles
- Gambling equipment
- Counterfeit goods

Enforcement is strict. Non-compliance results in confiscation of items, and the owner is liable to detention pending legal action.

### Restricted / Dutiable Items

Books, audio/video tapes, and music: Allowed but subject to censorship. [CENSORED]

Israeli Boycott list items: Items manufactured by companies on the Israeli Boycott list will be confiscated. This includes products from companies historically listed such as CBS, RCA, and Columbia. Confirm the current list with the destination agent.

Medicines and drugs for medicinal purposes: Cause delays in clearance. A special release order from the Ministry of Health is required. [PERMIT REQUIRED]

Computer modems: Subject to registration and an initial fee of approximately USD 400 levied by the Ministry of Communication, plus a renewable annual fee of USD 400. This is administered through the Department of Customs.

New electronic items: Should not be included in household goods shipments.

New furniture and household goods (commercial import): Require an import licence or temporary import licence, a Certificate of Origin (legalized by the Arab Chamber of Commerce / Kuwait Embassy or Consulate at origin), an invoice, and packing list. Duty is 5% of CIF for items

not manufactured in Kuwait; 15-22% for items where a similar product is manufactured locally. Cash, gold, and jewellery: Travelers must declare amounts exceeding KWD 3,000 (approximately USD 9,800) at airports. (Effective August 2025.)

## Special Categories

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### Research Notes

Sources consulted: IAM Country Guide (February 2016), FIDI Customs Guide (January 2020, from FIDI Middle East and North Africa), PetTravel.com (Kuwait pet import requirements), Trade.gov Kuwait Country Commercial Guide, Middle East Briefing (August 2025), PWC Kuwait tax summaries (January 2026).

Key differences between IAM and FIDI guides: The two guides are largely consistent on this country. The FIDI guide adds useful detail on the diplomatic documentation requirements (exemption certificate, diplomatic identity card, authorization letter format). The FIDI guide also clarifies the duty-free threshold at USD 1,000 C&F value, which the IAM guide omits. Both guides confirm that only Kuwaiti nationals and diplomats can import vehicles.

No VAT in Kuwait. While other GCC states have implemented VAT (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Oman at 5-15%), Kuwait has not. This makes the 5% customs duty the only significant import cost for household goods.

Regulatory update (January 2025): Kuwait implemented the GCC Integrated Customs Tariff with 12-digit tariff codes, replacing the previous 8-digit system. This increases classification precision from 7,800 to over 13,400 tariff lines but does not change the standard 5% duty rate.

Pet section significantly enhanced via PetTravel.com: the IAM and FIDI guides provide almost no pet detail. PetTravel adds the microchip requirement, the detailed vaccination requirements, the titer test requirement/recommendation, the PAAAFR import permit system (one per year, limited to one dog/two cats), the extensive banned breed list, and the minimum age requirement.

Israeli Boycott: Kuwait continues to enforce a boycott of Israeli-connected products. The IAM guide names CBS, RCA, and Columbia as examples. The specific companies listed may have changed. Destination agents should be consulted for the current boycott list.

Link verification (re-checked June 2026): Kuwait Customs (customs.gov.kw): active (200). MFA (mofa.gov.kw/en/): returns 403 -- Cloudflare WAF block; resolves and TLS-connects normally, browser-accessible. EmbassyPages: returns 403 to bots, browser-accessible. PAAAFR: no stable public website found -- both website.paafr.gov.kw and http://www.paafr.gov.kw fail DNS resolution; organization is active (resolutions issued 2025) but appears to have no accessible public web presence. OpenFactBook (replaces CIA World Factbook): active (200). PetTravel.com Kuwait: active (200).

## Consignment Instructions

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

Document lead time: All required documents must be available at destination at least 5 days before the shipment arrives in Kuwait. The temporary import licence cannot be obtained until all documents are in hand.

Consignment: The shipment must be consigned in the name of the owner on all documents.

Authorization letter: The employer's authorization letter (in Arabic) is critical. It must be on company letterhead, signed by an authorized signatory, stamped by the company, and confirm that the consignee is under their sponsorship. The destination agent provides the required format.

Inventory requirements: A detailed packing list is required. Do not include new electronic items. Medicines should be avoided or clearly documented, as they require a special release order from the Ministry of Health and will cause delays.

Israeli-origin goods: Any items manufactured by companies on the Israeli Boycott list will be

confiscated during inspection. Brief customers thoroughly at origin and review the packing list for potential issues.

Alcohol and pork: Absolutely no alcohol or pork products of any kind. This is strictly enforced and will result in confiscation and potential legal action.