

Sri Lanka

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

- Original passport (with valid residence visa — cargo must arrive after the owner has obtained a residence visa)
- Original Bill of Lading (OBL) or Airway Bill (AWB) — telex release is acceptable
- Detailed packing list and inventory (in English only)
- Insurance certificate
- Customs Declaration Form (provided by the local destination agent)
- Authorization Letters (provided by the local destination agent)
- Duty-Free Clearance Certificate, if applicable
- Import licence, if applicable
- Bank guarantee, if applicable
- Power of Attorney (if the owner is not present for Customs clearance): must be registered/legalized and submitted with a copy of the owner's passport

For Diplomats

- Duty-Free Clearance Certificate issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Packing list/inventory
- OBL or AWB (telex release acceptable)
- Certified diplomatic ID card copy
- Certified true copy of passport
- Customs Declaration Form and Authorization Letter (from local agent)

Specific Information

The owner of the goods should be present for Customs clearance in Sri Lanka. If unavailable, a registered and legalized Power of Attorney must be submitted with a copy of the owner's passport.

All shipments are subject to Customs physical inspection. Documents should be received by the destination agent at least 7 days before the shipment arrives.

All electrical items and furniture must be individually priced on the detailed inventory. If the total assessed value of electrical items and furniture exceeds USD 1,000, duty is payable on the excess. Only one electrical item of any type is permitted per consignment. Refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers, dehumidifiers, air conditioners, and home theater systems are not classified as household goods and are therefore subject to full import duties and taxes.

All applicable fees must be paid before the shipment is released.

Diplomats may only clear duty-free upon presentation of the Duty-Free Clearance Certificate.

Shipments with "A" Facility diplomatic status are not subject to physical Customs inspection. ISPM 15 compliance is required for all wood packaging material.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Narcotics and controlled substances
- Pornographic materials
- Anti-religious materials
- Firearms, guns, and weapons (without specific authorization)
- Ammunition and explosives
- Currency (undeclared cash above permitted limits)
- Animal parts and products from protected species CITES
- Antiques and high-value items (subject to restriction and licensing)
- Live plants
- Counterfeit goods
- Materials that undermine national security or public order

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Sri Lanka has no free trade agreement framework applicable to household goods imports. All non-personal-effects items are assessed for duty.

Alcohol: Only 2 bottles of wine or spirits are permitted duty-free per consignment. Quantities above this are treated as a commercial quantity and are subject to full duties and taxes.

Brand new furniture: Subject to import duties and taxes; not treated as household goods.

Clothing and personal belongings: Duty-free in reasonable quantities.

Consumer electronics: Subject to duty. Only one unit of each type of electrical item is permitted. Refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers, dehumidifiers, air conditioners, and home theater systems are not classified as household goods and attract full import duties.

Telecommunications equipment (satellites, remote control equipment, telephones, fax machines): Special prior approval from the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) must be obtained before the shipment arrives. An operation manual must accompany each item.

Computer software, floppy discs, music discs, tapes, and video tapes: Subject to Customs examination and may be restricted.

Videos and CDs: Will be screened for content.

Vehicle parts: Restricted; contact destination agent.

Full details on applicable duty rates are available in Schedule B of Sri Lanka Customs: <https://www.customs.gov.lk/about-us/customs-law/>

Consignment Instructions

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

Documents must reach the destination agent at least 7 days before the shipment arrives. All fees must be paid before the shipment is cleared and released. The owner should be present at Customs, or a legalized Power of Attorney must be provided.

All inventories must be in English, itemized, and individually priced. Items such as electrical appliances are subject to strict quantity limits and value thresholds.

Clearance timelines are significantly affected by transfer time to the designated Container Freight Station (CFS) — particularly for air (8–10 working days) and LCL sea (12–14 working days) — before the formal 1–3 working day clearance process begins. Plan accordingly and avoid tight

delivery deadlines.

ISPM 15 compliance is required for all wood packaging materials.