

Mali

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

Required Documents

Requirements vary significantly by importer category. All inventories must be in French, valued in euros, dated, and signed by the owner. The employer's NIF (tax identification) code at destination must be provided to the local agent.

For Diplomats (Sea and Air Shipments)

For Malian Nationals Returning with an Expatriate Contract (Sea Shipments)

For Other Categories (Air and Road Shipments)

Specific Information

Political context: Mali is governed by a military transitional government following coups in 2020 and 2021. In January 2024, Mali withdrew from ECOWAS along with Burkina Faso and Niger, forming the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). These political changes may affect customs procedures, transit routing, and diplomatic exemption processing times. Confirm all requirements with the destination agent before shipping.

Exemption for private citizens and expatriates: Private citizens not being sent to Mali by their company cannot benefit from the customs exemption, regardless of their status. It is the welcoming entity's NIF code that enables the shipper to be linked to the employer and benefit from the exemption. If the exemption is granted, private citizens and expatriates pay duties of 2.5% of the declared value of the inventory.

Redevance Statistique (statistical fee): 2.5% of the valued inventory for non-Malian citizens; 3.5% for returning Malian citizens. Diplomats are exempt.

Air freight under 200 kg: Personal effects shipments with a gross weight below 200 kg may clear customs without a formal exemption, subject to payment of approximately EUR 200 in additional fees. This simplified procedure applies only to personal effects, not to materials or equipment.

Road shipments: Customs clearance can be done at the border for non-diplomatic clients. The Fonds de Garantie Routier is a 1% tax on the valued inventory for all shipments transported by road from Abidjan (Ivory Coast) to Bamako.

Documentation language: All inventories and customs documentation must be in French.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free conditions: A certificate for free entry must be obtained from the Malian Customs head office. Once this certificate is obtained, used personal effects may be imported duty-free. The process to obtain the free-entry certificate takes approximately 20 to 40 days. Documents must be received by the destination agent at least 15 days before the shipment arrives.

New items: All new household items (less than 6 months old) are taxed at 44.28% of the

declared value. Original invoices less than 6 months old are required for all new items. New items must be listed separately on the inventory with exact amounts matching the invoices. Diplomats may be exempt if the Protocol Office signs the exemption request.

Diplomatic exemption process: The diplomat must have the Protocol Office sign the exemption request. The document must be issued by the diplomat's administration at origin and then validated by the Malian authority before being handed to the local agent. The validated exemption (Protocol plus customs) must be completed before the container arrives at port. Protocol validation takes 3 to 20 days depending on the embassy's efficiency. Customs validation requires an additional 7 to 15 days. Documents must be received by the agent at least 15 days before the shipment arrives.

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea / road shipments. Mali's political situation is fluid; confirm routing, transit permissions, and customs procedures before booking shipments.

Routing: Mali is landlocked. Sea shipments typically arrive via the port of Dakar (Senegal) or Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and travel overland to Bamako. The primary routing is by road through Ivory Coast. All containers arriving at the TOE (Terminal Opérations Extérieures) Bamako are scanned.

Air shipments: Air cargo arrives via Bamako-Senou International Airport (BKO). If all documents are in order when the shipment arrives, customs clearance takes 2 to 3 days for air freight.

Road transit charges: The Fonds de Garantie Routier is a 1% tax on the valued inventory for all shipments transported by road from Abidjan to Bamako.

Express releases: Express releases are accepted but incur additional fees of approximately EUR 100.

Document timing: Documents must be received by the destination agent at least 15 days before the shipment arrives. For diplomatic shipments, the exemption must be validated before the container arrives at the transit port (Dakar or Abidjan).

Free-entry certificate: The process to obtain the certificate takes 20 to 40 days. Plan accordingly and submit all documentation as early as possible.

Customs clearance: Sea freight clearance takes approximately 5 to 7 days after all documentation is in order. Air freight clearance takes 2 to 3 days. The Kati terminal handles vehicle inspection for road-arriving containers.

Security considerations: Northern and central Mali face ongoing security challenges. Confirm the safety of overland routing with the destination agent and monitor travel advisories from the U.S. State Department and other government sources.