

Maldives

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

If the owner is abroad when the goods arrive, a copy of the passport enclosed with a letter from the owner explaining the situation may be accepted in lieu of the original.

Specific Information

Important context: The Maldives is an Islamic republic. Customs regulations reflect Islamic law and values. Alcohol, pork products, religious materials offensive to Islam, and idols for worship are strictly prohibited from personal import. These items must not be included in any household goods shipment. See the Prohibited Items section for a complete list.

Consignment name: Goods imported for personal use must be consigned under the name of the individual. If goods are consigned under a company name, they will be treated as a commercial import and the standard import declaration process applies with full duties.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free categories: The following categories of personal effects may be imported under the duty-free allowance declared by the President of the Maldives: pre-used goods brought by Maldivian nationals returning after living abroad for 6 months or more; pre-used items brought by foreign professionals (as classified by the Ministry of Human Resources) coming to work in the Maldives for more than 6 months; personal effects imported for own use by Maldivians and foreigners already living in the Maldives; and goods carried by Maldivians and foreigners at the time of entering the country.

Duty-free threshold: Personal goods valued below MVR 10,000 on an FOB basis (excluding freight and insurance) are exempt from import duty. If the FOB value exceeds MVR 10,000, a goods declaration form must be submitted and duty is charged on the amount above the MVR 10,000 threshold. This threshold was recently increased from MVR 6,000.

Import duty rates: The Maldives applies varying import duty rates depending on the type of goods, generally ranging from 5% to 25%. Certain essential items are duty-free while luxury goods attract higher rates.

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import. The Maldives has unique logistical challenges as an island nation with no land connections and limited port infrastructure.

Port of entry: All international shipments enter through Male, either via the commercial port on Male island or via Velana International Airport (formerly Ibrahim Nasir International Airport) on Hulhule island. There is no direct shipping to individual resort islands or outer atolls; onward transport must be arranged separately, typically by speedboat, ferry, or domestic flight/seaplane.

Onward logistics: The Maldives has no road connections between atolls. Goods destined for outer islands or resorts must be transshipped from Male by sea or by domestic air transport. This adds cost, time, and logistical complexity that should be factored into planning.

Customs clearance: Customs examination is standard for all shipments of personal effects. The importer (or their authorized agent) must submit documents to the Documentation Section first, then the Cargo Examination Section for physical inspection.

Islamic law compliance: Before shipping, carefully review the prohibited items list. Alcohol, pork products, religious materials offensive to Islam, and idols for worship must not be included in any shipment. Customs will confiscate any prohibited items, and violations may result in fines or prosecution.

Visa information: Tourist visas for up to 30 days are granted on arrival at Male Airport for all nationalities, provided the traveller holds a passport valid for at least 6 months and a confirmed onward/return ticket. Work permits and long-stay visas must be arranged in advance through the employer or sponsoring organization.