

Qatar

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

All documents must be received by the agent at least 5 days prior to shipment arrival.

- Original Bill of Lading (OBL), Air Waybill (AWB), or copy of telex/express release
- Detailed inventory of household goods, itemised in accordance with Qatar Customs guidelines (as per new guidelines issued September 2017 -- at least 10 to 15 line entries for LCL shipments; at least 20 to 30 entries for a 20-foot container; at least 30 to 50 entries for a 40-foot container)
- Passport copy with Qatar work permit or residence permit (QID)
- First entry stamp to Qatar from the passport, or a valid Qatar ID (QID)
- No-Objection Letter (NOC) to import household goods into Qatar, typed in Arabic on the original letterhead of the employer or sponsor in Qatar, signed by the authorised signatory
- Clearing agency authorisation, to be completed online before the vessel arrives at Hamad Port. The customer must have a local mobile number registered under their QID to authorise online at: <https://www.ecustoms.gov.qa> *(browser access)*

Specific Information

All shipments are subject to 100% physical inspection. Additional inspection charges are billed based on the applicable tariff.

All sea import shipments inside a container must be strictly palletised. Non-palletised cargo attracts a penalty from the Customs Authority and Qterminals (the Port Authority).

The owner of the goods must be in Qatar during customs clearance. The residence visa must be obtained prior to the shipment's arrival.

All sea shipments that arrive at Doha port more than six months after the consignee's first entry date into Qatar are subject to 5% customs duty on the declared value, plus legalisation charges of approximately USD \$175. Legalisation charges do not apply to personal effects imports.

The 5% GCC tariff standard applies. Personal baggage and gifts accompanied by the shipper are exempt provided the total value does not exceed QAR 3,000, the items are personal in nature and not commercial in quantity, and the shipper is not a frequent passenger at that customs station.

All items must be declared on the packing list in full. All prohibited items detained by Customs may be destroyed without the consignee's consent. The Customs Authority may also impose substantial fines for importing prohibited goods.

Computer equipment requires a separate clearance procedure through Qatar customs. If a computer is included in a shipment, specifications must be sent prior to arrival to obtain Qatar Telecommunications approval.

All printed matter, books, films, audio/video tapes, CDs, computer software, and similar media

are subject to screening by the Ministry of Information and Education. Items are normally returned within 14 working days. These must be packed separately for easy access during inspection. Religious books require special approval from the Ministry of Education. Customers found to be carrying unauthorised material of this type are subject to severe penalties, including possible imprisonment.

Idols and figurines used for worship or as decoration must be declared prior to import, and prior approval from the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs is required.

New furniture is subject to 5% duty on CIF value plus legalisation charges. A legalised CIF invoice, certificate of origin, inventory, and original B/L or AWB are required. The invoice and certificate of origin must be endorsed by the Qatar Embassy at origin and received by the destination agent before the shipment arrives.

Duties & Taxes

Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Customs Union. The standard GCC tariff of 5% ad valorem applies to most imported goods based on the CIF (cost, insurance, freight) value. Used household goods and personal effects are generally exempt from this duty, but the exemption is not automatic -- it is subject to customs discretion and requires complete documentation. In practice, duties at 5% of the customs-declared value are frequently assessed on sea shipments, particularly where documentation is incomplete or the consignee has been in Qatar for more than six months before the shipment arrives.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

The following items are prohibited from import into Qatar:

- Alcoholic beverages (prohibited in all non-diplomatic shipments)
- Pork and pork-derived products
- Narcotics and controlled substances
- Pornographic material
- Political and religious literature or articles deemed offensive to the Qatar government or to the Islamic faith
- Firearms and explosives (without specific Ministry of Defense authorisation)
- Swords and daggers
- Wireless transmitters and receivers
- Medicines (other than those carried as personal effects with documentation -- see Section 4)
- Items made from ivory
- Buddha statues and religious idols (without prior approval from the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs -- see Section 1)
- Any products not manufactured in Qatar in accordance with Qatar law or otherwise illegally imported

All prohibited articles detained by customs may be destroyed without the consignee's consent. Significant fines apply, and in the case of certain categories (drugs, prohibited media), criminal penalties including imprisonment may result.

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Qatar applies a standard GCC import tariff of 5% ad valorem (CIF value) on most goods. The following categories have specific restrictions or higher duty rates:

Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are subject to a 100% import duty. Importing alcohol is prohibited for non-diplomatic shipments (see Section 5). Tobacco is dutiable at 100% and should be declared.

Cigarettes: up to 400 cigarettes may be imported duty-free as personal allowance (accompanied).

Personal items and gifts: up to QAR 3,000 in value may be imported duty-free if accompanied by the shipper.

Firearms: special permission from the Ministry of Defense in Qatar is required. Swords and daggers are prohibited outright (see Section 5).

Medicines: subject to restriction. Medicines found in shipments may be treated as prohibited items (see Section 5). Any prescription medications should be declared and carried with documentation of medical need; include only what is needed for personal use and confirm in advance with the destination agent.

Pork and pork products: subject to 100% duty and are strictly regulated. Pork is available only at one dedicated retail outlet for non-Muslim residents of Qatar. Pork products must not be included in any shipment.

Audio/video tapes, books, CDs, films, and similar media: subject to screening by the Ministry of Information and Education (see Section 1). Returned within approximately 14 working days.

Religious literature: all non-Islamic religious books require special approval from the Ministry of Education before import.

Special Categories

For Diplomatic Removals

Documents required: original B/L or AWB or telex/express release; detailed inventory; letter of protocol from the relevant Embassy processed with the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to vessel arrival; valid Qatar ID and passport; manual authorisation for the clearing agency.

The MOFA letter from the Embassy is required for duty and inspection exemption. All documents including the original MOFA approval must be submitted to the Customs Authority before the vessel arrives. After the vessel arrives, it is at the discretion of the Customs officer whether 100% inspection is still required, even if duty exemption has been approved.

Alcohol is permitted in diplomatic shipments but is limited to the annual quota agreed between the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the respective Embassy. All alcohol must be declared on the packing list and in the MOFA letter.

Consignment Instructions

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

All documents must be received by the agent at least 5 days prior to arrival. The clearing agency authorisation must be completed online before the vessel arrives at Hamad Port; the consignee must have a local Qatar mobile number registered under their QID to complete this process.

All sea shipments must be strictly palletised. Non-palletised cargo incurs penalty charges from both the Customs Authority and Qterminals. Ensure this is specified to the origin agent and packing crew.

LCL shipments should be planned with extended lead times: deconsolidation at Doha port can take up to two weeks, and total customs clearance and delivery may take up to three weeks after vessel arrival.

Printed matter, books, tapes, films, CDs, and all similar media must be packed separately and clearly labelled for easy customs access. Failure to do so can result in confiscation and criminal penalties.

Idols, figurines, and items used for worship or decoration must be declared prior to shipping, and approval from the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs must be obtained before the shipment departs.

Computer equipment must be cleared separately; provide all equipment specifications to the agent prior to arrival for Qatar Telecommunications regulatory approval.

New furniture requires a legalised invoice and certificate of origin endorsed by the Qatar

Embassy at origin -- these must reach the destination agent before the shipment arrives.

Storage or demurrage charges accrue from the date of receipt and will be billed to the owner of the goods or the agent. Unpredictable additional expenses can include inspection fees, palletisation penalties, deconsolidation charges, and labour charges for inspection.