

Russia

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.

For Russian Nationals (returning residents)

- Copy of passport
- Packing list / detailed inventory (with values and descriptions)
- Telex release bill of lading or copy of air waybill (AWB)
- Customs declaration form (stamped and signed by Russian Customs at the time of the owner's arrival -- required for returning citizens claiming duty-free import of unaccompanied baggage)
- Power of attorney (must be notarized by a Russian notary)

For Foreign Citizens (transferring residence)

- Copy of passport
- Copy of valid visa
- Telex release bill of lading or copy of AWB
- Detailed inventory or pro-forma invoice
- Letter of employment on company letterhead, addressed to Russian authorities
- Customs declaration form
- Registration with the Federal Migration Service (FMS)
- Power of attorney (notarized by a Russian notary)

For Diplomats and Accredited Individuals

- Copy of diplomatic passport, diplomatic visa, and diplomatic card
- Copy of accreditation card
- Packing list / detailed inventory
- Telex release bill of lading or copy of AWB
- Power of attorney (on embassy letterhead)
- Letter on embassy letterhead addressed to Russian authorities

Specific Information

Russia applies customs duties to virtually all non-diplomatic household goods shipments. There is no general duty-free transfer-of-residence exemption for foreign nationals comparable to those found in EU countries. The standard rate for non-diplomatic personal effects is EUR 4 per kilogram or 30% of the CIF (cost, insurance, freight) value, whichever is higher.

All inbound non-diplomatic shipments are subject to customs declaration for each Harmonized System (HS) code. The cost of the customs declaration is determined during clearance. Payment is made in Russian rubles (RUB) directly to the Federal Customs Service; the exchange rate applied is the Russian Central Bank rate on the day of import clearance. Budget additional funds

to account for exchange rate movement between booking and clearance -- payment processing through the FTS typically takes 3 to 4 working days.

The detailed inventory must include photographs and declared values for all works of art, antiques, or objects of cultural significance. For each artwork, the inventory must specify value, dimensions, author, year or period, and materials.

For returning Russian citizens who carried a Customs declaration form on departure, the form must be presented upon re-entry with Customs stamp and signature in order to qualify for duty-free treatment of unaccompanied baggage.

The power of attorney must be executed before a Russian notary. For diplomatic shipments, it may instead be issued on embassy letterhead.

Shipments arriving before the owner should be coordinated carefully. Pre-arrival importation is technically possible but involves additional guarantees and procedural complexity -- contact the destination agent for current requirements.

ISPM 15 compliance is required for all solid wood packing materials.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

The following items are prohibited from import into Russia:

- Weapons of all kinds (without proper permits and licenses) [PERMIT REQUIRED]
- Ammunition and explosives (without authorization) [PERMIT REQUIRED]
- Narcotics and psychotropic substances
- Pornographic materials
- Toxic, radioactive, and biologically dangerous materials
- Flora and fauna protected under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) [CITES]
- Technical receiving apparatus operating at frequencies above 9 kHz (without authorization) [PERMIT REQUIRED]
- Goods originating in countries subject to Russian counter-sanctions (product categories and country lists subject to change -- confirm with destination agent)
- Printed materials, audio-visual content, or other media deemed by Russian authorities to undermine state security or public order

Note: Since 2022, Russia has implemented extensive counter-sanctions affecting the import of a broad range of goods from Western countries. Shipments containing items of Western or sanctioned-country origin may be subject to seizure or return. This situation is fluid; always verify with the destination agent prior to booking.

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Personal allowances for travelers entering Russia (accompanied baggage):

Persons aged 21 and older may import up to 2 litres of alcoholic beverages duty-free. Tobacco products: up to 400 cigarettes, or 200 cigarillos, or 100 cigars, or 500 grams of tobacco. If more than one type of tobacco product is carried, only half of each category's allowance applies.

Unaccompanied baggage and household goods shipments:

There is a combined allowance threshold for unaccompanied baggage of 35 kg and/or a customs value of RUB 65,000. Goods exceeding this threshold are subject to customs duties at EUR 4 per kilogram over the limit or 30% of the excess value, whichever is higher.

Currency and valuables:

Currency (cash), precious jewelry, precious metals and stones, and pharmaceutical medicines may only be imported as accompanied baggage and must be declared to customs authorities at the time of the owner's arrival. Currency imports exceeding USD 10,000 (or equivalent) must be declared. Foreign currency may be imported freely but amounts above the declaration threshold require documentation. Export of currency is subject to separate restrictions.

Firearms and ammunition:

Subject to strict licensing and permit requirements. See Prohibited Items section for firearms imported without authorization.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air, sea, and road shipments. Given the significant changes to Russia's customs environment since 2022, advance coordination with a trusted in-country partner is essential.

All shipments require a detailed inventory, including values for each item. Inventories should be prepared carefully -- inaccurate or incomplete inventories can lead to delays, inspections, or penalties.

Currency exchange risk is a significant factor in duty calculations. The customs duty (where applicable at EUR 4/kg or 30% CIF) is assessed at the Russian Central Bank rate on the day of clearance. Because payment takes 3 to 4 working days to process, owners should deposit additional funds above the calculated amount to cover exchange rate movement.

Shipments containing artworks, antiques, or culturally significant objects are subject to heightened scrutiny and require detailed documentation in the inventory (see Household Goods section above). Items of cultural value may require export clearance from the originating country and import authorization from Russian customs.

There is no standard duty-free transfer-of-residence regime for non-diplomats. Members should advise clients to budget realistically for customs duties, which can be substantial.

International sanctions affect both the movement of goods into Russia and the ability of Western freight and banking networks to facilitate transactions. Some carriers, freight forwarders, and banks have suspended Russia operations. Confirm capacity and routing with the destination agent well in advance of shipment.