

El Salvador

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

Specific Information

Shipment timing: The shipment must arrive within 90 days of the shipper's arrival.

Customs clearance: Approximately 2-3 business days. All shipments are subject to inspection. The shipper must be present for customs clearance.

Alienation restriction: Items cannot be sold, loaned, or disposed of during the shipper's stay in El Salvador.

Inventory requirements: Must be in Spanish and include the value of each item. Electrical appliances must list make, model, and serial number.

Bitcoin legal tender (2021 update): El Salvador adopted Bitcoin as legal tender in September 2021 alongside the U.S. dollar. Customs duties and taxes may be payable in USD or Bitcoin. Confirm payment methods with the destination agent.

Currency: United States dollar (USD) is the primary currency. Bitcoin is also legal tender.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free conditions: Household goods and personal effects are duty-free provided they have been owned and used by the shipper for at least 6 months.

Returning residents: Must have lived abroad for at least 3 years for duty-free import and provide proof of residency abroad. Citizens must not have returned to El Salvador for more than 30 consecutive days during the 3-year period of official residency abroad. Contact the destination agent for specific eligibility requirements.

Foreigners with bank guarantee: Foreigners may qualify for a 6-month delay of duty payment by providing a bank guarantee equal to the customs valuation of the shipment. The payment is required upon expiration of the guarantee.

Diplomats and international organizations: Granted duty-free entry. Documents must be received by the destination agent 15 days prior to the shipper's arrival.

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

Shipper must be present: The shipper must attend customs clearance in person.

Inventory in Spanish: The detailed inventory must be in Spanish with values for each item and full specifications for electrical appliances (make, model, serial number).

90-day shipment window: The shipment must arrive within 90 days of the shipper's arrival. Shipments arriving outside this window may lose duty-free eligibility.

Returning resident 3-year rule: The 3-year residency abroad requirement is strict, and the

shipper must not have returned to El Salvador for more than 30 consecutive days during that period. The certificate of residence from the Salvadoran consulate must verify these facts.

Documents 15 days in advance (diplomats): Diplomatic documents must reach the destination agent 15 days before the shipper's arrival.

NIT number required: The shipper needs a Número de Identificación Tributaria from the Ministry of Finance. The destination agent can advise on obtaining this.

Central American customs union: El Salvador is part of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and has harmonized some customs procedures with Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Goods transiting through neighboring countries may benefit from simplified procedures.