

Trinidad and Tobago

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 all importers

- Valid passport
- Original Bill of Lading or express release
- Detailed inventory
- Tax ID
- Importer Registration Number (N number) — must be applied for before the shipment arrives; contact the destination agent to initiate this process early
- Two passport-size photographs

For non-resident foreign nationals

- Work permit
- Import Licence (for refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioning units — from the Ministry of Trade and Industry)
- Proof of address: lease agreement with ID copies of all signatories

For returning nationals (residents)

- Affidavit sworn before a local Commissioner of Affidavit
- Travel pattern document from the Trinidad and Tobago Immigration Department
- Proof of address: utility bill
- Supporting evidence of time lived overseas — such as payslips, rental/lease agreements, work visas, employment letters, tax returns, or a letter from a landlord

For diplomats

- Bill of Lading and inventory
- Exemption certificate (applied for by the diplomatic agency before the shipment arrives — documents must be submitted prior to arrival)

Specific Information

A Customs interview is required for all household goods shipments. The shipper must be present at the Customs interview and container examination, which takes place at the container examination station at the port.

Used household goods and personal effects may be imported duty-free provided the items are used and have been in the shipper's possession for at least one year.

For shipments destined to Tobago, Port of Spain should be the port of entry. The Bill of Lading must show Tobago as the final destination.

The Importer Registration Number must be obtained before the shipment arrives. The shipper

should contact the destination agent as early as possible to initiate this application. Returning nationals must provide documentary evidence of the time they lived overseas. Customs will review payslips, lease agreements, employment records, visas, and similar documents.

New items less than 1 year old are subject to duties and taxes.

ISPM 15 compliance is required for all wood packaging materials (heat treatment to 56°C for 30 minutes, or methyl bromide fumigation). ISPM 15 requirements do not apply to wood 6mm or less in thickness or to processed wood made with glue, heat, and pressure.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Firearms and ammunition (without authorization from the Police Commissioner) PERMIT REQUIRED
- Narcotics and illegal drugs
- Communications equipment such as CB radios and walkie-talkies (without authorization)
- Wildlife and wildlife products covered by CITES
- Counterfeit goods

Restricted / Dutiable Items

- Refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioning units: require an Import Licence from the Ministry of Trade and Industry before clearance
- New items (less than 1 year old): subject to duties and taxes — provide a valued listing
- Alcohol: maximum 1 quart duty-free per person
- Cigarettes (persons 17 and older): maximum 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or ½ lb (approximately 227g) loose tobacco duty-free
- Building materials (e.g., tiles): subject to duty
- Firearms and weapons: require permission from the Police Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago PERMIT REQUIRED

Consignment Instructions

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

The shipper must be physically present for the Customs interview and container examination. This is mandatory for all household goods shipments and cannot be delegated. Plan the shipper's arrival in Trinidad and Tobago accordingly.

The Importer Registration Number must be applied for before the shipment arrives — this process takes time and should be initiated as early as possible through the destination agent.

For Tobago-bound shipments, use Port of Spain as the port of entry and note Tobago as the final destination on the Bill of Lading.

Diplomatic agencies must apply for the exemption certificate before the shipment arrives. Documents must be submitted prior to arrival to allow processing time.

ISPM 15 compliance is required for wood packaging materials.