

Tanzania

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 Returning Residents (Tanzanian nationals)

- Detailed, itemized packing list in English, dated and signed by the shipper
- Original valid passport (with entry stamp; destination agent requires it in hand)
- Expired visa from abroad (confirming duration of expatriation)
- Copy of TIN (Taxpayer Identification Number) certificate
- Two originals of Ocean Bill of Lading, Sea Waybill, Telex Release, Airway Bill, or Road Consignment Note (RCN)
- Invoice for all new items

For Expatriates (non-diplomatic foreign nationals)

- Detailed, itemized packing list in English, dated and signed by the shipper
- Original valid passport (with entry stamp)
- Original Work Permit
- Original Residence Permit
- Copy of employment contract (required by Customs for cross-border road shipments)
- Copy of TIN certificate
- Two originals of Bill of Lading, Sea Waybill, Telex Release, Airway Bill, or RCN
- Invoice for all new items

For Diplomats

- Detailed, itemized packing list in English, dated and signed by the shipper
- Passport copy
- PRO6 form (diplomatic exemption) — must be applied for through the shipper's employer/mission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; documents must be express-mailed to the destination agent at least 30 days before the shipment arrives so the employer can apply for the duty exemption
- Two originals of Bill of Lading, Sea Waybill, Telex Release, Airway Bill, or RCN
- TIN certificate

For NGOs

- Exemption certificate accompanied by an approved Form VAT 220
- Packing list, passport, and Bill of Lading

Specific Information

All non-diplomatic shipments are subject to 100% physical inspection and verification by Customs officials.

To qualify for duty- and tax-free clearance, the shipment must arrive after the importer has obtained their Work Permit, Residence Permit, and TIN certificate. If a shipment arrives before these documents are issued, port or airport storage charges, demurrage, and penalties will accrue from day one. It is strongly advised to hold the shipment at origin until all documents are confirmed in hand.

Personal effects must be imported within 3 months (90 days) of the importer's first arrival in Tanzania. The 90-day period can be extended for a further 3 months on request. Customs counts the first date of entry into Tanzania as the start date, even if the initial entry was on a temporary visa.

Returning Tanzanian nationals must have lived abroad continuously for at least 12 months with no time spent in Tanzania during that period. Any stay in Tanzania, even a few days, within the previous 12 months makes the shipment fully taxable.

New items are always taxable. For non-diplomats, all wooden furniture and electronic appliances are subject to excise duty with no exemption, even when the rest of the shipment qualifies for duty-free clearance.

Taxes on new and dutiable items for non-diplomats: Import Duty 25% of CIF value, plus VAT 18% of CIF, plus Railway Development Levy (RDL) 1.5% of CIF, plus Customs Processing Fee 0.6% of CIF.

Diplomatic shipments are exempt from VAT but are subject to a wharfage tax of approximately 1.5–1.6% of the Customs value declared on the PRO6 form. Physical inspection is not required for diplomatic shipments with a valid PRO6.

Shipper-owned containers are dutiable.

Port storage charges begin 7 days after arrival at approximately USD 20 plus VAT per day for a 20-foot container and USD 40 plus VAT for a 40-foot container for the first 21 days, doubling thereafter. Demurrage accrues after a free period of 7–14 days (depending on the shipping line) at approximately USD 4–14 per day for a 20-foot container and USD 8–30 for a 40-foot container.

Documents should reach the destination agent at least 2 weeks (15 days) before the vessel arrives. Clearance typically takes approximately 2 weeks when documents are in order and the shipment contains no dutiable items.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Firearms and ammunition (without specific authorization) PERMIT REQUIRED
- Narcotics and unlawful drugs
- Elephant tusks and ivory CITES
- Wildlife products from protected species CITES
- Pornographic materials
- Toy guns
- Oil and petroleum products
- Foodstuffs (for non-diplomatic shipments without import permit)
- Alcohol (for non-diplomatic shipments — import treated as prohibited/heavily dutiable)
- Detergents (in shipments)
- Telecommunications items (without specific authorization)
- Grains

Restricted / Dutiable Items

- Food items, alcohol, medicines, and minerals are not treated as personal effects and are taxed heavily (duty rates of 50–100% of CIF value). A special import permit from the relevant government authority (Ministry of Health for medicines, Ministry of Natural Resources for minerals) may be required prior to the shipment's arrival.
- Trophies: require a special import permit.
- Consumables (food, beverages, medicines, cigarettes): prohibited in non-diplomatic

shipments unless an import permit is obtained from government authorities. Diplomats may import consumables with the required permits.

- New furniture and electronics: subject to excise duty for all non-diplomatic importers — no exemption available.
- Cigarettes: restricted; include in personal effects at the owner's risk.

Consignment Instructions

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

Do not ship before the Work Permit, Residence Permit, and TIN certificate are all confirmed in hand. For diplomatic shipments, documents must be express-mailed to the destination agent at least 30 days before arrival so that the PRO6 exemption can be processed.

Documents must reach the destination agent at least 2 weeks before the vessel arrives. Delays result in port storage and demurrage charges from day 8, which escalate rapidly. All documentation must be in English; non-English documents incur a translation fee of approximately USD 50.

New items, wooden furniture, and electronic appliances are always subject to duty and excise for non-diplomatic shippers, regardless of the overall shipment's exemption status. Shipper-owned containers are dutiable.