

Uganda

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

- Original passport with entry stamp
- Packing list in English
- Detailed valued inventory in English, dated and signed by the owner of the goods
- Tax Identification Number (TIN)
- Invoice for all new items included in the shipment
- Original bill of lading (OBL), or express/telex release (2 copies)

For Foreign Citizens / Expatriates

- Letter of employment or copy of employment contract
- Work permit
- Original residence permit

For Diplomats

- PRO6 form
- Exemption letter from the relevant embassy or mission

Specific Information

Port Wharfage: A wharfage fee of 1.6% applies to all shipments processed through Mombasa (the primary sea gateway for Uganda). This fee is levied on the declared value of the cargo.

First Arrivals by Air: For the first shipment arriving by air, the owner of the goods must present their original passport with entry stamp and a letter of employment.

Returning Residents: Returning Ugandan residents should have a residence permit from their country of residence abroad.

Grace Period: A grace period of seven days applies after arrival of the shipment for documentation and clearance purposes before storage fees begin accruing.

ISPM 15: All wooden packing materials (pallets, crates, dunnage) must comply with ISPM 15 phytosanitary treatment standards.

Uganda Electronic Single Window: Customs clearance in Uganda is processed through the Uganda Electronic Single Window platform. The destination agent and a licensed customs broker must be engaged well in advance of the shipment's arrival.

Uganda is a member of the East African Community (EAC), and customs procedures are governed by the East African Community Customs Management Act (EACCMA). Duty-free import of used household goods and personal effects is available to returning residents and qualifying expatriates. Non-qualifying consignees are subject to 25% import duty, 18% VAT, and 10% in other taxes and levies — confirm current rates with the destination agent.

Practical Note: Uganda is landlocked. Almost all sea freight routes through the port of Mombasa (Kenya) before onward road transport to Kampala. Mombasa clearance procedures and transit documentation add time and cost to the process. The destination agent should be engaged before shipment.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

The following goods are prohibited from import into Uganda under the EACCMA and the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017. Persons found in possession of prohibited items must pass through the Red Channel and declare them; penalties range up to five years imprisonment or a fine of 50% of the goods' value, plus destruction costs.

- Narcotics and drugs under international control
- Pornographic materials in all formats
- Counterfeit currency and false money
- Counterfeit goods of all kinds
- Hazardous wastes and materials subject to the Basel Convention
- All soaps and cosmetic products containing mercury
- Used tyres for light commercial vehicles and passenger cars
- Worn underwear garments (all types)
- Plastic articles less than 30 microns used for conveyance or packing of goods
- Distilled beverages containing harmful essential oils (including thujone, absinthe, and similar substances)
- Mercury compounds (agricultural and industrial applications — specific chemicals listed on the URA website)
- Industrial chemicals including crocidolite, PCBs, PCTs, PBBs, and related substances
- Cultural artifacts and objects of cultural importance (export also prohibited)
- Some wildlife species (in accordance with CITES and domestic wildlife law) [CITES]
- Explosive materials and explosive caps for toy pistols
- Aerosol sprays containing benzene
- CFC- and HCFC-based refrigerants in refrigerators, air conditioners, and insulation materials
- Incandescent lamps of 75 watts and above
- Bull bars (vehicle frontal protection bars)
- Batteries containing mercury
- PVC teethingers and teething rings
- Used electronics (computers, laptops, monitors, used fridges, TV sets) — except for confirmed personal use
- Second-hand motor vehicles outside the permitted age bands (see Section 2)
- Second-hand motor vehicle tyres
- Goods bearing marks or designs likely to cause outrage against any religion or public morality

Restricted / Dutiable Items

The following personal allowances apply to travelers aged 18 and over entering Uganda. Items exceeding these allowances are subject to import duties and taxes.

Tobacco: Cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, and tobacco not exceeding 250 grams in total weight.

Alcohol: Spirits (including liquor) not exceeding 1 liter, and wine not exceeding 2 liters.

Perfume and toilet water: Not exceeding 500 ml in total, of which no more than 250 ml may be perfume.

New items: Any new goods included in a household goods shipment are subject to import duties and taxes, regardless of the duty-free status of the used goods.

Hunting weapons: Authorization from the Ministry of Internal Affairs is required prior to import.

[PERMIT REQUIRED]

Endangered species and CITES-listed products: Permission from CITES and/or the relevant Ugandan authority is required. [CITES / PERMIT REQUIRED]

Ivory and tortoise shell: Subject to restrictions under domestic and international law. [CITES]

Consignment Instructions

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

Routing: Uganda is landlocked. Sea freight typically arrives at Mombasa, Kenya, and travels overland to Kampala. This transit adds significant time and cost. Agents must account for Mombasa port procedures, Kenyan transit documentation, and road haulage when quoting and planning. The Uganda Electronic Single Window system at singlewindow.go.ug handles customs pre-clearance.

Licensed Customs Agent: All customs declarations must be handled by a URA-licensed customs agent. Confirm the agent's license status through the URA at ura.go.ug.

Document Language: All packing lists and inventories must be in English. The inventory must be dated and signed by the owner of the goods and must include values for all items.

New Items: Any new or unused items in a household goods shipment will be assessed for import duty and taxes regardless of the duty-free status of the other goods. Advise clients accordingly and ensure new items are invoiced separately.

Grace Period: A seven-day grace period applies from the shipment's arrival before storage fees begin. Clearance should be initiated immediately upon arrival.

Diplomatic Shipments: Diplomatic shipments are exempt from physical customs examination. A PRO6 form and an exemption letter are required.