Country Guide (IAM)

Venezuela

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

- Passport with recent Venezuelan immigration entry stamp
- Detailed inventory (PBO contents may be listed, unlike in many countries — see note below)
- Original bill of lading (OBL) or air waybill (AWB)
- Copy of the owner of the goods' Fiscal Information Registry (RIF — Registro de Información Fiscal) document
- Sanitation permit (required if the shipment contains alcohol or food items)

For Returning Venezuelan Citizens and Foreigners with Resident Visa

- Certificate of Use (Certificado de Uso), duly stamped by the Venezuelan Consulate at the origin country
- Letter of employment (if applicable)

For Non-Residents with Transeunte Visa (Category 3 — business, investors, students, workers)

- Certificate of Use obtained at the Venezuelan Consulate or Embassy in the country of origin
- Documentation demonstrating the goods have been used for at least 6 months

For Diplomats

- Diplomatic franchise document (produced by the Embassy before Customs clearance)
- Original OBL / AWB (2 copies required)
- Detailed inventory

Specific Information

RIF Requirement: The Fiscal Information Registry (RIF) document is required for both import and export shipments. The owner of the goods must hold a RIF.

Owner Must Arrive Before Shipment: Venezuelan citizens and foreigners must arrive in Venezuela before the shipment arrives at the port or airport to avoid clearance complications.

PBO Note: Unlike most countries, Venezuela permits packed-by-owner (PBO) contents to be listed on the detailed inventory. PBO descriptions should still be specific — avoid vague or generic entries.

Values on Documents: Values should not be declared on shipping documents or on the Certificate of Use stamped by the Venezuelan Consulate. Including value information can lead to higher duty assessments.

Diplomatic Shipments: The diplomatic franchise must be produced by the Embassy before Customs clearance begins. Storage and container demurrage charges may accumulate during the process of obtaining the diplomatic franchise — advise diplomatic clients of this risk.

Antiques: Documented antiques shipped separately may attract high duties. If antiques are to be included, ship them with the household goods and ensure proper documentation.

ISPM 15: All wooden crates and lift vans must bear a certification seal confirming methyl bromide (MB) or heat treatment (HT). This does not apply to paper products. Shipments arriving without certification will be returned to the country of origin.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-Free Eligibility: Importation is free of customs duties and taxes for returning Venezuelan citizens and returning foreigners holding a resident visa, provided:

If a Certificate of Use is not presented to Customs, the shipment is subject to payment of duties.

Non-Residents (Transeunte Visa): Holders of a Category 3 Transeunte Visa (for businesses, investors, students, and workers) are also eligible to obtain a Certificate of Use at a Venezuelan Consulate or Embassy in the origin country, enabling duty-free import. The household goods must have been used for at least 6 months and show visible signs of use.

Duty Rates (if applicable): Customs duties range from 5% to 20% of the CIF (cost, insurance, freight) value. An import tax of 1% of CIF value also applies. VAT at 16% is calculated on the sum of the CIF value, duties, and import tax.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Firearms (without authorization from the relevant Venezuelan authority) [PERMIT REQUIRED]
- Narcotics and controlled drugs
- Pornographic materials

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Cigarettes: 200 cigarettes per person (duty-free allowance for accompanied personal baggage).

Cigars: 25 cigars per person.

Perfume: 4 small bottles per person.

Alcohol: Up to 2 liters per person for air travel; up to one case per sea shipment container. A sanitation permit is required for alcohol included in a household goods shipment. Alcohol is subject to confiscation if not covered by the sanitation permit.

Consignment Instructions

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

Certificate of Use — Obtain at Origin. The Certificado de Uso must be obtained and stamped at the Venezuelan Consulate in the origin country before the shipment departs. It cannot be obtained in Venezuela after arrival. Without it, the shipment will be subject to full duties ranging from 5% to 20% of CIF value plus VAT.

Do Not Declare Values on Shipping Documents. Values shown on the OBL, AWB, or Certificate of Use can trigger higher duty assessments. Keep value documentation (purchase receipts, insurance documents) separate from the shipping papers.

ISPM 15 — Critical. All wooden packing materials (crates, lift vans, pallets) must have a clearly visible MB or HT certification seal. Shipments without this certification will be returned to the country of origin. Verify ISPM 15 compliance before loading.

Owner Arrival — Before Shipment. The owner of the goods must arrive in Venezuela before the shipment reaches port or airport. Coordinate travel dates carefully.

Diplomatic Franchise Lead Time. Diplomatic clients must obtain the franchise from their Embassy before Customs clearance. Storage and demurrage fees accumulate while this documentation is being prepared — inform diplomatic clients of this risk and factor it into cost estimates.

Vehicle Pre-Permits. For vehicles, the temporary import permit and COVENIN/SENORCA permits (for 2000+ model years) must be arranged before the vehicle departs origin. Shipping a vehicle without these pre-clearances leads to significant delays and possible confiscation.

Operational Risk. Venezuela's port infrastructure, Customs staffing, and regulatory stability are all significantly affected by the country's ongoing political and economic situation. Agents should maintain close contact with trusted local partners in Caracas and the port of La Guaira, and should advise clients in writing of the heightened risk of delays, unexpected costs, and procedural changes.