

Zambia

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.

Required Documents

- Copy of passport certified by the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA)
- Packing list
- Original bill of lading (OBL) — express release accepted — or air waybill (AWB)
- Copy of resident permit or work permit, certified by the Zambia Revenue Authority
- Original letter of employment
- Tax Identification Number (TPIN)
- Detailed inventory in English, dated, valued, and signed by the owner of the goods — for any new items purchased less than 6 months before the shipment's arrival, attach the original purchase invoices

Specific Information

ISPM 15: All wooden packing materials must comply with ISPM 15 phytosanitary treatment standards.

The owner of the goods should be in Zambia before the shipment arrives. All required documents must be received by the destination agent before the shipment arrives to minimize port charges and storage costs. If Customs requests an interview with the shipper, the shipper must be present.

Documents must be certified by the Zambia Revenue Authority — straightforward passport copies are not sufficient. Allow time for certification before the shipment is dispatched.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Unlawful drugs and narcotics
- Pornographic materials
- Counterfeit goods
- Cultural artifacts and objects of cultural importance
- Henna
- Palm trees and any by-products of palm trees
- Explosive materials

Wildlife Products — Mandatory Minimum Sentence Warning: It is a serious criminal offence under both Zambian law and U.S. law to buy, possess, or transport animals or animal products including hippo or warthog tusks, tortoise shell, rhino horn, elephant ivory, or any items made from these materials. In Zambia, penalties include significant fines and a mandatory minimum

five-year prison sentence. Asset forfeiture applies in addition. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife actively screens at all international ports of entry and departure. Local sellers frequently attempt to sell prohibited items to foreign tourists — it is the buyer's responsibility to avoid prohibited purchases. This warning applies equally to members' clients and their household goods shipments. [CITES]

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Electrical items: 25% import duty + 16% VAT.

Computers: 15% import duty + 16% VAT.

Alcohol and spirits: Must be shipped separately from a personal effects shipment. Subject to 100% tax.

Tobacco (personal allowance): Cigarettes (200), cigars (50), cigarillos (100), tobacco (500 g).

Alcohol (personal allowance): 2.5 liters of alcohol and 2.5 liters of spirits.

Firearms and ammunition: Authorization from the territorial administration required. [PERMIT REQUIRED]

Hunting weapons: Authorization from the Ministry of Interior required. [PERMIT REQUIRED]

Endangered species and CITES-listed items: Authorization from CITES required; this includes any products or parts thereof. [CITES / PERMIT REQUIRED]

Medication: Subject to inspection and import controls.

Consignment Instructions

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

Documents Before Arrival — Critical. All documents must reach the Zambia destination agent before the shipment arrives. Zambia's port (the primary landlocked route goes through Dar es Salaam in Tanzania or Durban in South Africa) involves transit charges that accumulate rapidly. Late documents lead to significant demurrage and storage costs.

ZRA Certification. Copies of the passport and resident/work permit must be certified by the Zambia Revenue Authority, not merely notarized or photocopied. Arrange this certification process before the shipment departs origin.

New Items — Separate Inventory. Any items purchased less than 6 months before the shipment arrives must be listed separately on a detailed valued inventory with original purchase invoices attached. Failing to identify new items correctly is a common cause of clearance complications.

Alcohol — Ship Separately. Alcohol and spirits must not be included in the household goods shipment. They must be shipped separately and are subject to 100% tax. Advise clients at the booking stage.

Wildlife Awareness. Remind clients that Zambia has a strict zero-tolerance policy on prohibited wildlife products. Items such as carved wooden figures, curios, taxidermy, or decorative items that incorporate animal parts may be subject to seizure and prosecution. Advise clients not to include any animal products of uncertain origin.

Routing. Zambia is landlocked. Sea freight typically routes through Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) via the TAZARA rail corridor, or through Durban (South Africa) by road and rail. Both routes add transit time and cost. Confirm routing with the destination agent.