

Zimbabwe

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
- Original bill of lading (OBL), express release, or air waybill (AWB)
- Original detailed inventory with serial numbers of all electrical appliances
- Original packing list with values stated in USD, in English
- Freight invoice (for customs clearance purposes)
- Resident permit, work permit, or letter of employment

For Those on a Work Permit

- Letter of appointment from the organization in Zimbabwe
- The resident stamp, work permit, or letter of employment must explain the details of the new contract in Zimbabwe

For Returning Zimbabwean Citizens

- Payslips for the past 2 years
- Bank statement for the past 6 months
- Exit stamp showing when the owner of the goods left Zimbabwe (required for interview with Customs)

For Diplomats

- Report order letter from the Embassy in Zimbabwe
- Diplomatic ID card
- Duty exemption letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe

Specific Information

Diplomatic Shipments: A duty exemption letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be obtained before clearance. The Embassy in Zimbabwe initiates this process. Coordinate timing carefully to avoid storage charges while the exemption letter is being obtained.

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

The owner of the goods must be present during Customs clearance. Customs will inspect all shipments.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-Free Eligibility: Goods must be household goods and personal effects only. Diplomats are

exempt from duties. Returning Zimbabwean citizens who have lived abroad for 2 or more years are also exempt from duties — this exemption mirrors the diplomatic exemption and requires documentation demonstrating the 2-year period of residence abroad (payslips and bank statements are the standard supporting evidence; Customs will conduct an interview with the returning resident).

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Narcotics and illegal drugs
- Explosive materials
- Foreign soil
- Pornographic, defamatory, or obscene publications
- Cultural artifacts and objects of cultural importance
- Henna
- Palm trees and any products thereof

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Wine and spirits: 2 liters duty-free allowance per person.

Cigarettes: 200 cigarettes duty-free per person.

Plants and seeds: An agricultural certificate and phytosanitary certificate are required (obtain from the Embassy in the origin country). [PERMIT REQUIRED]

Animals: Agricultural certificate and phytosanitary certificate required (obtain from the Embassy in the origin country). [PERMIT REQUIRED]

Medication: Subject to import controls. Controlled substances require prior authorization.

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

Endangered species and CITES-listed products: Authorization from CITES required. [CITES / 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.

Owner Presence Required. The owner of the goods must be present during Customs clearance. This is a firm requirement in Zimbabwe — clearance cannot be completed in the owner's absence. Coordinate travel and shipping dates accordingly.

All Shipments Inspected. Customs will physically inspect all shipments. This adds time to the clearance process and may add examination costs. Ensure the inventory is accurate, itemized, and includes serial numbers for all electrical appliances.

Returning Citizens — Interview. Customs will conduct an interview with returning Zimbabwean citizens claiming the duty exemption. The client must bring their payslips for the past 2 years and bank statements for the past 6 months, along with their passport showing the exit stamp from when they departed Zimbabwe. Prepare clients for this interview in advance.

Diplomatic Exemption Letter Lead Time. The duty exemption letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be in hand before clearance begins. Storage and demurrage charges accumulate while this letter is being obtained. Advise diplomatic clients and their embassies to initiate the request promptly.

Pet Import Permit (Non-SADC Countries). For pets from countries other than the six SADC exempted states (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa), the import permit must be obtained from the Director of Animal Health well before travel. The permit is valid for 6 months. Allow sufficient time for processing.

Currency Note. Zimbabwe has experienced significant currency instability. Packing list values must be stated in USD. Confirm with the destination agent how duties and fees are currently being assessed and paid, as the currency and payment environment can change.

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