

Saudi Arabia Country Guide

Country Guide: Saudi Arabia

Due to the current coronavirus/COVID-19 situation and restrictions in various countries, the below information may not be accurate. This pandemic is a fluid situation. Check with authorities for local laws and restrictions concerning movements.

Updated: August 19, 2016

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Used Household Goods and Personal Effects

Documents Required

- Copy of passport with entry visa page
- Original bill of lading (OBL) / air waybill
- (AWB) Detailed and valued inventory packing list
- Purchase receipts for electrical / electronic appliances
- Certificate of insurance, if applicable
- Letter of authorization attested by the Saudi Chamber of Commerce (for government employees, only the seal of the government agency is required)
- Copies of residence permit (Iqama) / Saudi National's ID (Bataqa)
- Copy of diplomatic ID / passport (diplomats)
- Customs duty and inspection exemption certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (diplomats)

Specific Information

- All incoming shipments are subject to a rigorous full inspection.
- The format for the letter of authorization should be provided by agent to the consignee upon arrival at the destination.
- Items valued over SR 10,000.00 (approximately US\$ 3,000.00) are subject to Customs duty and payment assessed on the cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value.
- If purchase receipts for electrical / electronic appliances are unavailable, Customs authorities will assess the goods based on the local value of the items.
- All containerized shipments must be on pallets or in lift vans; otherwise, the seaport authority will impose penalty for improper stowage.
- The owner of the goods must be present in Saudi Arabia at the time of Customs clearance to clear the shipment.
- The importation of prohibited items may be considered a smuggling attempt and may result in immediate confiscation, heavy penalties, fines, and/or imprisonment.
- Diplomats must obtain the duty and inspection exemption certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; otherwise, the shipment will be subject to a physical inspection and duty payment.

Motor Vehicles

Documents Required

- Certificate of title / car registration
- Saudi Arabian Standard Organization (SASO) conformity certificate from the country of origin
- Police clearance / de-registrations from the country of origin
- Proof of ownership (purchase invoice, etc.)
- OBL

Specific Information

- The Customs duty for cars is approximately 5% based on customs final assessed value.
- Cars must be left-hand drive.
- Only one car can be imported (foreigners).
- Cars older than 5 years are not allowed for import into Saudi Arabia.
- Personal items may not be left inside the car.
- The SASO conformity certificate can be obtained in Saudi Arabia locally.
SASO may require replacement or conversion to some parts of the car to meet the SASO Standard at owner of the goods' expense.
- The application for the SASO conformity certificate may be rejected, which may result in the export of the car back to origin of origin at the owner of the goods' expense.

Pets

Note: *Pets cannot be imported at this time.*

Restricted/Dutiable Items

- Duties are applied as follows:
 - Electrical / electronic appliances 5%
 - Audiotapes, videotapes, CDs / DVDs 5%
 - Furniture 15%
 - All similar items manufactured in Saudi Arabia 5-15 %
- Books and used clothing (reasonable quantities are exempt from duty payments)
- The following items are subject to censorship, confiscation, or may result in penalties at the owner of the goods' expense:

- Exposed film, including prints, slides, etc.
- Records, books, magazines, pictures, photos, other printed matters,
- etc. Personal computers, audio/video CDs, diskettes, USBs, computer hard disks, printers, etc. Mobile or cellular phones
- Audio/video VHS/VCR/cassette tapes and phonograph recordings
- Any items that store information
- A penalty will be charged to the consignee for CD's, VCR tapes and
- books confiscated after the censorship. (US\$ 135.00 each for CD's and VCR tapes; and US\$ 14.00 each for books)

IAM Note: *If items subject to censorship are contained in the shipment, Customs Authority will remove them from the container for censorship or review. To reduce the time for clearance, these items must be packed separately for easy access and cartons must be marked clearly on the inventory or be sent by air. The delivery of censored articles may incur additional charges; contact agent for additional information.*

Prohibited Items

- All games of chance (gambling paraphernalia) including chess sets, dice, backgammon and the likes
- Animal skins in commercial quantities
- Weapons and firearms (real or ornamental, antiques, etc.) including guns, ammunition, fireworks, spears, etc. (if imported, the owner of the goods will be subject to investigation that may result in fines and/or prison)
- Military uniforms or military equipment of any kind
- Alcoholic beverages or food products containing alcohol such as vanilla, flavoring extract, cooking wines, etc.
- Books, wine making kits, or other items used in the preparation or manufacture of alcoholic drinks and beverages
- Narcotics and unidentified medicines
- Radio transmitter or communication equipment / devices (including receivers, VHF, Marine / police bands or walkie-talkies)
- Stuffed animals (products of taxidermy), statues, figurines, carving or objects depicting human or animal forms
- Pornographic materials and literature, including fashion magazines with people wearing underwear or swimsuits
- Any foodstuffs containing pork and related pork meat products, etc.
- Any books pertaining to religions other than Islam

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea shipments.

Cultural and Other Information

CIA World Factbook

Wikipedia Entry for Saudi Arabia