

United Arab Emirates Country Guide

Country Guide: United Arab Emirates

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: June 20, 2018

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Used Household Goods and Personal Effects

Documents Required

- Copy of passport
- Copy of residence permit / residency visa on passport
- Employment visa with entry stamp of UAE if residence visa not ready / Emirates ID copy / Emirates ID application form / Visa applicable form etc.

- Bill of lading (express release) / air waybill (AWB)
- Detailed packing list in English
- Letter from Ministry of Foreign Affairs for exemption from the payment of Customs duties (diplomats)
- Copy of diplomatic card (diplomats)
- Letter of authorization / undertaking

Specific Information

- All documents must be in place prior to shipment arrival on port
- Without a residence visa or passport, shipments will not be cleared, nor will the shipping line release the delivery order or release order for the shipment.
- Import shipments may be intensively inspected by Customs authorities with charges incurred.
- The importation of household goods and personal effects into the UAE is exempted from Customs duties.
- If any prohibited items are found during the Customs inspection, severe punishment will be imposed including fines, imprisonment, or both. All import duties are charged based on the costs, insurance, and freight (CIF) value of the shipment.
- Import Duties on new items are charged at 5% of the value of the item and VAT on total shipment value is 5% as well.
 - It takes approximately 4 - 5 work days for sea shipments, 3 - 4 days for air shipments.
 - Shipments not cleared within 5 days from the arrival date at the port will not have a free port storage period granted and the shipment will attract port charges from the first day of arrival.
- Shipments that arrive before the weekend i.e. Friday and Saturday will automatically lose two days of Customs clearance and the shipment can become more susceptible to incurring port storage charges.

Motor Vehicles

Documents Required

- Copy of passport
- Copy of residence visa on passport
- Copy of diplomatic card (diplomats)
- Residence permit
- Original / express bill of lading
- Authorization letter
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Title / Copy of certificate of origin / registration card from origin country vehicle certificate must include detailed description, including engine number, year of production, colour, etc.

- Copy of commercial invoice / copy of purchase invoice
- Proof of ownership

Specific Information

- The length of ownership is not applicable when deciding duties. Duties on new items @ 5% and VAT on total shipment value @ 5% are charged on all motor vehicles and goods.
- Customs will issue vehicle clearance certificate in 2 - 3 days; this document is required for registration with the traffic department.
- Jebel Ali has tremendous port congestion, therefore, be aware of delays in clearing shipments, the time frame is approximately 1 - 2 weeks from the arrival date of shipment.
- Owners of the goods that are bringing cars must be able to provide a copy of their UAE residence visa or no clearance and release will take place.
- The vehicle can be older than 10 years with approval of local agent.
- Vehicles with tinted glass restricted for import.
- Only left handed cars are allowed.
- Details needed for Customs clearance:
 - Model of the vehicles with the model number
 - Colour of the vehicle
 - Year of manufacture
 - Current market value
 - Engine and chassis number
 - Weight of the vehicle (if applicable)

Pets

Documents Required

- Owner's passport
- Owner's UAE residence visa
- Certificate of vaccination
- Veterinary health certificate
- Import permit

Specific Information

Permission from the embassy is required for importation.

Restricted/Dutiable Items

The following items may qualify for free import if within the limits indicated:

Cigarettes (400), cigars (50), tobacco (500)

Prohibited Items

- Weapons of all kinds
- Military uniforms
- Alcohol and spirits
- Narcotics of all kinds, including poppy seeds, flowers and leaves
- Banned substances, including drugs and medicines
- Radio transmitters, wireless transmitters and communication equipment
- Gambling games
- Statues and figures of animals with religious undertones
- Carvings and statues of humans (especially nude)
- Pornographic materials
- Controversial political and religious literature and materials contrary to Islamic principles
- Toxic and radioactive materials
- Items manufacture by Israeli black-list and of Israeli origin
- Food items containing pork
- Articles made from endangered animals or made of ivory or rhinoceros horn
- Any other goods, the importation of which is prohibited under the authority of U.A.E. Customs laws or any other laws in the country
- Contact local agent for more specific details

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 United Arab Emirates