



# *Importing Personal Property Into Nicaragua*

## **HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS**

### **CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

#### **Customs Regulations:**

All shipments are subject to inspection. The client must be in the country prior to arrival of the shipment. It is not a requirement to be physically present during the clearance process.

All used household goods and personal effects are subject to duties and taxes if one is a foreign executive or employee under a temporary work contract. Taxes for foreign citizens are 65-80% of CIF value. Those on a work contract incur 14.5 % less in taxes. Shipment must be consigned to both the client and the Company/Employer. Only one shipment is allowed, unless declared as a “partial shipment”. All documents must be “Originals” unless otherwise noted. Clearance procedures will not begin without all documentation. Process takes about 4-5 weeks once all documents are completed. Extraordinary charges for demurrage of container and/or in-bound storage due to incomplete/incorrect documents will be charged to the client directly. Charges for handling, storage is about 300.00USD per month until Duty Free exemption is secured.

All original documents must be scanned to the Destination Agent upon departure of the shipment. The number of items and cartons declared on the shipping documents must match the Inventory List otherwise a \$100.00USD fine will be incurred in addition to possible demurrage or tax charges.

All shipments except diplomatic shipments are unloaded in a Bonded Warehouse for inspection.

**Returning Nicaraguan Citizens:** Must have lived abroad a minimum of 10 years can apply for the Tax Exoneration of their household goods. Must receive a pension or prove a stable provable income from a private or public company a minimum of \$600.00 a month. Shipments may be inspected by Customs officials. CIF value for household goods is max. \$20,000USD and one vehicle valued at \$25,000USD The return must be permanent for the Tax Free Exemption to be valid.

**Ports:** Corinto, Rama, Limón (Costa Rica) or Cortés (Honduras)

#### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Passport – copy, must include ALL pages with the exception of blank pages
- ✓ Residence Visa
- ✓ Proof of Employment
- ✓ Duty Free Exemption – issued by the Ministry of Finance, authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original, indicate “Express Release”
- ✓ Comprehensive Inventory- original, typed (handwritten is unacceptable) in English or Spanish indicating value declared for Customs. All electronics and electrical appliances must state serial numbers, brand, model and cost
- ✓ Purchase invoices for ALL new items, notarized by consulate at origin & attached to the Inventory
- ✓ Letter of Authorization allowing the Destination Agent to clear the shipment

#### **Retired Foreign Citizens**

Household goods must not exceed a CIF value of 20,000USD and one vehicle not to exceed 25,000USD It is recommended that retired citizens who plan to establish themselves in Nicaragua contact the Ministry of Tourism to obtain all applicable information regarding procedures that apply to their status.

- ✓ Endorsement – issued by Ministry of Tourism, authorized by Ministry of Finance and Customs Head Office

### **Returning Nicaraguan Citizens- additional documentation**

- ✓ Passport– copy, must include photo page and last entry to Nicaragua
- ✓ Letter by Nicaraguan Consulate from origin country – affirming years abroad
- ✓ Residency Card
- ✓ Migratory certification from Migration Office in Nicaragua – attesting to length of stay abroad
- ✓ Letter by an attorney in Nicaragua– attesting returning citizen will not sell, transfer or dispose of goods for a period of 3 years
- ✓ Tax exoneration document – original either reference Law 822 or Law 535 based on returning citizens time abroad, importing a vehicle or tools of trade
- ✓ Re-Importation Declaration – the items that were exported and are being imported with the returning Nicaraguan must be within the 3 year term abroad to be allowed, be in good condition & descriptions specified on the inventory – must be identical to the original exported pack list
- ✓ Separate Inventory of other items (used or new) not included on the Re-Imported List

### **Diplomat Status:**

Foreign and returning diplomats, members of government or international organizations are granted tax and duty free entry of their personal effects and household items either new or used. Diplomatic shipments are not subject to inspection so long as there are reciprocal relations with the country they represent. Diplomats are advised to arrive 20 days prior to arrival of the shipment to obtain all required documents and receive the accreditation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With the accreditation in hand one can request the Tax Exoneration.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Diplomatic Franchise/Tax Exoneration Document – original, obtained through the Embassy or organization; issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Managua
- ✓ Diplomatic Letter to Customs – requesting immediate delivery of shipment upon arrival
- ✓ Passport - copy
- ✓ Comprehensive Inventory – Original, in English or Spanish, include total number of packages
- ✓ B/L, AWB or Inland Transportation Document – original, marked “DIPLOMATIC SHIPMENT”

### **RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS**

- ✓ Medicines and plants require a permit
- ✓ Radio and telephone equipment, mobile phones, LAN line phones, receivers & transmitters
- ✓ Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and foodstuffs require special permits
  - 3 litres of alcohol allowed
  - 200 cigarettes or 500 grams of tobacco
  - 3 bottles of perfume allowed
- ✓ Personal firearms, hunting rifles other weapons for “collectors purposes” require an Import License – obtained from origin embassy or consulate
- ✓ New items require original receipts
- ✓ Electronics, appliances – state serial numbers, make & model
- ✓ Animal & agricultural products including leather require permits
- ✓ Gas cans & extinguishers

## PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ✓ Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- ✓ Pornography and subversive material
- ✓ Explosives, ammunitions and assault weapons, swords, knuckle dusters etc
- ✓ Gunpowder and chemicals
- ✓ Toluene (glue)

## IMPORTATION OF PETS

Quarantine is not required for cats, dogs, and rodents such as hamsters providing the pet is arriving from the same continent. Birds may be subject to quarantine due to threat of Avian Flu. Veterinarian's letter must be notarized and then submitted to the nearest Nicaraguan consulate to be authenticated. Upon arrival in Nicaragua Customs agents will request the letter to confirm authentication. Airlines require the veterinarian provide this letter within 10 days of the flight, which requires you to deal with the Nicaraguan consulate within that time frame. It is advised to attend to this matter in person at the consulate to facilitate the process. Pets are subject to taxes.

### Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, dated less than 30 days prior to arrival
- ✓ Health Certificate - dated no more than 10 days prior to departure by a licensed veterinarian
- ✓ AWB/BL & Invoice indicating value of animal
- ✓ Import Permit – obtained from Ministry of Agriculture - Original

## IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles must be no more than 10 years old, are subject to import taxes and duties except those belonging to diplomatic personnel or those with an approved Tax Exoneration. Amount to be paid depends on value, model, year, cubic centimeters and accessories. Customs requires a certification authenticated by the Nicaraguan Consulate in country of origin for all importers including diplomats.

**Returning Nationals** CIF value for a vehicle is \$25,000USD and not more than 7 years old. Customs clearance takes approximately 4-5 weeks.

### Required Documents:

- ✓ Passport - copy
  - ✓ Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
  - ✓ Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original
  - ✓ B/L - must be original- state make, model, year, color, engine size, fuel type, VIN, engine/chassis serial numbers
- \* All of the above should be in importer's name

## NOTES:

**Entry/Exit Requirements:** Foreigners must be in possession of a valid identity document at all times while in Nicaragua and may be required to show it to Nicaraguan authorities upon request. Acceptable identity documents are: (1) a Nicaraguan permanent residency card, (2) a Nicaraguan temporary residency card, or (3) a valid passport or travel document accompanied by a Nicaraguan entry stamp. Nicaraguan law requires visitors to exit Nicaragua using the same passport with which they entered the country. Dual national minors who have a claim to Nicaraguan citizenship are subject to departure requirements specific to Nicaraguan children under the age of 18, even though they may also be citizens of other countries. Dual national adults are required to enter Nicaragua using a Nicaraguan passport, except for visits of less than 90 days.

**Re-exportation of Goods:** Archaeological items, artifacts of historical or monetary value, and gold are strictly prohibited to export. Animal products, ammunition, medicines, controlled drugs, plants, and soil are also prohibited

**Travel into bordering countries:** Nicaragua is part of the “Central America-4 (CA-4) Border Control Agreement” with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Under the terms of the agreement, citizens of the four countries may travel freely across land borders from one of the countries to any of the others without completing entry and exit formalities at immigration checkpoints. U.S. citizens and other eligible foreign nationals who legally enter any of the four countries may similarly travel among “CA-4” countries without obtaining additional visas or tourist entry permits for the other three countries.

**Health:** Immunization against typhoid is strongly recommended. Risk of Malaria exists throughout the year. Please seek the advice of a physician to determine if vaccination is needed for the location of travel and relocation. Other risks: Amoebic and bacillary dysenteries, diarrhoeal diseases, and hepatitis A are common throughout the country. Cutaneous and visceral leishmaniasis occurs. Dengue fever may occur.

**Retiring to Nicaragua:** Under Decree No. 628: the "Law of Resident Pensioners and Retirees," one is eligible for benefits after 45 years of age with proof of a monthly income of at least \$400 or the equivalent in another currency. (Add an additional \$100 for each dependent family member living with you in Nicaragua.) Foreign retirees do not pay no taxes on any out-of-country earnings; Can bring into Nicaragua up to \$10,000 worth of household goods duty free; Are allowed importation of one automobile for personal or general use and without being subject to import tax or protective tariff and can sell it after five years, again exempt from consumer sales tax; Importation of an additional vehicle every five years under the same duty exemptions as also allowable.

**Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials:** Nicaragua has published requirements adopting ISPM15 for wood packaging material (WPM).

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

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USDA- [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov)

Department of State: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/nicaragua.html>

Living History Nicaragua <http://www.living-history-nicaragua.com/nicaragua-residency.html>

Embassy of Nicaragua (Spanish only): <http://consuladodenicaragua.com/>

The information presented herein is based on customs data available at the time of printing and is frequently subject to change without notice. It is the responsibility of the owner or importer of the household goods to comply with the current customs restrictions, regulations, and duties of the country to which the goods are imported. We strongly advise customers to contact the consulate or embassy of the destination country for the most current information on customs regulations, restrictions and duties for importing household goods, personal effects and vehicles.