

Importing Personal Property Into Sierra Leone

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:

Used household goods and personal effects are duty free provided goods have been owned and used by the customer for a minimum of six months and customer has lived abroad for at least one year. All clients regardless of status must pay a “documentation tax” of 1.25% of CIF value of the shipment. Shipments will be inspected,

Non-diplomats and returning citizens are subject to a 41% import tax for all personal electrical appliances. All new items will be levied a tax. The goods must be imported within three months of the client’s arrival. Items can not be sold, lent or otherwise disposed of during stay.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Passport - copy
- ✓ Residence Permit or Work Permit
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original, Express Release allowed but subject to \$100.00USD fee
- ✓ Comprehensive Valued Inventory – in English, dated & signed by owner
- ✓ Pack list - in English
- ✓ Electronic Cargo Tracking Note (ECTN)
- ✓ Power of Attorney – giving authority for Destination Agent to arrange customs clearance
- ✓ Letter from Employer –attesting to client’s employment contract
- ✓ Unaccompanied Baggage Declaration – stamped at Customs upon arrival

Diplomat Status:

Foreign diplomats, members of government or international organizations are granted tax and duty free entry of their personal effects and household goods. All documents must arrive to the Destination Agent 15 days prior to arrival to obtain free entry from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ocean shipments: subject to a 250.00USD charge for processing diplomatic “duty-free” documentation.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Exemption Form – obtained Ministry of Foreign Affairs by diplomat’s mission/organization
- ✓ Passport - original
- ✓ Comprehensive inventory – dated & signed by owner
- ✓ Power of Attorney – giving authority for Destination Agent to arrange customs clearance

RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

- ✓ Appliances/Electronics – must have receipts, state make & serial numbers on Inventory
- ✓ Firearms & ammunition- requires a permit prior to shipping from Ministry of Interior, Intelligence Section
- ✓ Pharmaceuticals – obtain a permit from Ministry of Health; those who require daily medications must bring their own supply for the duration of stay
- ✓ New items – (less than 6 months) must have invoices/receipts
- ✓ Tobacco – 200 cigarettes or 250 grams of loose tobacco, in excess of these amounts incurs duty

- ✓ Religious materials, icons & antiquities

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ✓ Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- ✓ Pornography and subversive or seditious materials
- ✓ Explosives, ammunitions and another weapons unless otherwise approved
- ✓ Alcohol – must be sent separately

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, less than 6 months prior to arrival
- ✓ Health Certificate - by a Veterinarian at origin
- ✓ Import Authorization – obtained from the Veterinary Department

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles are subject to high import taxes and duties. Amount to be paid depends on value, model, year, cubic centimeters and accessories. Tax range varies depending on these factors of 5% - 110%. The OBL.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
- ✓ Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original
- ✓ Drivers License & International Insurance Policy (green card)
- ✓ Residence Permit
- ✓ OBL – registration number, chassis & engine number, cubic capacity, year of manufacture, brand and model

NOTES:

Entry & Exit Requirements: Visitors to Sierra Leone are required to show International Certificates of Vaccination (yellow card) upon arrival at the airport with a record of vaccination against yellow fever. U.S. citizens who are also Sierra Leonean nationals must provide proof of payment of taxes on revenue earned in Sierra Leone before being granted clearance to depart the country.

Safety & Security: US citizens are encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, to stay current with the latest safety and security announcements dispersed by the Embassy in your area. Your enrollment can also help the Department of State reach your family and friends in case of emergency. Travel outside the capital of Freetown after dark is not allowed for U.S. Embassy officials and should be avoided by all US residents. There are occasional unauthorized, possibly armed, roadblocks outside Freetown, where travelers might be asked to pay a small amount of money to the personnel manning the roadblock. In addition, U.S. citizens should carry a means of communication at all times (fully charged cell phone with emergency contacts).

Crime: Resident U.S. citizens have experienced armed mugging, assault and burglary. Petty crime and pick pocketing of wallets, cell phones, and passports are very common especially on the ferry to and from Lungi International Airport. Law enforcement authorities usually respond to crimes slowly, if at all. Police investigative response is often incomplete and does not provide support to victims. Inefficiency and corruption is a serious problem at all levels within the government of Sierra Leone. Americans traveling to or residing in Sierra Leone should maintain a heightened sense of awareness of their

surroundings to help avoid becoming the victims of crime. Business fraud is rampant and the perpetrators often target foreigners, including Americans. Schemes previously associated with Nigeria are now prevalent throughout West Africa, including Sierra Leone, and pose a danger of grave financial loss. It is not uncommon for registered diamond or gold dealers to target foreigners using sophisticated scams resulting in significant financial loss.

Currency: Sierra Leone is generally a cash economy, though recently several ATMs that accept international Visa cards have been installed by ProCredit, a Germany-based institution. Point of sale credit card terminals exist in some major shops, hotels, and restaurants. There are no functioning MasterCard cash points in Sierra Leone. Currency exchanges should be handled through a bank or established foreign exchange bureau. Exchanging money with street vendors is dangerous because criminals may "mark" such people for future attack and there is the risk of receiving counterfeit currency.

Health: Cholera is a serious risk and pre-cautions are essentials. All visitors traveling to or residing in Sierra Leone must have current vaccinations prior to arrival in Freetown. These include, but are not limited to, tetanus, yellow fever, polio, meningitis, typhoid, hepatitis A and B, and rabies. Malaria exists year round and preventative treatments must begin 2 weeks prior to departure. Lassa fever is endemic in Eastern Province. There is a high level of HIV/AIDs reported; thus one should take all necessary precautions. In the event medications are needed, such as over-the-counter medication, antibiotics, allergy remedies, or malaria prophylaxis, travelers may contact the U.S. Embassy's American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit to receive general information about reliable pharmacies. ACS maintains a [list of physicians, clinics, and pharmacies](#) as provided by the Embassy Health Unit. Consume bottled water only, although recently, even bottled water has been shown to be contaminated by bacteria. Check with the local health unit for current safe brands.

U.S. citizens visiting Sierra Leone should consider purchasing comprehensive medical evacuation insurance and coverage. There are many plans and companies that offer such services. Many even offer packages for long term expatriates.

Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials: As of this posting Sierra Leone does not impose ISPM15 regulations for wood packaging material (WPM).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

AGS Frasers: Freetown, Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone High Commission: <http://www.slhc-uk.org.uk/>

Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1016.html

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

USDA: www.aphis.usda.gov

IATA Travel Centre

Visa HQ.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.