



# *Importing Personal Property Into Venezuela*

## **HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS**

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

#### **Customs Regulations:**

All shipments are subject to inspection. The client, either a returning national or foreign resident must have lived outside of Venezuela for a minimum of six months. The client's presence is required to present their original passport to Customs prior to arrival of the shipment and must remain in the country for the length of the clearance process. Failure to comply may result in confiscation of the shipments and passports.

Used household goods are free of tax, duty and VAT with presentation of the "Certificate of Use". This certificate confirms the goods are over six months old. Without this certificate the shipment is subject to import duties ranging for 5-40% of CIF value, import tax of 1% of CIF and VAT of 12% of the sum of the CIF value, duties and taxes. These fees must be paid before the shipment is released.

Shipment must arrive within six months of client's arrival into Venezuela.

Documentation requirements are strongly enforced. Clearance takes 5-8 working days. Fines will incur when a Customs entry is made later than 5 days after the arrival of the shipments. Demurrage charges are very high as well. Documents should be sent via DHL or FedEx to the Destination Agent two weeks in advance of the vessel to avoid accrual of fines. Keys to all trunks, lockers, suite cases and any other locked items in the shipment must be turned over to Customs Authority.

**Note:** Strikes and delays with Customs are frequent. Theft is common with airfreight so shipments should be sent in secured wood crates. A copy of the AWB/BOL must reach the destination agent 3 working days prior to arrival of the shipment so that containers may be transferred from the docks to a private bonded warehouse for customs inspection. There is no additional cost to the client or carrier.

#### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Passport – copy of all pages, original may be requested by Customs Authority
- ✓ Visa – either a Residence or Transit
- ✓ Work permit
- ✓ Certificate of Use "Certificado de Uso" – in Spanish obtained from the Venezuelan consulate at origin, must match the inventory pack list, without values
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill –2 original sets, supplied by origin agent
- ✓ Power of Attorney – obtained in Venezuela, notarized original, for air shipments
- ✓ Pack List – original, supplied by origin agent
- ✓ Comprehensive Inventory - in Spanish, notarized at origin, each carton must state exact names of contents. (PBO "Packed by Owner" and Misc are not allowed) Dutiable items must be identified
- ✓ Customs Form A+B– completed at Destination
- ✓ Declaration of Value – completed at Destination
- ✓ Authorization Letter to Destination Agent to clear shipment – completed at Destination
- ✓ Letter from Employer – confirming work contract
- ✓ RIF (tax registration document)– copy,

\* Consulate employees often claim the Certificate of Use is not required. Please insist to have one, if one can not be secured, contact your Destination Agent in Venezuela for the certificate and have it stamped.

### **Diplomat Status:**

Foreign 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. Shipment is subject to inspection but duty charges are not applied. Exemption must be requested to the Department of Treasury. Diplomatic exemption does not cover port charges and demurrage, which must be paid if applicable. Diplomat's presence is not required during shipments clearance.

### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Diplomatic Franchise/Exoneration – Obtained at Destination from Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ✓ Passport copy
- ✓ Original AWB or OBL
- ✓ Comprehensive inventory in Spanish
- ✓ Declaration attesting to Value - completed at Destination
- ✓ Customs Form A+B - completed at Destination
- ✓ Authorization Letter for Destination Agent to clear shipment
- ✓ “Certificado de Uso” (certificate of use) if importing a vehicle

### **RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS**

Original or copies of invoices/receipts for all items less than six months old or that appear new with little wear should be sent to the Destination Agent along with the copy of the passport as they will become part of the Customs Entry.

- ✓ Firearms - require commercial invoice, import license & permit from the Ministry of Defense
- ✓ New items - incur duty & require receipts
- ✓ Tobacco - 25 cigars and 200 cigarettes are duty-free, excess requires a government license
- ✓ 4 small bottles of perfume
- ✓ appliance or electronic items - Only one of each type of allowed
- ✓ Paper products such as paper towels, laundry, bathroom and kitchen sundries

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

- ✓ Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Pornography and subversive material
- ✓ Explosives, ammunitions and weapons of all kinds even those decorative in nature without required permits stated above
- ✓ Foodstuffs & diapers
- ✓ New furniture
- ✓ Chemicals, detergents, toxic products such as fungicides, fertilizers etc., tires
- ✓ Flowers, live plants
- ✓ Birds, bird products or by-products from Chile

### **IMPORTATION OF PETS**

Domestic pets may be subject to quarantine upon entry. An official from the Department of Agriculture will provide the inspection. Upon completion of exam a Venezuelan Certificate of Health will be issued. Owner's presence required during clearance. Exotic pets or other animals will require a permit from the Department of Agriculture and a government license. Inquire with your destination agent for the latest requirements. The Caracas airport does not have facilities for pets. Best practice is to have any pet as accompanied baggage.

**Required Documents:**

- ✓ Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, from an approved government veterinarian
- ✓ Health Certificate - dated no less than 15 days prior to arrival from an approved government veterinarian
- ✓ Vaccination Record - dated no less than 15 days prior to arrival
- ✓ Owner's Passport w/Resident Visa
- ✓ Original AWB/OBL
- ✓ Customs Form – at destination

**Notes:** Exportation of pets from Venezuela requires specific procedures. Please contact SASA (Servicio Autonomo de Sanidad Agropecuaria) the Animal Service Office for further information.

Birds: require a Good Health Certificate. There is no restriction on quantity from any country aside from Chile as stated on Prohibited List above.

**IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES**

**Used vehicles:** Only Venezuelans/returning residents or Diplomats can import used vehicles. The limit is one per family with a value under \$20,000USD. Used vehicles are duty-free provided shipper has lived abroad for at least 1 year and used the vehicle for at least 11 months in the country of origin. Vehicle must be the used personal property of the owner and registered in the country of origin in his/her name.

Used vehicles that were over \$20,000USD when new will be assessed duties of 40% of CIF and import tax at 1% of CIF

**New vehicles:** are subject to duty of 50% of CIF and import tax at 1% of CIF and VAT of 12% of the sum of the CIF value, duties and taxes.

Vehicles cannot be sold for a period of 3 years after importation.

**Notes:**

All vehicles/motorcycles are required to be manifested as dangerous cargo, including diplomats.

Corresponding charges apply. Must be shipped separately from household goods.

Owner must be present at port with a current driver's license in order for the vehicle to be released. Owner of vehicle must be at least 18 years old. Failure to comply with the above requirements will result in heavy fines levied by port authorities or government officials.

Vehicles imported under a Temporary Permit will only be valid for 6 months and can be renewed once for another 6 months after that the vehicle must be exported. The owner must also pay a bond through an insurance company for the value of the duties & pay 1% of Import Tax.

Inquire with your Destination Agent for the latest regulations for autos and motorcycles prior to shipping.

**Required Documents:**

- ✓ Certificate of Title and Registration – original, notarized by Venezuelan Consulate at origin
- ✓ Commercial/Purchase Invoice – original, notarized by Venezuelan Consulate at origin
- ✓ Passport & Residence Visa
- ✓ Certificate of Ownership
- ✓ Certificate of Use – notarized by the Venezuelan Consulate attesting to length of ownership
- ✓ Import License – (new vehicles) obtained from the MILCO office in Venezuela
- ✓ Customs Form A & B and Authorization for Destination Agent to clear vehicle
- ✓ Exemption form from Treasury Department – DIPLOMATS ONLY

**NOTES:**

**Entry & Exit Requirements:** Venezuelan immigration authorities require that U.S. passports have at least six months validity remaining from the date of arrival in Venezuela. Some U.S. citizens have been turned back to the United States because their passports were to expire in less than six months. U.S. citizens residing in Venezuela should be careful to obtain legitimate Venezuelan documentation appropriate to their status. U.S. citizens, having employed intermediaries, received what they believed to be valid Venezuelan resident visas and work permits have been arrested and charged with possessing fraudulent Venezuelan documentation. SAIME, the Venezuelan government agency responsible for immigration documents, has informed the embassy that the only valid resident visas are those for which the bearer has personally signed at SAIME headquarters in Caracas. Venezuelan law requires Venezuelan citizens to enter and depart Venezuela using Venezuelan passports, and Venezuelan immigration authorities are increasingly enforcing this requirement. In order to comply with U.S. and Venezuelan law, persons who hold dual U.S.-Venezuelan nationality must plan to travel between Venezuela and the United States with valid U.S. and Venezuelan passports.

**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. Violent crime in Venezuela is pervasive; the country's overall per capita murder rate is cited as one of the top five in the world. According to the non-governmental organization, Venezuelan Violence Observatory (VVO), 2011 was the most "violent in Venezuela's history." The Venezuelan National Counter Kidnapping Commission was created in 2006, and since then, official statistics have shown increases in reported kidnappings throughout the country. However, police sources indicate that as many as 80% of kidnappings go unreported. Travel to and from Maiquetía Airport, the international airport serving Caracas can be dangerous, and corruption at the airport itself is rampant. Both arriving and departing travelers, including foreigners, have been victims of personal property theft and muggings in the airport. It is suggested to arrive/depart during daylight areas and in groups if possible. Exercise extreme caution along the Columbian border. Kidnapping and murder is high and usually by Columbian terrorists or drug traffickers.

**Currency:** Carry as little US currency on you as possible and only one credit card. Credit card data pilfering is rampant and one is advised to be aware of surroundings when using credit cards. At this point Venezuela is largely a cash economy. Credit cards are not widely accepted.

**Works of Art:** Art work and antiques may be included in household goods shipment. These items are subject to duties unless accompanied by a fine art and/or antique certificates, verified by the Venezuelan Consulate. Antiques must be over 100 years old to be considered antique.

**Health:** Yellow fever vaccine is required. Vaccination against Typhoid is advised. Dengue Fever and viral encephalitis is becoming more common. Malaria also occurs in certain areas. Up to date advice should be sought by a physician prior to relocation.

**Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials:** Venezuela has published requirements adopting ISPM15 for wood packaging material (WPM). Regulation has been in effect since 2005.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

Evergreen Shipping Agency

Venezuelan International Packers, CA; Caracas, Venezuela

Embassy of Venezuela: <http://venezuela-us.org/>

Department of State: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1059.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1059.html)

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

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

Grant Thornton: <http://www.gti.org/Services/Tax-services/Expatriate-tax/Expatriate-tax-ebook/Venezuela/facts-and-figures.asp>

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.**