



Importing Personal Property Into Laos

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:

While the shipper does not have to be physically present at the port or airport during customs clearance, the original passport and original work permit (or diplomatic certificate) must be presented to the Lao authorities at the time of clearance. Thus, he/she must be in Laos for the shipment to clear through customs.

A foreigner may import household goods and personal effects into Laos duty free under the following conditions:

- He/she has diplomatic status or works for a registered foreign company.
- He/she obtains a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs verifying his/her diplomatic status; or in the case of a non-diplomat, obtains a valid Laos work permit. Copies of the employer's investment license and business license will also be required for non-diplomats. If the above criteria are met, only one sea and one air shipment are permitted duty free, and the shipper can only import one each of any electrical appliance duty free.

All other foreigners, who do not meet the above criteria, may import household goods and personal effects into Laos but they will be subject to duty. The duty amount varies and is often subject to negotiation with the Customs Department.

NOTE: Ocean shipments enter into Bangkok, Thailand and are unstuffed in Bangkok port before being transported in-bond to Laos. Bills of Lading must state "In-transit to Vientiane, Laos via Bangkok, Thailand." Liftvans are a requirement as steamship lines do not allow their containers to enter Laos.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Passport - original
- ✓ Residence Permit or Work Permit
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original, Express Release not allowed
- ✓ Comprehensive Valued Inventory – dated & signed by owner
- ✓ Pack list
- ✓ Power of Attorney – giving authority for Destination Agent to arrange customs clearance
- ✓ Employer's Business & Investment licenses –copies

Diplomat Status:

Foreign diplomats, members of government or international organizations are granted duty free entry of their personal effects and household goods.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Diplomatic Certificate – obtained from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Laos
- ✓ 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 – only 1 of each allowed
- ✓ Religious materials and icons
- ✓ Prescription medications – require physicians prescriptions
- ✓ New items – (less than 6 months) must have invoices/receipts
- ✓ Tobacco – 500 cigarettes or 500 grams of loose tobacco; in excess of these amounts incurs duty
- ✓ Alcohol – 2 bottles of wine & 1 bottle of spirits; in excess of these amounts incurs duty

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ✓ Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- ✓ Pornography and subversive or reactionary materials and publications
- ✓ Explosives, ammunitions and weapons unless otherwise approved

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Most pets including cats, dogs and birds, can be brought into Laos with no quarantine period.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, less than 6 months prior to arrival
- ✓ Health Certificate - by a Veterinarian at origin, issued no more than 7 days prior to arrival

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles are subject to high import taxes and duties for non-diplomats and returning Lao nationals of upwards of 300% of the new purchase value. The procedure is lengthy and tedious as well thus one is strongly discouraged from importing a vehicle.

Diplomats may import one vehicle duty free with a letter from the Laos Ministry of Foreign Affairs verifying his/her status and requesting that Laos Customs permit duty free entry.

The OBL must show Chassis Number, Engine number, Cubic Capacity, year of manufacture, brand and model.

Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
- ✓ Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original
- ✓ Drivers License & International Insurance Policy (green card)
- ✓ OBL

NOTES:

Entry & Exit Requirements: Business visas can only be arranged in advance; a company or individual “sponsor” must contact the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Vientiane and request a visa for you and offer a “guarantee.” Once the Lao MFA approves the request, the approval will be sent to the Lao Embassy in Washington, DC, and business travelers may then apply for the business visa. This process usually takes one to three months. Do not attempt to enter Laos without valid travel documents or outside of official ports of entry. You should not cross the border between Laos and Thailand along the Mekong River except at official immigration check crossings. If you attempt to enter Laos outside of official ports of entry, you may be arrested, detained, fined, and deported. Immigration offices at some of the less-used land border crossing points are not well marked. Make sure you complete all immigration and customs

requirements when you enter or depart Laos. If you enter Laos without completing these formalities, you may be subject to fines, detention, imprisonment, and/or deportation.

Safety & Security: One should also exercise caution in remote areas along the Lao border with Burma (Myanmar). Bandits, drug traffickers and other people pursuing illegal activities operate in these border areas, as do armed insurgent groups opposed to the government of Burma. One should also exercise caution in remote areas along the Lao border with Burma. Bandits, drug traffickers and other people pursuing illegal activities operate in these border areas, as do armed insurgent groups opposed to the government of Burma.

Crime: Residential burglary is commonplace. Local law enforcement responses to crimes, even violent crimes, are often limited. Foreigners attempting to report crimes have reported finding police stations closed, emergency telephone numbers unanswered, or policemen lacking transportation or authorization to investigate crimes that occur at night. If you move to Laos, please contact the [U.S. Embassy Vientiane](#) for security advice. Many restaurants in the Vang Vieng area offer menu items, particularly “pizzas,” “shakes,” or “teas,” that may contain unknown substances or opiates. These products are often advertised as “happy” or “special” items. These unknown substances or opiates can be dangerous, causing serious illness or even death. Travelers in Vang Vieng have been fined and detained for purchasing, possessing, or using illegal substances. In recent years, foreigners, including U.S. citizens, have died in Laos after using illegal drugs, such as methamphetamines, opium, or heroin. The potency of some of these drugs can be several times that of similar substances found in the United States.

Currency: Prohibitions exist against importing or exporting more than \$2,500 (U.S. dollar equivalent) of currency without authorization. Contact the Lao Embassy or Lao customs authorities for more details.

Health: Cholera is a serious risk and pre-cautions are essentials. Immunization against polio and typhoid is often recommended. Malaria exists year round throughout the country except in Vientiane. Hepatitis A and E occur; hepatitis B is highly endemic. Meningococcal meningitis may occur. Dengue fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis and Japanese encephalitis occur. H1N1 (Swine flu) and H5N1 (Avian flu) do exist and precautions should be taken. The Lao government’s influenza hotline may be reached by calling 166 from anywhere in Laos. This hotline may be used to report suspected cases of influenza in animals or humans, or to obtain information on areas in Laos where influenza may have been recently detected.

Operators speak Lao and English.

Counterfeit pharmaceuticals are a problem throughout Southeast Asia. Please be aware of this problem and purchase pharmaceuticals only through the most reputable pharmacies and with a physician’s prescription

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Vanpac Group Asia: www.vanpacgroupasia.com

Embassy of Laos: <http://www.laoembassy.com/>

Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_946.html

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.