



# *Importing Personal Property Into Malawi*

## **HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS**

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

#### **Customs Regulations:**

Client is required to be present during Customs clearance process. Customs officials may demand a physical inspection. 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 new items will be levied a tax. The goods must be imported within six months of arrival or after either the work permit or residence visa has been granted. Items can not be sold, lent or otherwise disposed of during stay.

#### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Passport - original
- ✓ Residence Visa /Work Permit or Letter from Employer attesting to work contract
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original, Express Release not allowed
- ✓ Comprehensive Valued Inventory – in English, dated & signed by owner
- ✓ Pack list
- ✓ Power of Attorney – giving authority for Destination Agent to arrange customs clearance

**Returning Nationals:** Those returning to Malawi after completion of a work contract must provide termination of employment documentation. Students must provide completion of studies certificate, certificate of degree etc.

For returning nationals who lived abroad less than 2 years must provide the below documents.

- ✓ Receipts for goods being imported; these will incur duty
- ✓ Inventory
- ✓ Bill of Lading/Air Waybill – original, Express Release not allowed

#### **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. Diplomatic shipments must arrive within 6 months of diplomat's arrival.

#### **Required Documents:**

- ✓ Diplomatic Franchise
- ✓ 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 invoices/receipts, state serial numbers on Inventory
- ✓ Personal computers – 1 used computer is allowed duty free

- ✓ New appliances, electronics & additional computers, – (less than 6 months) must have invoices/receipts; subject to 50-150% tax on declared value
- ✓ New personal effects – subject to 30-80% tax on declared value
- ✓ Alcohol – subject to taxes
- ✓ Precious metals, precious jewelry – may require pmt of duties
- ✓ Seeds, deciduous plants – requires an import license
- ✓ Office equipment; fax machines, copiers, printers – subject to duty

## PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ✓ Firearms & ammunition- requires a permit from the Secretary of Home Affairs prohibited
- ✓ Explosives, ammunitions and weapons unless otherwise approved
- ✓ Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind
- ✓ Pornography and subversive material

## IMPORTATION OF PETS

Animals including pets are subject to import control. Applications for the appropriate license can be obtained from the Director of Veterinary Services.

### Required Documents:

- ✓ Certificate of Vaccination – including rabies, less than 6 months prior to arrival
- ✓ Health Certificate - by a Veterinarian at origin

## IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Only one vehicle allowed importation. 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 95% - 150% of CIF. The OBL must show Chassis Number, Engine number, Cubic Capacity, year of manufacture, brand and model.

If vehicle is lent, sold or otherwise disposed of within five years of importation duties may need to be paid by the client similar to the amount paid to Customs at initial importation.

### Required Documents:

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

## NOTES:

**Entry & Exit Requirements:** US residents in Malawi are encouraged to enroll in the STEP program (refer to link in Acknowledgements). This program keeps you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. Be certain you have applied for the correct visa. Malawian immigration authorities have fined, arrested, and deported U.S. citizens who entered Malawi with a tourist visa or on a visitor's permit and proceeded to conduct other activities inconsistent with their status (e.g., business or volunteer services). Individuals that overstay on their visa, even unknowingly, have been fined, arrested and deported.

**Safety & Security:** Spontaneous civil disturbances, primarily related to labor and student strikes, occur, but are uncommon. U.S. citizens should avoid crowds, political rallies, and street demonstrations and maintain security awareness at all times.

**Crime:** Most crimes against U.S. citizens involve property. Residential break-ins are prevalent throughout Malawi and perpetrators of these crimes are usually well-armed and may resort to violence with little provocation. Petty street crime (robbery and pick-pocketing) is common. U.S. citizens are urged to avoid traveling on foot at night, especially in urban areas, as armed muggings and assaults have increased. Specifically, expatriates have been targeted in Lilongwe, and several U.S. citizens have been injured. Even when walking in a large group, city streets should be considered unsafe after dark.

**Currency:** Any currency declared at entry may be expatriated without further authorization. With bank approval, an individual may export up to \$2000 per trip. Otherwise, an individual is not permitted to expropriate currency, and it will be confiscated at the point of departure.

**Health:** Medical facilities in Malawi are rudimentary and do not meet U.S. standards. For any major medical problems US citizens should consider obtaining medical treatment in South Africa, where advanced medical care is available. HIV infection is endemic in the Malawian population. US citizens are advised to take appropriate precautions to limit the risk of transmission. Cholera is a serious risk and precautions are essentials. Immunization against polio and typhoid is often recommended. Malaria is endemic and exists year round. One is encouraged to initiate treatment prior to arrival. Schistosomiasis (also known as Bilharzia) is present in most lakes and rivers in Malawi, including Lake Malawi. The Department of State recommends against swimming, wading or bathing in fresh water. Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Malawi

**Special Circumstances:** Dress codes against short skirts on women and long hair on men no longer exist, but US citizens may wish to dress modestly, especially when visiting remote areas. Police roadblocks are common and properly documented drivers usually pass quickly and without incident. Foreigners intending to remain in Malawi for an extended period of time are expected to obtain a locally-issued driver's license.

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

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

AGS Frasers: Lilongwe, Malawi

Department of State: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_959.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_959.html)

STEP Program: [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

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