

South Africa Country Guide - IAM

Country Guide: South Africa

Due to the current coronavirus/COVID-19 situation and restrictions in various countries, the below information may not be accurate. This pandemic is a fluid situation. Check with authorities for local laws and restrictions concerning movements.

Updated: June 19, 2018



[Find a foreign embassy in South Africa](#)

[Find South Africa's embassies in other countries](#)

Used Household Goods and Personal Effects

Documents Required

- Original passport (including page with entry stamp)
- Original bill of lading (OBL) / express or telex release / (copy of) air waybill (AWB)
- Detailed inventory
- Permanent residence documents / temporary residence permit / work permit
- Affidavit (returning citizens only)
- Customs form DA 304 and P.1.160
- Diplomatic clearance (diplomats)

- Certificate from Embassy signed by South African Department of Foreign Affairs (diplomats)

Specific Information

- The owner of the goods must possess required documents and forward a copy to agent prior to import.
- The owner of the goods must be present for Customs clearance.
- The shipment of household items, new furniture, and precious metal objects are treated as a commercial import and subject to the payment of full duties.
- The following household goods may be imported duty free if meeting the following requirements:
 - Works of art forming a part of a bona fide household shipment or are over 100 years old.
 - The articles have been in the use and possession for more than 12 months and are not for sale or other disposal.
- Returning residents must have been abroad for a period of at least 6 consecutive months.
- Diplomats may import items duty free.
- Embassy will require the following documents before diplomats can apply for the Certificate A or B:
 - Copy of detailed inventory
 - Copy of OBL / AWB
- Affidavit must state the reason for arrival in to South Africa (returning citizens only).

Motor Vehicles

Documents Required

- Customs form DA 304/A (only needed for automobiles / motorcycles)
- Vehicle registration (only needed for automobiles / motorcycles)
- Original bill of lading (OBL) / express or telex release / (copy of) air waybill (AWB) (only needed for automobiles / motorcycles)
- Document showing that vehicle has been in the owner of the goods' use and possessions abroad for more than 12 months prior to the importation of the vehicle (e.g., original purchase invoice, insurance certificate, etc.).
- Valuation certificate (3 copies)
- Import permit
- Letter of authority (LOA) issued by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) in Pretoria (must be submitted at the time of clearance)

Specific Information

- No left-hand drive motor vehicles can be imported if registered on or after January 1, 2000.
- The owner of the goods must be in possession of the import permit and letter of authority prior to the arrival of any motor vehicles, motorbikes, motor scooters, or motorcycles (anything motorized); delays related to the permit may result in demurrage charges (also applies to diplomats).
- All motor cars, motor bikes, scooters, or any other motorized vehicles are subject to Customs exam.

Owner of the goods must be present for pickup of motorized vehicle at Elliottwarehouse.

- The owner of the goods must be in the country at least 10 business days prior to arrival of an ocean vessel.
 - For air shipments the owner of the goods must arrive prior to the shipment in order to proceed with the Customs documentation.
 - The origin agent cannot send the shipment until the destination agent gives a “green light”.
 - If the shipment is sent prior to receiving a “green light” from the destination agent, Customs clearance charges are applicable.
- A faxed copy of the letter of authority and the import permit must be received by the agent to avoid a delay of Customs clearance.

Originals of the documents will be required after the owner of the goods

- Motorized vehicles should not be shipped until transferee has proven possession of all required documents to Customs and has received written permission for import.
- Temporary residents must pay in cash.
- Vehicles cannot be sold for at least 2 years after the date of importation.
- The rate of value added tax (VAT) is assessed on the import value of the vehicle.
- A fee is payable to the South Africa Bureau of Standards.

Proof of payment must be sent with LOA application to NRCS.

- Incomplete or missing documents may result in the detainment or destruction of the shipment.
- Returning residents must pay full duties and taxes.
- Temporary residents must provide a Customs bond to cover full duties / taxes.
 - Temporary residents do not need an import permit.
 - A refund may be possible at the time of export; contact agent for details.
- Foreign diplomats pay no duties or taxes, subject to provisions of the diplomatic clearance certificate, and proof of value.

Pets

Documents Required

- Rabies vaccination certificate

- Veterinary health certificate
- Import permit

Specific Information

- An import permit may be granted after the owner of the goods has made arrangements for the period of quarantine required for pets travelling from most, but not all countries; check with agent.
- Call agent for restrictions on the import of live animals.

Antiques, Artifacts, Carpets, Paintings

Inheritances:

Documents Required

- Copy of death certificate
- Copy of will of deceased or certified relevant extract, or copy of Probate from the court if the deceased died intestate; English translation required.
- Inventory with lawyer's declaration that the imported goods are the legatee's rightful share of the estate
- South Africa Bureau of Standards Letter of Authority in Pretoria (not applicable for second-hand household effects unless motorized vehicles)
- Import permit (not applicable for second-hand household effects unless motorized vehicles)
- Declaration from the Legatee confirming permanent residency in South Africa and the right to share of the estate

Specific Information

- An inventory is required only if the copy of the deceased's will or other document does not specifically detail the goods to be imported.
- Items of inheritance may be imported duty free if the legatee is permanently residing in South Africa.
- Duty is payable on inherited motor cars, motorcycles, and mopeds.
- Goods should not be shipped until Customs has authorized duty-free entry.

IAM Note: Failure to comply with requirements may result in the destruction of goods by Customs or return of the entire consignment to the port of origin at the owner of the goods' expense.

Wedding Trousseau / Gifts

Documents Required

- Invoice
- Import permit (if requested by Customs - applies to second-hand goods)

Specific Information

Items are subject to the payment of duties.

Restricted/Dutiable Items

- Local currency of over \$10,000; gold coins, coin and stamp collections and unprocessed gold must be declared.
- Endangered species of plants or wildlife, alive or dead, including parts and articles made from them (require CITES permit)
- Animal and animal byproducts
- Medicines for personal use (note from physician and prescription required)
- Cigarettes (200), cigars (20), tobacco (250g)
- Perfume (50 ml)
- Eau de toilette (250ml)
- Goods for personal use
- Wine / liquor / alcohol
 - Import permit and liquor removal certificate required.
If less than 15 L a liquor removal certificate is not required however, duties and taxes will be applicable.
 - A wine list is required and must be loaded last in the shipment.
Customs exam will be applicable.
 - Items subject to payment of duties.
 - Documentation requirements must be met prior to the arrival of the shipment.
- Dangerous goods / firearms
 - Import permit and South African Police Firearm Registrar Certificate SAP 312 are required.
 - Firearms must be hand carried by the owner of the goods.
Shipment cannot be cleared if the firearms are included in the sea / air shipments
 - Items are subject to the payment of duties.

IAM Note: Travelers may be asked to pay deposit on expensive items like laptops, which is refunded at re-exported. Returning residents are advised to register personal items (jewelry, watches, cameras, laptops, etc.) before leaving the country to avoid paying duty on these items upon re-importation.

Prohibited Items

- Narcotics
- Illegal drugs
- Plants and vegetable products
- Pornographic books and magazines
- Walkie-talkies and radios (may include other prohibited communication devices)
- Animal products (certain feathers, furs, skins, tusks, or animals identified under protected species regulations)

Cultural and Other Information

[CIA World Factbook](#)

[Wikipedia Entry for South Africa](#)
