

IMPORT PROCEDURES, CUSTOM CLEARANCE PROCEDURES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

SHIPPING DOCUMENTS.

The documents required for all commercial shipments to The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, irrespective of value or mode of transportation, are : a **commercial invoice**, a **certificate of origin**, a **bill of lading** (or airway bill), a steamship (airlines) company certificate, an insurance certificate (if goods are insured by the exporter) and a **packing list**. Depending on the nature of goods being shipped, or upon certain requests from the Saudi importer or clauses in a contractual document, **specific certificates** may also be required.

It is important to note that authentication of these documents is the responsibility of the exporter, who must see that those are certified as per following:

1. All documents must be notarized by the Foreign Office.
2. All documents to be sealed and certified by a local Chamber of Commerce.
3. All documents to be legalized by the Consulates General / Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

Description of Shipping Documents:

Commercial Invoice:

All commercial invoices must be on the letterhead of the company preparing the invoice. The invoice should contain names and addresses of consignor and consignee, accurate description of goods and components, trademarks, name of the vessel (or airlines) and the date of sailing, port of loading and port of discharge, net and gross weight, quantity, unit price and extended price of each type of goods, total value of the shipment, contents of each package and container, currency, number of L/C (if applicable) and freight and insurance.

The Saudi Custom authorities have notified with effect from May 1995, that commercial invoices issued by exporters should contain accurate description of goods being exported to the Kingdom, for example :

For equipment :

Length, number and size of exported item.

Model number.

Trade marks.

Manufacturers' complete name.

For other exported products:

Complete material description including type, size, weight and percentage of its components if possible.

Complete name(s) of manufacturer(s) or product(s).

Besides the above, invoices should be certified by a responsible person of the exporting firm as follows :

'I certify this invoice to be true and correct and in accordance with our books, also that the goods referred to are of Pakistan origin'.

Certificate of Origin:

This is to be issued by the manufacturer (or by the exporting firm). In addition to the name of the vessel (airlines) and the date of sailing, name(s), nationality(ies) and street address (s), in full, of manufacturer(s) of all items being shipped, and components, must be declared, as well as the origin of each item/component. A signed statement to the effect that the document is true and correct is to be given.

If the merchandise to be shipped to Saudi Arabia is not solely and exclusively products of Pakistan then a notarized 'APPENDED DECLARATION TO CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN' (available at any Saudi Consulate), must be attached to the certificate of origin.

In addition, the certificate of origin must include name and address of Saudi importer, description of the goods and name and address of shipping company.

The Bill of Lading (or Airway bill):

One non-negotiable copy of the bill of lading is to be presented to a Saudi Arabian Consulate. The bill of lading should commensurate with the commercial invoice and should show description, value, net and gross weight of shipped goods, volume & measurement, marks, name and address of consignee (Saudi importer) and consignor, name and address of shipping company and/or shipping agent, name of vessel and date of sailing, port of loading and port of discharge, number of packages. Marks and numbers should agree with those on invoice and containers.

Steamship Certificate:

This certificate (which is an APPENDED DECLARATION TO BILL OF LADING) should be issued by steamship company in one original at a minimum, must be notarized and state that the vessel (named in the Bill of Lading) is not registered in a country with which business relations are discouraged or owned by nationals or residents of such country, and that it is not scheduled to call at certain specific destinations en-route to Saudi Arabia. Further, it should declare that said vessel is otherwise eligible to enter into ports of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in conformity with its laws and regulations (standard form of Appended Declaration to Bill of Lading is available at Saudi Arabian Consulate/Embassy).

Insurance Certificate

This certificate (issued by an insurance company in one original at a minimum) must contain the following information: actual amount of insurance, description and value of insured goods, name of vessel, port of loading and Saudi port of discharge and name and address of beneficiary. In addition, the APPENDED DECLARATION TO INSURANCE POLICY (form of which is available at any Saudi Arabian Consulate) should state that the insurance company has a duly qualified and appointed agent or representative in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, giving his name and full address.

Note.- If the shipment is insured by an insurance company in Saudi Arabia, the exporter, on their letterhead, must state the name and address of said company.

Packing List:

This includes names and addresses of consignor and consignee, description and value of the exported goods, net and total weight,

number of packages and their contents, number of containers and contents, numbers of seals and number of L/C. (if available).

Special Documents:

As mentioned at the outset,, depending on the nature of exported goods to Saudi Arabia, or according to a request from the Saudi importer, certain additional documents may also be required. **Special certificates / documents** need to be authenticated in accordance with the procedure for authentication of shipping documents delineated above. The most important of these certificates / documents are the following :

i). Food Products' Export Documents:

Requirements for labeling of food and food products sold in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are determined by Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (**SASO**). **Exporters of these products should comply (among other SASO standards) with Mandatory Standards SSA 1/1984, whether for sample demonstration or for commercial shipments, and must provide the following certificates :**

- a. **Food Manufacturer's Ingredients Certificate:** This certificate should include description of exported food products (contents and percentage of each ingredient), chemical data, microbiological standards, storage and life of product (date of manufacture and length of life). When the product contains any animal fats in their products, the certificate must confirm the kind of animal from which it is taken, or states that no pork meat or its artificial flavor nor its animal fate is being used.

This certificate must be obtained from local health department and must be signed.

- b. **Consumer Protection Certificate:** Must confirm the healthiness of the various ingredients of the exported food products to Saudi Arabia, their safety and fitness for human consumption. This certificate must be obtained from Authorized Government Agency or one of its local offices, and must be signed.
- c. **Price List:** Issued by the exporter and required to indicate that the prices of exported products are the standard local market prices.

ii). **Meat Imported into Saudi Arabia.**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia imports only (male) beef or lamb meats, fresh or frozen. In addition to the above-mentioned shipping documents, all meat shipments must be accompanied by the following certificates :

a. A certificate which indicates that slaughtering has taken place in an officially-licensed slaughter-house and in accordance with Muslim procedures. (Such certificate should be legalized by a recognized Islamic Center. This certificate must also accompany shipments of poultry into Saudi Arabia.

b. **Official Health Certificate** indicating the date of slaughtering, kind

Of animal and their average age, in each shipment. The health certificate must also indicate that animals were examined by a licensed veterinarian within twelve hours before being slaughtered and were found free from disease and suitable for human consumption.

Note.- **HEALTH CERTIFICATE** is also required for all exports to Saudi Arabia of all kinds of meat (including poultry and sea-foods), meat products, livestock, vegetables, fruits, human blood etc. attesting that they are free from pests and/or diseases.

Slaughtered animals must be stamped by the concerned health authority on several parts. Age of animal, when slaughtered, should not exceed three years for lamb and five years for beef. Exporters should comply with prevailing Saudi rules and regulations regarding the procedure of cutting, shipping, storing etc. of meat shipped to the Kingdom.

iii). **Importation of Seeds and Grains into Saudi Arabia :**

Exporters of seeds and grains are to clearly write in Arabic on each package/bag the following information.

1. Barely or Sorghum for Animal Fodder.
2. Name of exporter.
3. Weight of bag.

4. Country of production.
5. Date of production.
6. Expiration date.

Grains used as Seeds :

1. Barely, Sorghum, or wheat as seeds.
2. Name of exporter.
3. Country of production.
4. The Phrase: (Poisonous for both human and/or animals).
5. Date of production.
6. Expiration date.

The exporter must provide the following authenticated certificates :

(1) **Certificate of Inspection:**

Issued by a specialized company for inspection of seeds. The most important information which the certificate must include is as follows :

- Name and address of buyer.
- Name and address of seller.
- Kind and amount.
- Name of shipping vessel.
- Type of packing.
- The written information on bags and each package.
- Results of inspection and percentage of ingredients.
- Method of chemical treatment of the seeds.
- Confirmation that the seeds are free from insects, epidemic and diseases.

(2) **Phyto-sanitary Certificate** :

This is a certificate verifying that the seeds or grains are free from epidemic and/or agricultural disease. It is to be obtained from authorized department of agriculture or from one of its local offices. This certificate is required to accompany all shipments of flour, rice, grains, agricultural seeds, plants, plant material etc.

(3) **Seed Analysis Certificate** :

This certificate is to prove the degree of purity of the seeds shipped to Saudi Arabia. It is issued by the Authorized Government Agency or by one of its local offices.

(4) **Certificate of Weight** :

Issued by the exporting company indicating the name and address of Saudi importer, name of shipping vessel, number of the bill of lading, number of seals and containers, and net and total weight of the shipment.

iv). **Shipment of Livestock to the Kingdom** :

Besides the standard set of six shipping documents, the following additional documents are required :

- 1) **Certificate of Weight** : This must show the average weight of the exported livestock.
- 2) **Health Certificate**: This must verify that the livestock are free from diseases. It is issued by Pertinent Department.
- 3) **Health Certificate** issued by a veterinarian.
- 4) **Pedigree Certificate** issued by Authorized Government Agency.
- 5) Production Records.
- 6) Declaration of Inspection and Acceptance.

v). **Certificates regarding the shipment of pets** :

- 1) Health certificate issued by a veterinarian and approved by Authorized Government agency, confirming that the animals are free from diseases.

2) Animal Vaccination Certificate.

Only guard, hunting, and seeing-eye dogs are allowed into Saudi Arabia.

vi) **Importation of Horses to the Kingdom.**

Importer should submit an application to the President of the Saudi Equestrian Club, indicating the number of horses, exporting country, and customs center at the port of entry to the Kingdom. The application should be accompanied by the following documents :

1. **A certificate** of origin, issued by the company of raising and breeding horses, with a colored picture of the horse affixed to it. the certificate must be authorized by the Authorized Government Agency and approved by a Saudi Arabian Consulate.
2. **Health certificate**, confirming that the horses are free from diseases, approved by a veterinarian and authenticated as in (1) above. **It should be noted, however, that only Saudis are allowed to import horses into the Kingdom.**

vii). **Vegetable and Fruit Health Certificate :**

This certificate is required to accompany all shipments of vegetables and fruits to the Kingdom certifying that such exports are free from pests, insects, and other agricultural diseases, and that they have not been exposed to ionizing radiation. This certificate is obtainable from Authorized Government Agency.

viii) **Certificate of Free Sale.**

This certificate should accompany all shipments of pharmaceutical and medicinal products to Saudi Arabia. It is obtainable from the Authorized Government Agency and should be presented to a Saudi Arabia Consulate with other documents.

In addition, **imports of pharmaceuticals and medicinal products require a certificate issued by the Pertinent Department of Health.** The certificate must state that the medicines are being used by the public in the Country of export under the same trade name and formula and must include the name of each product, the

formula and the date and number of the permit to manufacture if one is required. **The certificate must be certified by the Authorized Government Agency and be authenticated by a Saudi Arabian Consulate. This certificate is required to be filed with the Ministry of Health in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, prior to any shipment and must be renewed every two years.**

l) **SASO Certificates of Conformity for imported electrical appliances, equipment, and accessories into Saudi Arabia:**

There are two types of certificates :

a. Certificate of Conformity for electrical appliances and equipment.

b. Certificate of Conformity for electrical accessories.

The relevant certificate (which standard form is available at any Saudi Consulate) must be issued by the manufacturer on their official letterhead, authenticated as detailed above, and must be approved by the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO) prior to shipment. These certificates are only required for commodities mentioned in the **List of Imported Electrical Products issued by SASO.**

ix). **SASO Motor Vehicles Conformity Certificates:**

At least three months before dispatching the first consignment of any type of motor vehicles in any year, the manufacturer must send to SASO this certificate in English and/or Arabic languages for their approval. Individuals must obtain this certificate from the manufacturer prior to the shipment of any car for their personal use in the Kingdom (a personal used car of a Saudi student or a diplomat is exempted).

Arrangement of Documents:

Shipping documents (each followed by its Arabic translation) must be presented to any of the Saudi Arabian Consulates in the following manner or those will be rejected :- Commercial Invoice, Certificate of Origin, Insurance Certificate, Bill of Lading (or airway bill), Steamship Certificate, Packing List and any of the special documents, all stapled together.

In addition, an Export Information Sheet, EIS (available at any Foreign Arab Chamber of Commerce) must be filled out, signed by an official of the exporting shipping company and presented to a Saudi Arabian Consulate along with the rest of the required shipping documents. The EIS does not require authentication.

GENERAL NOTES :

Imports of plants, fruits, vegetables, seeds, live animals and poultry must have the prior approval of the appropriate Saudi Arabian authorities and must be accompanied by a phytosanitary / health certificate stating that they are free from pests and other diseases. All shipments of plants will be inspected upon arrival in Saudi Arabia.

According to Royal Decree No.5/E/27748 dated 24/11/1402 H, the country of origin must be mentioned on all products imported into Saudi Arabia, except when it is unfeasible; for instance as in the following cases :

- a. Small spare parts, nails, pins, nuts etc. In this case the country of origin should be mentioned on the package, box etc.
- b. Barbed wires, metal sheets, unfinished boards of glass, wood, marble etc. In this case the country of origin should be mentioned on the band.
- c. Raw materials or semi-finished products used as an input by national industries.

Carpet manufacturers and suppliers must indicate in Arabic the following data which is to be applied on each 5 meters along the carpet roll length :

1. Thickness or weight of each square meter.
2. Pile weight.
3. Country of Origin.
4. **Type** : Indicate whether made of nylon, wool, acrylic or polypropylene. All carpet manufacturers, suppliers and distributors have to show the captioned data on the **sales invoice**.

Shaving brushes and other articles made of raw hair should be accompanied by a recognized official certificate showing the consignment to be free from anthrax germs.

Used imported clothing requires an official dis-infection certificate. These goods will be subject to inspection by the Saudi Arabian Quarantine officials.

Islamic Laws strictly forbid the importation, sale and use of liquor and narcotics.

Saudi laws forbid the importation of fire arms, wireless telephones and satellite dishes. Arms for hunting and similar sports arms need special permission.

Books and Publications are subject to inspection and approval by customs for entry. In particular, obscene literature and Communist propaganda will not be allowed entry.

Medical drugs for personal use in small quantities are allowed. Travelers **should be ready to show the inspectors the necessary documents to identify the drugs and the medical documents** (e.g. doctor's prescription) to prove that the medicine is for personal use.

Non - commercial shipments of less than 10,000 Saudi

Riyal (about 2,600/-) and cars imported into the Kingdom for

personal use, regardless of their value do not require shipping documents.

Commercial samples are subject to the payment of customs duty and surcharge either by a deposit equal to the duty at the time of import or by a bank guarantee.

A refund is made if the goods are re-exported within 12 months. In case samples are sold, neither deposit nor guarantee will be refunded.

Prior permission to import samples must be obtained from the Director General of Customs, Customs Department, who should be furnished with lists of samples, prices and catalogues. A non-refundable duty of 12% is levied for imports of samples of jewelry and watches. Authenticated shipping documents are required for all shipments of commercial samples.

Palletization / containerization of cargo.

The existing operative Saudi law requires that all incoming cargo is properly palletized and containerized. In case this is not followed then each offending import without any exception (**with exclusion of bulk cargo**) is imposed a penalty ranging from SR.1,000/- (minimum) to SR.5,000/-. Exporters are required to be vigilant to avoid this discretionary overloading.

Intellectual Property Law.

Intellectual property law encompasses three distinct areas : **trademarks**, **copyrights**, and **patents**. In Saudi Arabia, each area is governed by a different set of rules.

Trademarks.

The current trademark law is operative since 1984. **Letters, names, drawings or other distinguishing symbols**, including service marks, may be protected under the trademark law. In order to receive trademark protection, the **applicant must be a Saudi citizen or legal entity** (such as a limited liability company) or must reside in a country that offers the same protection to Saudi Arabians. If the trademark is registered in another country, the company may file a priority claim. **Approved trademarks are protected for a ten-year renewable period.** While the registration is pending, a foreign company may still obtain some protection for its trademark by entering into licensing arrangements with local merchants.

Initially, the trademark law was not widely enforced but now its enforcement has become more effective. Recently, Saudi courts and

government officials have punished or brought charges against local merchants who were violating the trademark law. If a company suspects that its trademark is being violated, it can obtain an “**attachment order**”. The “attachment order” will require an inventory of the alleged violator’s assets and may restrict their use during the proceeding.

Copyrights

Saudi Arabia introduced the copyright law during 1989. The ambit of the copyright protection depends on the type of work – audio works receive shorter terms of protection, around 25 years, while written works may be protected for several decades after the author’s death. Recently, in a move designed to strengthen copyright protection, Saudi Arabia joined the **Universal Copyright Convention** and the **Berne Convention** on copyright protection. As a result, foreign-owned copyrights now receive the same protection under Saudi law as Saudi-owned ones.

Like enforcement of the trademark laws, copyright laws have effectively been enforced in recent years with the government crack downs on copyright violators.

Patents.

Saudi Arabia adopted its current **patent law** in 1989. An inventor may obtain a patent on new products or processes or on improvements to current ones. A patent applicant must have a local agent. Applications are submitted to the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology

(KACST). The inventor generally must exploit the patent on a full industrial scale within two years of the grant. Once issued, **a patent is effective for fifteen years and may be renewed.**

Resolution of Disputes in Saudi Arabia.

If a dispute arises, a company may sue – or be sued – in Saudi courts. It is important for a company to understand, before entering into a transaction, how a dispute will be resolved. This involves three important considerations; whether to use Saudi courts or courts of other countries, the type of Saudi tribunal in which the dispute will be resolved, and the possibility of arbitration.

Saudi Tribunals Vs Courts in Other Countries.

If a dispute arises between a Pakistani and a Saudi party, the Pakistani company should consider suing the party in Saudi Arabia. In some cases, Saudi law requires the suit to be brought in Saudi Arabia. For example, Saudi law prohibits government agencies from disputing a contract in another country. **Bringing a suit directly in Saudi Arabia provides the best optable possibility that a favour-able judgment may become enforceable.**

Before suing a Saudi in Pakistan, the Pakistani company understand the bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. If a company sues a Saudi in Pakistan and attempts to enforce the judgement in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Foreign Ministry first shall review that judgment. In

order to obtain an order of a Saudi tribunal to enforce the judgment passed by a Pakistani Court.

ITEMS WHOSE IMPORT IN SAUDI ARABIA IS PROHIBITED.

In Saudi Arabia, there is no codified form of Trade Policy. Imports and exports of all items are regulated through different Royal Decrees and Orders issued in the Kingdom. After hectic efforts, lists of those **commodities** whose **import is prohibited** in the Kingdom has been acquired from Saudi Customs. The cited list have been translated in English for convenience of the exporters. The prohibited import items are as follows:

- 1) Pig, its meat fats, blood ,offal and its limbs.
- 2) Dogs excluding those for hunting , watching and guidance of the blinds subject to the production of a certificate from the exporting country to the effect that the dog being entered into the Kingdom is meant for watching or hunting or guidance of the blind, duly attested by the Saudi Mission abroad. It will also be liable to be checked by the Veterinary Health Quarantine Department.
- 3) Frog meat.
- 4) Narcotics of all kinds , natures and varieties like odors, powders , materials for sniffing (Naswar) etc.
- 5) Food preparations of all kinds prepared of living thing's blood.
- 6) Wines and intoxicant materials of all kinds.
- 7) Holy Quran copies in commercial quantity.

- 8) Blank Invoice Books with the names and addresses of foreign companies.
- 9) Publicity materials on cigarettes.
- 10) Any commodity with the mark of Cross and all other printed books, audio and video material contrary to the Islamic faith and the local publication laws.
- 11) Empty bottles arriving from outside for bottling which contain the mark of its manufacturer.
- 12) Embodied materials, models, statutes which contradict the common values and being imported in commercial quantities.
- 13) All the instruments goods and machinery meant for gambling.
- 14) Tyres (used and re-treaded).
- 15) Birthday trees(Xmas tree).
- 16) Arms, Ammunition and military equipment and its components or parts excluding those imported by the concerned public sector agencies.
- 17) Night vision devices/Scopes, laryngo- scopes, magnifying glasses used to see the things during darkness.
- 18) Explosives, Powders, detonating material, potassium chlorides of all natures without obtaining proper licence.
- 19) All kinds of toys made of and containing explosive materials.
- 20) Medicines without labels and other related printed information and prescriptions.
- 21) Commodities affixed with the state insignia, which consists of two swords in cross shape with date palm tree in between the swords.

- 22) Nutmeg fruit, its seeds and powder. Its powder in shape of a component of a spice provided that the spice does not contain more than the allowed ratio of 20% of its total contents.
- 23) Satellite receivers and its components and spare parts.
- 24) Blue print cameras.
- 25) Body massage aids which are usable in a manner contrary to the common social graces.
- 26) Children mini cars and motor cycles having a height less than 50 cm as compared to its tyres diameter and equipped with auto engine working with petrol , gas or any other fuel source. Similarly , battery operated items having speed capacity of 10 kph.
- 27) Tools used to open the (locks of) doors and vehicles.
- 28) Horns which cause disturbance (pressure).
- 29) Costume masks.
- 30) Empty bags imported separately having marks, logos or details on food materials, cement, or company logo except that which is arriving for national companies.
- 31) Transparent (mesh/thin) ladies Abayas even if imported in personal baggage.
- 32) Knives of particular nature meant for causing damage to life of others. e.g. having two blades or a handle.
- 33) Amusement machines containing hysteric laughs.
- 34) Ether.
- 35) Syringe shaped pens.

- 36) Articles with affixed flags of the foreign countries in a large and conspicuous manner.
- 37) Medical preparations causing deride to human body's parts/organs.
- 38) Models of the seal of the Holy Prophet, PBUH.
- 39) Goods bearing names and photographs of famous people.
- 40) Skins of predatory animals.
- 41) Video boosters.
- 42) Video telephone devices.
- 43) Brief cases having built in radio, audio recorder, or alarm.
- 44) Greeting cards containing a musical instrument functions automatically or on moving the card.
- 45) Aerials of automobiles having the shape of the aerials and wireless / telephone antennas fixed on the vehicles of the security agencies.
- 46) Imitation money.
- 47) Camouflage vehicles and shading materials.
- 48) Twin exhaust engine vehicles having engine capacity of 450 HP with manual transmission.
- 49) Appliances put behind the drivers to keep them alert and not to let them sleep.
- 50) Logo of an eagle.
- 51) Sonic operated appliances.
- 52) Spectacles operated with laser.
- 53) Luminous shoes in which mercury is used.

- 54) Toys in shape of human hand which is kept by some drivers visibly in their vehicles.
- 55) Electronic niche(mihrab).
- 56) Model of Kaaba Sharif.
- 57) Sixfold star (State logo of Israel)