

Import & Export Procedures

Export Procedures from South Africa

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise issues a Customs code (client) number as a computer check number for export control purposes and this must appear on all documentation presented to the customs authorities. This application is on form DA 185, obtainable from all customs offices or from their website.

The International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC), formally known as (DTI) Department of Trade and Industries allocates the same number to the company concerned, although in this case, it serves as the exporter's registration number for the purpose of claiming export incentives.

Irrespective of the mode of transport used when exporting goods, the exporter/his freight forwarder is required to present the following documents to the customs authorities:

Bill of entry export:

Goods may not be exported from South Africa unless a bill of entry export is submitted to and accepted by the customs authorities.

As from 1st October 2006, customs introduced the SAD 500 (Single Administrative Document), which applies in place of all customs documents, with different purpose codes.

The words "Form F178 produced" must be entered on the bill of entry, or if not required "Form F178 not required". Similarly, if an export permit is required or not required, this must also be entered on the bill of entry. The HS tariff number must also be inserted and whether the cargo is containerized.

Amendments may be made to the bill of entry export by means of a Voucher of Correction (VOC).

Commercial invoice:

The commercial invoice must be presented to customs with the bill of entry export as well as relevant transport documents to be stamped by customs. This enable customs to check the validity of the value of a consignment of goods as stated on the SAD 500.

Export permit (if necessary):

This document is required for certain goods and commodities only in terms of import and export regulations. If an export permit is required, the export permit number must appear on the SAD 500. These permits are obtainable from ITAC, but there are commodities that also require more specific export permits from other controlling authorities which includes:

- The Director-General: Department of Agriculture
- The Director-General: Department of Water Affairs
- The Director-General: Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs
- The Director-General: Department of National Health
- The Director: minerals Bureau, Department of Environmental and Energy Affairs.

Export permits are not transferable. Export permits are also issued for a specific duration whereby they expire.

Import certificate from the country of destination:

Where goods are classified as strategic commodities, an import certificate, obtained from the government from the importing country, needs to accompany an application for an export permit. The import certificate represents an undertaking by the importer to import the goods and not to divert, transship or re-export them to another destination, except in accordance with the export control regulations of the importers country.

Import certificate from the country of destination: (Continued)

Strategic commodities may include: chemicals and allied products; certain metals, minerals and their manufacturers: all arms, ammunition, military equipment and articles; certain types of industrial machinery and equipment, etc.

Special export certificates or permits:

Apart from those goods requiring an export permit, a number of other products are subject to inspection and/or to the issue of special permits by certain authorities prior to the goods being exported. Goods requiring special permits include live animals, meat (excluding canned meat), certain types of fish (also excluding canned fish), dairy products, coffee, protected plants and animals, cereals etc. Goods subject to inspection and/or grading include fruit (fresh and frozen), cereals, vegetables, tobacco, hides and skins.

Transport documents:

i.e. the S.A. harbours combined export document for break bulk / bulk consignments (sea), the air waybill (air) the freight transit order (rail) and the road 'waybill'. Note that no transport document need be presented to customs in the case of containerized cargo as all details relating to the cargo are stated on the bill of entry. The bill of entry export will then be stamped by customs "Export Authorised". Without this stamp, the consignment assumed to be break bulk. This copy must be presented to the container operator if the exporter is using a container that is controlled by an approved container operator or to the terminal operator if an approved container operator does not control the container. In the case of LCL consignments, the bill of entry export must be presented to the groupage operator / shipping line. Containers packed with goods for export may not be loaded by the carrier unless the container / terminal operator is in possession of the bill(s) of entry export on which customs has authorised export. Goods packed in containers are subject to occasional inspection by the customs authorities.

Certificate of origin:

Movement certificates (EUR.1 and SADC) must also be presented with the export document to customs for approval, for the importer/client to enable him for the preferential rate of duty applicable in the country of import.

Pre-shipment inspections:

These inspections have to be performed by the nominated institution as per the letter of credit before goods could be exported, but do not need to be presented to customs authorities.