



## Importing Personal Property into

# CHINA

### IMPORTING HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

#### CUSTOMS REGULATIONS:

- **All household goods and personal effects are subject to duties and taxes** (except for Diplomats). Used clothing and books are the only items permitted duty-free entry.
- It is recommended that you visit China at least one month prior to THE shipment's arrival to insure that all documents and permit applications are completed to avoid long customs delays.

#### Notes:

- Shipment must arrive within 6 months of shipper's arrival.
- For electronic devices (such as a TV, Radio, Washer/Dryer, etc.), you are only allowed one of each.
- If you are a Chinese person with a foreign passport and do not have a Residence Card, your goods and effects will be taxed by customs.
- Chinese nationals are not allowed to import furniture items back into China. There are no exceptions to this rule.

#### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR AN IMPORT PERMIT:

Before importation of goods can occur, an **Import Permit** must be obtained. The following documents are required by your agent to obtain the permit:

- ✓ Original Employment Certificate
- ✓ Passport with Chinese Work Visa
- ✓ Work permit (employment permit) or Chief Representative Card issued by China Labor Bureau

- ✓ Residence permit issued by China Security Bureau
- ✓ Representative certificate or company registration book (preferably in Chinese) for customs
- ✓ Copy of permits for shipper's company issued by the Economy & Trade Committee
- ✓ Copy of company's Business License and Foreign Trading Association Approval Certificate

#### DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCE:

- ✓ Ocean bill of lading or express release / airway bill
- ✓ Declaration form of articles for official and private use
- ✓ Signed application form for import of personal effects
- ✓ Customs Permit
- ✓ Separate Import Permits for Pets and Plants
- ✓ Clear, detailed inventories in English
- ✓ Attestation of shipper's employer in China verifying employment

#### DIPLOMATIC SHIPMENTS – REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- ✓ Copy of Diplomatic Passport & China Diplomatic card
- ✓ Ocean bill of lading or express release / airway bill
- ✓ Clear, detailed inventories in English

## PROHIBITED & RESTRICTED/ DUTIABLE ITEMS

### PROHIBITED ITEMS:

- Bursaphelenchus xylophilus (a destructive pest contained in certain wooden packing materials). See **\*Note** below.
- Weapons
- Firearms
- Ammunition
- Drugs and poisons
- Fresh food, especially meat
- Importation of copy machines as personal effects.
- Pornographic materials
- Politically subversive materials
- Material advocating the P.R.C. government. Authorities will inspect film, videos and cassette tapes before importation is permitted.

**Note:** The Chinese Import/Export Inspection and Quarantine authority has seized shipments from the USA and Japan if they contained **Bursaphelenchus xylophilus**. The following emergency measures must be applied to shipments leaving the USA and Japan as of January 1, 2000:

- ✓ Avoid using conifer wood packing materials when exporting or importing goods from the USA and Japan. If such material is used, it must be heat-treated and accompanied by a certificate from the official Quarantine Department of the USA or Japan verifying such treatment has occurred.
- ✓ When import/export shipments are packed in non-conifer or non-wood materials, a statement of "Non-conifer wood packing materials used" or "Does not contain wood packing materials" must accompany the shipment.
- ✓ Import shipments will be inspected and quarantined selectively. Shipments not in compliance will be treated at the importer's expense or may be re-exported.

### DUTIABLE / RESTRICTED ITEMS:

- Alcohol (Customs regulations are very strict. We recommend that no alcohol is included in shipment.)
- Foodstuff is restricted. Non-perishable food is allowed in reasonable quantities in the first shipment (subject to tax).
- Office equipment can't be imported as personal effects. If it is, it will be subject to substantial duties.
- Oriental antiques must be declared in detail to customs to avoid difficulties in re-exporting these items
- Prescription drugs are restricted. You will need a copy of the prescription stating the type of drug and dosage. You are allowed to import a reasonable quantity for personal consumption for a year.
- Furniture, electrical appliances, audio visual equipment, computers, printers, light fixtures, foodstuff, CDs, DVDs, videotapes, and cassette tapes exceeding a quantity of 100 items are subject to duty as assessed by Customs.

### Approximate duties for some items are as follows:

- Furniture 10%
- Food 10%
- Bedding 10-20%
- Electronic items 30%
- Cars subject to 80-120% duty charge
- Books and Periodicals 10%
- Alcohol & tobacco 50%

## IMPORTING MOTOR VEHICLES AND PETS

### IMPORTATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES:

- Import restrictions are governed at the local level. Import regulations will vary accordingly, dependent upon city regulations/restrictions.
- Check with a Chinese consulate or embassy in the United States before deciding to import any motor vehicles.
- Only left-hand drive autos are allowed importation.

### RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTATION OF DOGS AND CATS:

- Some provinces of China impose severe restrictions and high registration fees on dogs.
- Check with a Chinese consulate or embassy in the United States before deciding to import any pets. Import Permits can be obtained from the Bureau of Animals & Plants.
- Only 1 pet per residence is normally allowed.
- Large dogs are prohibited.

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- ✓ Health Certificate
- ✓ Proof of Rabies Vaccination
- ✓ Animal Import Permit.

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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.

## **NO MEANS YES – 10 TIPS FOR LIVING IN CHINA**

1. **Laowai.** This label means “respected foreigner” but can often sound less than complimentary. Although it’s never meant to be rude. If you dislike the label, suggest a suitable alternative, such as your nationality and title, as in “British Engineer.”
2. **Guanxi.** This refers to connections or a certain relationship. In a society overpopulated and bogged down by bureaucracy, favors and personal connections are often the only means to accomplish anything, and the Chinese live by guanxi. People keep in touch with relatives, former classmates, any colleague, because the connection might be mutually beneficial.
3. **No means yes.** In many Chinese social situations, good manners require a refusal. One refuses tea or snacks the first time offered, as well as a seat on a bus, a gift, or some type of assistance. The general rule is that the offering person repeats the offer and the receiver refuses again but accepts the third time.

4. **Kaishui.** This is boiled water, the cornerstone of Chinese daily life. Every home, dorm room, hotel, or office has the ubiquitous red or silver thermos bottles to keep water hot all day. Kaishui is not just safe drinking water; it's also useful for cleaning glasses, bowls, chopsticks, and other utensils before using them. You'll hear locals ask if utensils have been rinsed in kaishui.
5. **Suibian.** This word does not translate into English exactly, but it means "casualness," or "whatever you like." It gets more mileage than any other phrase, and it's very flexible. You can say it when someone asks you what you want to eat, if you want to ride or take the bus...anything. When you're incapable of making a decision, this word takes care to that.
6. **Bargaining.** State-owned shops like department stores have fixed prices, but any privately owned establishment allows bargaining. Find out the usual price of a product first and cut the seller's offer by 50%. If he comes down, you raise your offer, and so on, bit by bit. Your trump card is walking away, which often prompts the seller to call you back and accept your last offer.
7. **Banqueting.** If you're in China teaching or on business, be prepared for big banquets. Remember a few basic rules: First, always wait until the host offers you a seat; otherwise you might sit in the wrong place. The host himself sits in the seat of honor, usually designated by a napkin that's folded fancier than the rest. The person assigned to settle the bill usually sits nearest the door and opposite the host. Secondly, pace yourself. At least 10 and maybe 15 courses will roll past you on the lazy Susan, and the Chinese will generously pressure you to eat more and drink more. Thirdly, toasts can be numerous, so if you don't drink, make that clear immediately. To show gratitude and good manners, give at least one toast with whatever you're drinking.
8. **Nali.** Although this means literally "where," it is associated with modesty and can be used when someone compliments you as well as for asking directions. If someone compliments you, "nali, nali" is an appropriate response.
9. **Mind your face.** The concept of "face" (mianzi) governs the social behavior of all Asian peoples. Nobody likes to "lose face" (diu lian).
10. **Avoid the four "Ts"** - Tiananmen, Tibet, Taiwan, and Turkmenistan- in conversation. "Although most people will tell you their Cultural Revolution experience, the Tiananmen incident is a topic the Chinese are only just beginning to discuss. And Taiwan is considered a renegade province whose residents must return to the motherland politically and geographically at some point.

#### Acknowledgment

- International Living. "no means yes – 10tips for living in China." Volume 18, No.1, page 9, 1998