

# IMPORTING GOODS INTO THE U.S.



The process to import goods into the United States involves several key steps, from documentation and compliance to customs clearance. Here's a detailed overview:

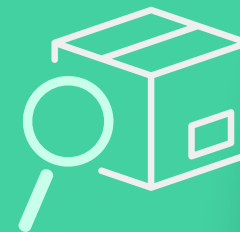
## Identify the Goods & Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) Classification

Determine the HTS code for your imported product. This is necessary to identify applicable duty rates and regulatory requirements.



## Check Regulatory Requirements & Restrictions

- Ensure your goods comply with U.S. laws and regulations, including:
  - FDA approval for food and drugs.
  - USDA/APHIS certification for agricultural products.
  - EPA requirements for chemicals.
  - DOT standards for automotive products.
- Verify any licensing or special restrictions.



## Find a Reliable Supplier & Arrange Shipment

- Agree on Incoterms (International Commercial Terms) with the supplier (e.g., FOB, CIF, EXW).
- Arrange for shipping (air, sea, or land).
- Choose reliable freight forwarders/carriers.



## Obtain Required Documentation

Commonly required import documents include:

- Commercial Invoice: Detailed description and value of goods.
- Packing List: Describes the packaging details.
- Bill of Lading (BOL)/Airway Bill: Proof of shipment and ownership of goods.
- Arrival Notice: Notification from carrier of arrival in the U.S.
- Certificate of Origin: May reduce duties if there is a trade agreement.
- Importer Security Filing (ISF, 10+2): Submitted electronically to CBP at least 24 hours before loading on vessel bound for the U.S.
- Other certificates or licenses: FDA, USDA, EPA documentation if needed.



## File Entry Documents & Clear Customs

Entry filing is usually done electronically by a licensed customs broker using the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) system.

Broker submits entry documents to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP):

- Entry Summary (CBP Form 7501).
- Payment of applicable duties and fees.

CBP may inspect or hold goods for further examination.



## Pay Import Duties, Taxes, & Fees

Importers must pay customs duties and taxes assessed by CBP, based on:

- Product type (HTS code).
- Value of shipment.
- Country of origin.

Fees include Merchandise Processing Fee (MPF) and Harbor Maintenance Fee (HMF).



## Obtain Customs Clearance & Release

Once CBP releases the shipment, your goods can be picked up from the port or airport.

If your shipment requires a release by a Partner Government Agency, you will also need to obtain the release from that agency. Some examples are FDA, USDA, CPSC, etc.



## Post-Entry Audit & Record-Keeping

Maintain accurate import documentation for at least five years.

CBP may conduct post-entry audits to verify compliance.



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## Common Terms & Agencies to Know

- **CBP (Customs and Border Protection):** Primary agency regulating imports.
- **HTS (Harmonized Tariff Schedule):** Determines duty rates and regulations.
- **FDA (Food and Drug Administration):** Oversees food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices.
- **USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture):** Oversees agricultural products.
- **EPA (Environmental Protection Agency):** Oversees chemicals and pesticides.

## Tips for Smooth Importing:

1. Work with an experienced customs broker or freight forwarder.
2. Clearly understand your product's tariff classification and regulations.
3. Ensure timely submission of paperwork to prevent delays or fines.