

*Everything*  
**You Need**  
**To Know About**  
*International Shipping*

An infographic on a dark blue background featuring seven stylized planets of different colors (light blue, dark blue, magenta, grey, purple, green, and dark grey) arranged in a descending path from top-left to bottom-right. A white dotted line connects the planets. Each planet has a small white circle with a pink number inside, indicating its position in the sequence. The text for each planet is centered between the planets.

## How International Shipping Works

1

## How Long Does International Shipping Take

2

## What Are You Allowed To Ship Internationally?

3

## Essential Documents For International Shipping

4

## International Shipping For Small Businesses

5

## International Shipping On Shopify

6

## International Shipping For Large Items

7



# How International Shipping Works

[International shipping](#) is a vital part of the global economy, enabling businesses to reach customers and suppliers in other countries. However, it can also be a complex and challenging process, requiring businesses to navigate different modes of shipping, logistics, customs regulations, and more.

This guide is designed to provide an overview of the critical aspects of international shipping, including different modes of shipping, service providers, logistics, documentation, customs, world trade, and technology. Additionally, it will delve into the future of international shipping, including trends and technologies, regulatory developments, and the impact of COVID-19.

Whether you have previous experience or are new to international shipping, this guide will provide valuable insights and practical advice to help you navigate the global marketplace.

# Different Modes Of International Shipping

Regarding international shipping, there are several different options available to businesses. These include [air freight](#), [ocean freight](#), and [courier services](#).

## Airfreight

Air freight is the quickest mode of international shipping, but is also the most expensive. It is ideal for shipping small, high-value items or items that are needed quickly.



## Courier

[Courier services](#) are a middle ground between air freight and ocean freight. They are faster than ocean freight but slower than air freight and tend to be more expensive than ocean freight but less expensive than air freight. This type of service is often used for shipping documents and small packages.



## Seafreight

Ocean freight is the most cost-effective option for shipping large quantities of goods, but it takes longer than air freight. This shipping mode is often used for bulk items like raw materials, manufactured goods, and heavy equipment.

# International Shipping

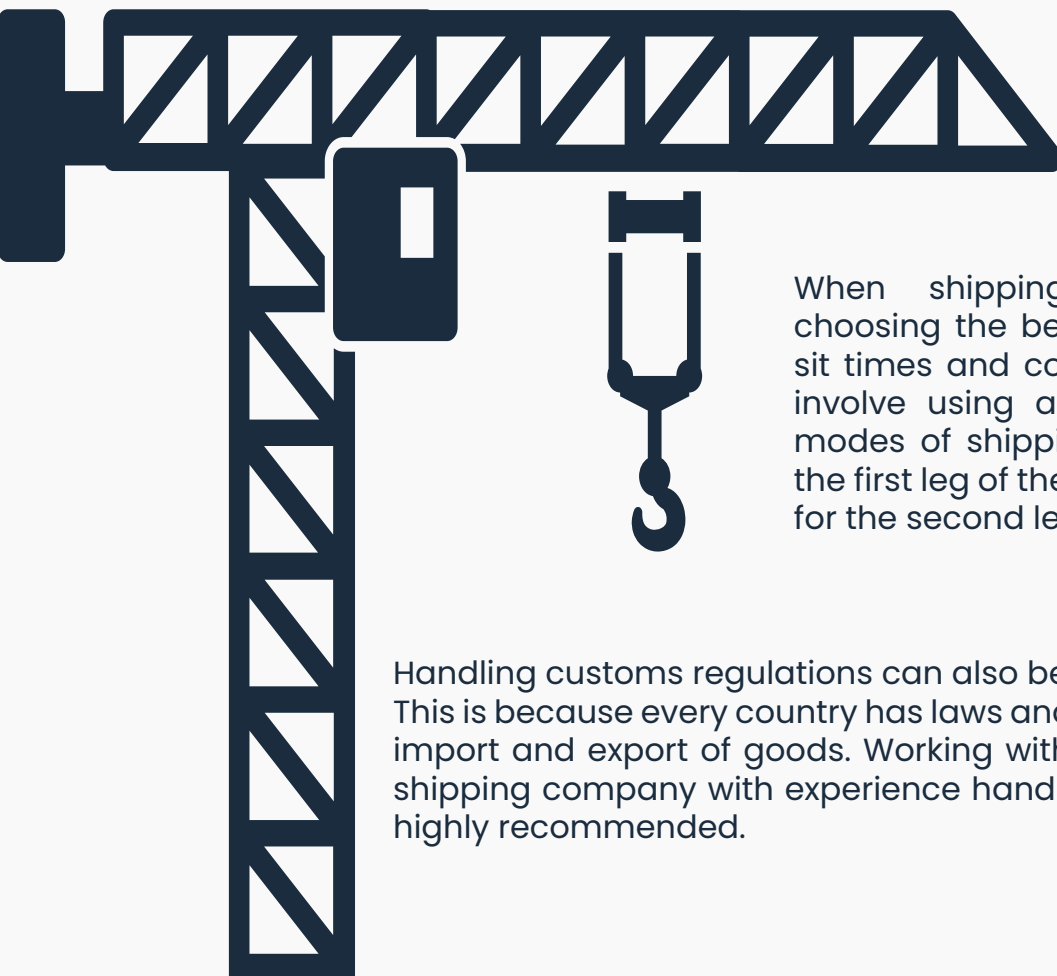
## Companies and Service Providers

There are many international shipping companies and service providers, each with its business models and services. Some companies specialize in one mode of shipping, while others offer a range of services.

Many international shipping companies offer door-to-door service, which means they will pick up the goods from the shipper's location and deliver them to the recipient's location. Other companies offer a port-to-port service, which means the goods are delivered to and picked up from a port.

## *Logistics* Of International Shipping

The logistics of international shipping can be complex, involving routing, transit times, and handling customs regulations.



When shipping goods internationally, choosing the best route to minimize transit times and costs is important. This may involve using a combination of different modes of shipping, such as air freight for the first leg of the journey and ocean freight for the second leg.

Handling customs regulations can also be a challenge. This is because every country has laws and regulations governing the import and export of goods. Working with a reputable international shipping company with experience handling customs regulations is highly recommended.

# Documentation Required For

## International Shipping

To ship internationally, specific documents are required, including:

**Commercial Invoice**

**Bill Of Loading**

**Export License**

A commercial invoice is a document that lists the details of the goods being shipped, including the type, quantity, and value of the goods. A bill of lading is a document that serves as a receipt for the goods and proves ownership.

An export licence may also be required, depending on the kind of goods being shipped and the destination country.

Sender: Business Name 12 Example Lane ABI 23C Exampleplace VAT No:		Date: Consignment Note No: Invoice Currency: Reason for Export: Order Reference No:						
Receiver: Business Name 34 Example Road DE4 56F Examplecity		Receiver:						
Quantity	Units	Weight	Description of Goods	HS Tariff Code	Country of Origin	Unit Value	Total Value	
Total Weight	Units Of Weight	KG	Total Number Of Packages			Invoice Line Total		
Declaration(s)								
INCO Terms							DDU	Invoice Total
Shipper Name and Job Title			Shipper Signature			Date		

## Customs

Customs rules and regulations vary from country to country, but generally, they are designed to protect the country's economy and citizens.

Importers are required to pay duties and taxes on goods imported into a country. The amount of duty and tax will depend on the type of goods, their value, and the country of origin.

Exporters must also comply with specific regulations, such as obtaining export licences for certain goods and providing documentation to prove that the goods are legal to export.

# World Trade

Free trade agreements are agreements between countries that lower or slash tariffs and other trade barriers. These agreements can have both benefits and drawbacks.

On the one hand, free trade agreements can result in increased economic growth and job creation. They can also lead to lower prices for consumers and increased access to new markets for businesses.

On the other hand, free trade agreements can also lead to increased competition for domestic industries, which can lead to job losses.

## Future Of International Shipping

The future of international shipping is likely to be affected by several trends and technologies, regulatory developments, and the impact of COVID-19.

One trend that is expected to continue is the use of technology in international shipping. This includes tracking and tracing systems, cargo security, and data management. These technologies can help businesses to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer service.

Regulatory developments are also likely to have an impact on international shipping. This includes changes to customs regulations, trade agreements, and environmental policies. Businesses must stay up-to-date with these changes and ensure that they are compliant.

COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on international shipping, with disruptions to global supply chains, changes to demand patterns, and increased scrutiny of the environmental impact of shipping. Businesses must adapt to these changes and seek new opportunities in the post-pandemic world.

# How Long Does International Shipping Take?



2

International shipping can be a convenient and cost-effective way to send packages and goods worldwide. However, when using international shipping services, one of the main questions is, “How long will it take for my package to arrive at its destination?”

In this article, we will explore the factors that can affect the shipping time for international shipments, including the distance between the origin and destination countries, the shipping service used, and any additional handling or processing required during transit.

We will also provide some tips on tracking the progress of your international shipment and getting estimates for delivery times.



# Factors That Affect *International* Shipping Times

## - Destination Country And Distance

The distance between the origin and destination countries is a significant factor in determining the shipping time for international shipments. Shipments that travel longer distances will take longer to arrive at their destination.

This is because the cargo must be transported by various modes of transportation, including planes, trains, and trucks, and each method has its own transit time. The destination country can also affect shipping times.

Some countries have more developed transportation infrastructure and efficient customs processes, which can speed up the delivery of shipments. On the other hand, countries with less developed transportation systems or more complex customs regulations may take longer to process and deliver shipments.

## Shipping Carriers And Shipping Method

Different carriers and shipping methods offer varying levels of speed and reliability, and some may be better suited to certain types of shipments or destinations. For example, an express shipping service such as FedEx International Priority or DHL Express will generally result in faster delivery than a standard air cargo service.

This is because express shipping services typically prioritise handling and transport, and they may also offer more direct routing options and fewer stops along the way.

## - Customs Clearance And Other Regulatory Processes

Customs clearance and other regulatory processes can significantly impact the transit time for international shipments. These processes are necessary to ensure that the shipment complies with the laws and regulations of the destination country. They can involve various activities, such as verifying the shipment's contents, collecting duties and taxes, and inspecting the goods. Also, certain goods may require additional permits or certifications to be imported into a country. These processes can also add to the overall transit time for a shipment.

It is important to note that delays at customs or other regulatory agencies are often beyond the shipping carrier's control and may cause unexpected delays in transit times.



## Weather Conditions

Weather conditions can affect international shipping times in several ways. For example, inclement weather can cause delays in transporting goods by air, land, or sea. Severe storms or natural disasters can disrupt the normal flow of shipments and cause transit delays.

In addition, extreme heat or cold can cause damage to certain types of goods and may require additional handling or protective measures during shipping, which can also affect transit times.

## Size And Weight Of Package

The size and weight of the package can also impact international shipping times. Larger and heavier packages may require additional handling and may be subject to additional fees, which can add to the overall transit time for the shipment.

In addition, some shipping carriers have strict size and weight restrictions for packages, and packages that exceed these limits may need to be shipped by a different carrier or shipping method, which can affect transit times.

## Number Of Stops And Transit Points

The number of stops and transit points can also affect international shipping times. Shipments that have to make multiple stops may take much longer to arrive at their destination than shipments that move directly.

Each stop or transit point adds additional handling and processing time to the shipment.



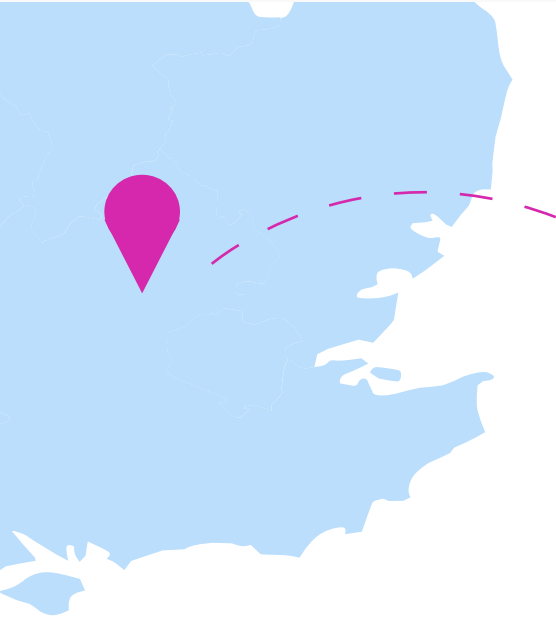
## Sender And Recipient's Location And Availability

If the sender is located in a remote or hard-to-reach area, it may take longer for the shipment to be picked up and transported to the shipping carrier's sorting facility. This can add to the overall transit time for the shipment. Also, delays can happen if the recipient lives in a remote or hard-to-reach area because of poor roads, fewer delivery options, and the need for extra handling and processing.

## Fuel

Fuel prices can affect international shipping times by impacting the cost of transportation. High fuel prices can increase the cost of shipping goods by air, land, or sea, leading to longer transit times as carriers try to lower their costs. On the other hand, lower fuel prices may result in faster transit times as carriers have more resources to make sure deliveries arrive on time.

# The Role Of Customs In *International Shipping*



## Customs Clearance

Customs clearance is the process of verifying the contents of a shipment and ensuring that it complies with the laws and regulations of the destination country. This process is necessary for all international shipments and can take varying amounts of time depending on the destination country, the type of goods being shipped, and the volume of shipments being handled at the border.

Some countries have more efficient customs processes, which can help expedite the clearance of shipments. On the other hand, countries with more complex customs regulations or higher volumes of imports may take longer to clear shipments.

## Customs Duties And Taxes

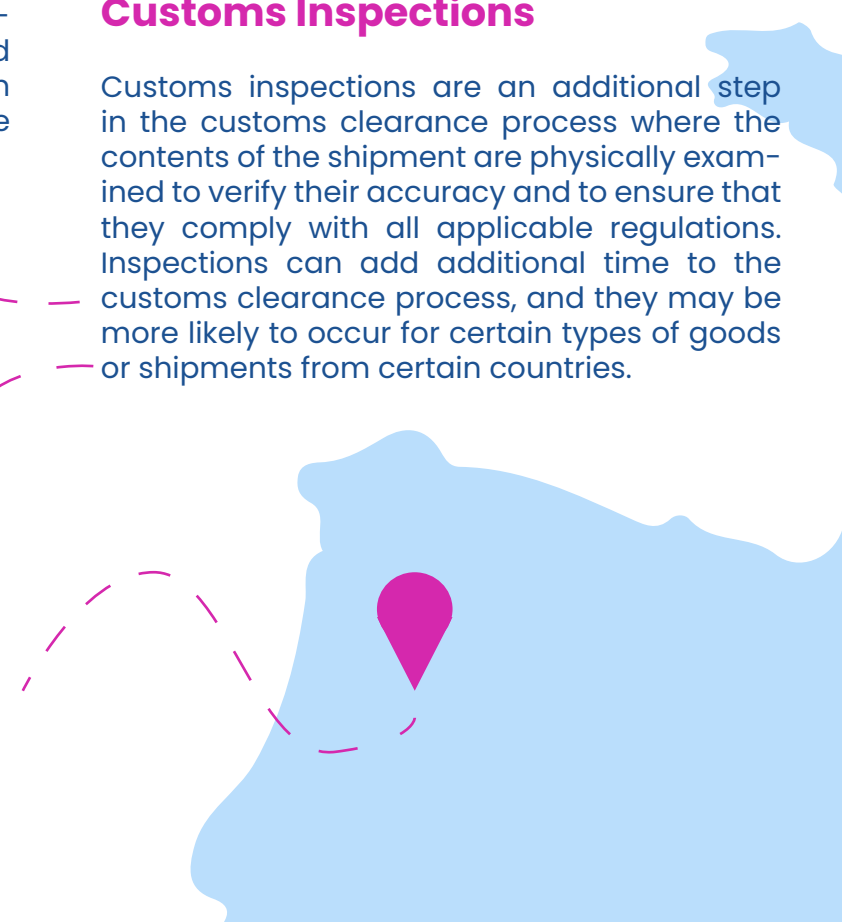
Customs duties and taxes can affect international shipping times in several ways. The collection of duties and taxes can add additional processing time to the shipment, especially if any discrepancies or issues need to be resolved. In addition, the payment of duties and taxes may be required before the shipment can be released for delivery, which can also cause delays.

## Customs Inspections

Customs inspections are an additional step in the customs clearance process where the contents of the shipment are physically examined to verify their accuracy and to ensure that they comply with all applicable regulations. Inspections can add additional time to the customs clearance process, and they may be more likely to occur for certain types of goods or shipments from certain countries.

## Customs Regulations

Customs regulations can also affect international shipping times. Different countries have different regulations for importing and exporting goods, and the sender and recipient need to be aware of these regulations to ensure timely delivery. Failure to comply with customs regulations can result in delays or even the seizure of the shipment.



# Ways To Speed Up *International Shipping*

## Choose A Faster Shipping Method

Express shipping is a premium option that guarantees faster delivery times of 1-3 business days and offers real-time tracking, value-added services such as packaging and warehousing, and enhanced security measures like insurance.

It is ideal for businesses that need to quickly and reliably get their products to customers, especially those that sell perishable goods or offer same-day delivery. It is also helpful for businesses that must keep customers informed of the status of their orders. Overall, express shipping is an excellent option for international shipments.

## Use A Reliable And Reputable Carrier

Choosing a reliable and reputable carrier when shipping internationally is crucial to ensure that products are delivered on time, in good condition, and with advanced tracking options.

A reliable carrier has a good track record of on-time delivery and good handling, while a reputable carrier is known for its quality service and positive reputation.

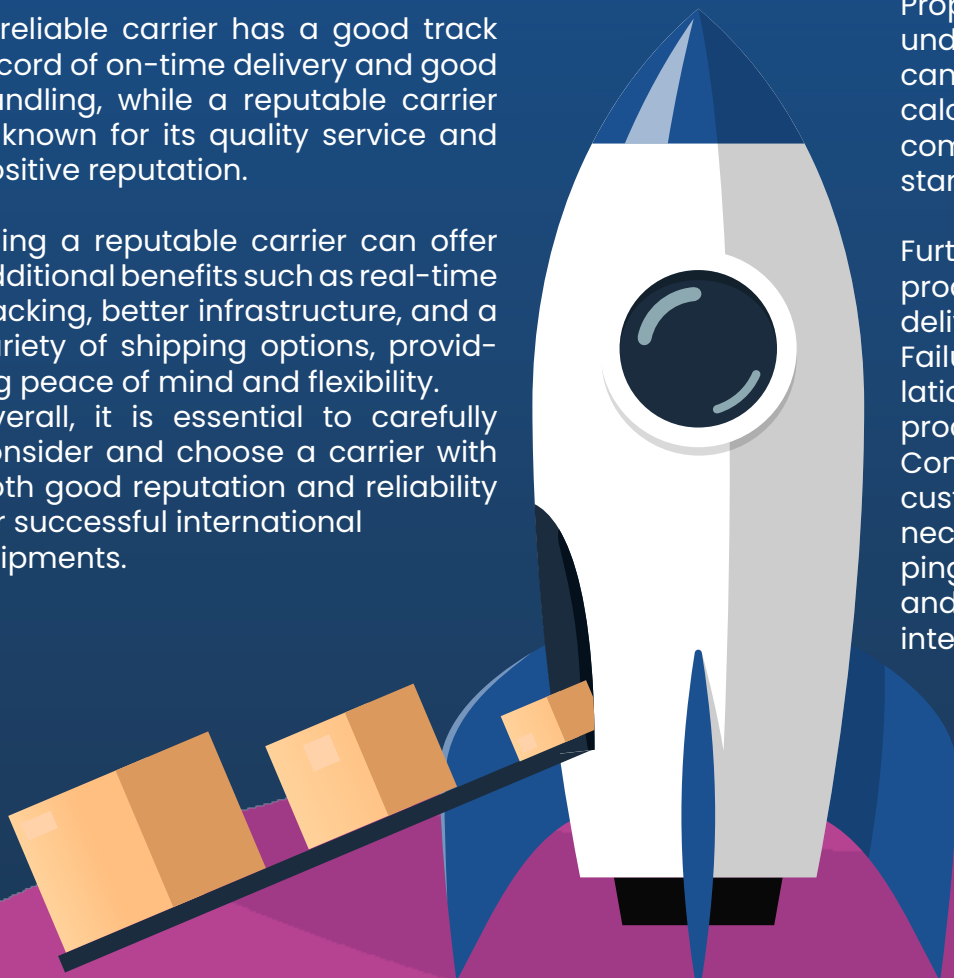
Using a reputable carrier can offer additional benefits such as real-time tracking, better infrastructure, and a variety of shipping options, providing peace of mind and flexibility. Overall, it is essential to carefully consider and choose a carrier with both good reputation and reliability for successful international shipments.

## Consider The Destination Country's Customs And Import Rules

When shipping internationally, it is important to consider the destination country's customs and import regulations to avoid delays, fines, legal issues and unexpected costs.

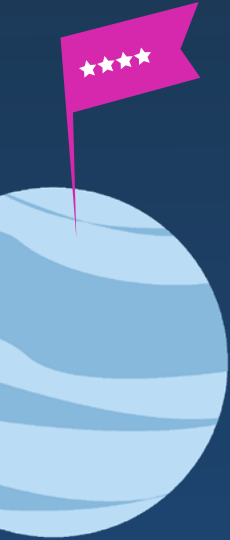
Properly researching and understanding these regulations can ensure timely delivery, proper calculation of tariffs and taxes and compliance with safety and quality standards.

Furthermore, it also ensures that the products are cleared quickly and delivered to the recipient promptly. Failure to comply with these regulations can lead to penalties, loss of products and damage to reputation. Considering and complying with customs and import regulations is a necessary step in international shipping that can save a lot of headaches and ensure a smooth and successful international shipping experience.



# Tips For Choosing the right Shipping Carrier


## Check Online Reviews



Checking online reviews is an important step when choosing an international shipping carrier. It provides valuable insights into other customers' experiences and can help identify potential issues or problems with a carrier. These carriers specialize in certain types of shipments and carriers that are highly recommended by others. By reading reviews, you can understand the carrier's strengths and weaknesses, evaluate potential issues, and find a reliable and suitable carrier for your specific needs.


A carrier with a good reputation and positive feedback is more likely to provide reliable service, and deliver packages on time and in good condition. In conclusion, researching and checking online reviews of carrier options is crucial to make an informed and wise decision when choosing an international shipping carrier.

## Consider The Costs



Choosing the suitable international shipping carrier involves considering various factors, including cost, service, reliability, and delivery time. The cost of shipping can significantly vary depending on the carrier, destination country, and shipment type; it is crucial to choose a carrier that provides the best balance of cost and service.

To ensure the best carrier choice, it's essential to balance the cost of shipping against the services offered, considering factors like tracking, packaging, warehousing, and insurance. The shipping cost affects the business's profitability and the products' competitiveness in the market.



It's also important to remember that cost is not the only factor to consider and to evaluate the full range of options to find the best value for your business. Finding the carrier that can provide the best balance of cost and service can help your business succeed in the global market.

# What Are You Allowed To Ship Internationally?

3

International shipping can be a complex process, with various rules and regulations governing the movement of goods across borders. Understanding what you are allowed to ship internationally is crucial to avoid complications, delays, and potential penalties.

This article will guide you through the general guidelines and specific restrictions imposed by major carriers, including UPS, DHL, TNT, and FedEx, and offer insights into the requirements for shipping different types of items.

# General Guidelines And

## Prohibited Items

A variety of items are prohibited or restricted when shipping internationally. Many courier services, such as [UPS](#), [DHL](#), [TNT](#), and [FedEx](#), have comprehensive lists of prohibited items on their websites. Commonly restricted items include:



**Firearms and ammunition**



**Explosives and fireworks**



**Flammable liquids and gases**



**Counterfeit goods**



**Drugs and narcotics**



**Live animals (with certain exceptions)**



**Perishable items (without proper packaging)**

### Shipping Perishable Goods And Food Items



Shipping perishable goods and food items can be challenging due to the potential for spoilage and contamination. Regulations for shipping these items vary by destination, and carriers may have specific guidelines for packaging and labeling.

For instance, [UPS](#) and [FedEx](#) offer international services for shipping perishables, but they require adherence to strict packaging and temperature control standards. When shipping food items, it's essential to provide a detailed pro forma invoice or commercial invoice that accurately describes the contents and their value.

### Shipping Animals And Plants

Shipping live animals and plants internationally is subject to strict regulations and may require special permits and health certificates. Quarantine and inspection requirements may also apply. Consult your chosen carrier for guidance on the necessary documentation and restrictions.



### Navigating Customs And Import Regulations



Navigating customs procedures can be challenging, but understanding the process and preparing accurate documentation can help avoid issues. Duties and taxes may apply to your shipment, and these are typically calculated based on the item's value, the country of origin, and the destination. It's crucial to provide a detailed commercial invoice or pro forma invoice to facilitate customs clearance.



# Essential Documents For International Shipping

4

Understanding how international shipping works can be complex, especially when deciphering the various documentation requirements. Ensuring the correct paperwork is essential for a smooth and successful shipment.



<b>Sender:</b> Business Name 12 Example Lane ABI 23C		<b>Date:</b> Consignment Note No: Invoice Currency: Reason for Export:			
<b>Receiver:</b> Business Name 34 Example Road		Receiver:..			
	Description of	HS	Country of	Unit Value	Total
Total	Units	KG	Total		Invoice Line
Declaration(s)					
INCO Terms				DDU	Invoice Total
Shipper Name and Job Title		Shipper Signature		Date	

## Commercial Invoice

A commercial invoice is a vital document in international trade that details the goods being shipped, their value, and the terms of the sale. Used by customs authorities to assess duties and taxes, it serves as a record of the transaction between the exporter and importer.

A commercial invoice should include the HS code, country of origin, and a detailed shipment description.

## Packing List

An export packing list, a packing slip, provides a detailed account of the shipped items, their quantity, and how they are packed. This document is crucial for customs clearance and helps ensure the shipment is accurately processed at the destination country. The packing list should include information such as the shipper's and consignee's contact details, package dimensions, and the total weight of the shipment.

<b>Company:</b> Address: Phone:			<b>Customer Name:</b> Address: Phone:	
Order Date	Ship Date	Shipping Company	Order Number	Customer PO Number

Quantity Ordered	Quantity Shipped	Product Weight	Description	Product Number

Total Ordered	Total Shipped	Total Weight

Additional Notes
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<b>Exporter:</b> Address: Tax ID:	<b>Blanket Period</b> From: To:	
<b>Supplier or Producer</b> Name and Address Tax ID:	<b>Importer Name and Address</b> Tax ID:	
Description of goods	HS Tarriff Classification Number	Country Of Origin
• I agree to maintain, and present upon request, documentation necessary to support this certificate, and to inform, in writing, all persons to whom the certificate was given of any changes that could affect the accuracy or validity of this certificate. • I am or represent the.....of the goods listed above.		
<b>Authorized Signature</b> Name Date	<b>Company</b> Title	

## Certificate Of Origin

A certificate of origin is a document that verifies the country of origin of the goods being shipped. Customs authorities in the destination country often must determine whether the goods are eligible for preferential treatment under free trade agreements. The certificate of origin is typically issued by a local chamber of commerce or other designated authority in the exporter's country.

U.S. Principle Party In Interest:		Date of Exportation:			
Zip Code:		Transportation Reference No.:			
USPPI EIN Or ID No.	Parties To Transaction: <input type="radio"/> related <input type="radio"/> Non-related				
Ultimate Consignee:					
Intermediate Consignee:		Point (State) of origin or FTZ No.:			
Forwarding Agent:		Country of ultimate destination:			
Loading Pier:	Method of transportation:	Carrier ID Code:	Shipment Ref. No.:		
Exporting Carrier:	Port of Export:	Entry number:	Hazardous Materials: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		
Port of unloading:	Containerized: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	In bond code:	Routed Export Transaction: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		
Schedule B Description of Commodities					
D/F or M	Schedule B Number	Quantity - Schedule B Unit	Shipping Weight	Vin/Product Number/ Vehicle title number	Value (U.S. Dollar)
License No.:		ECCN (when required):			
Dully authorized employee:		The USPPI authorizes the forwarder named above to act as forwarding agent for export control and customs purposes.			
<small>I certify that all statements made and all information contained herein are true and correct and that I have read and understood the instructions for preparation of this document, set forth in the "correct way to fill out the Shipper's Export Declaration." I understand that civil and criminal penalties, including forfeiture and sale, may be imposed for making false or fraudulent statements herein, failing to provide the required information or for violation of U.S. law on exportation (18 U.S.C. Sec.3052; U.S.C. Sec.401; 18 U.S.C App. 2416)</small>					
Signature:	Title & Date:	Authentication:			

## Shipper's Export Declaration

The shipper's export declaration (SED) is a document some countries require for exports exceeding a specific value or for certain controlled goods. The SED provides detailed information about the shipment, including the exporter, consignee, and a description of the goods. It's used by customs authorities to compile trade statistics and enforce export controls.

## Export License

An export license is a government-issued document that authorises the export of specific goods or services. It's required for certain controlled items, such as military equipment, hazardous materials, and entities subject to trade restrictions. The requirements for obtaining an export license vary by country and depend on the goods' type and destination.

Country Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

### License To Export

License number: 123456789

License holder: Emily Example

For the purpose of exporting the following items from UK.

Powered Drones  
by Air and Sea

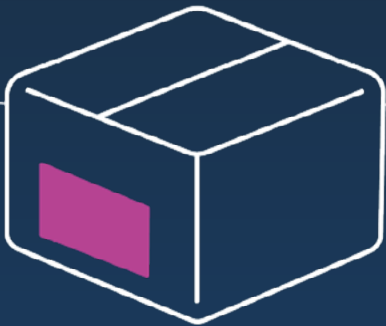
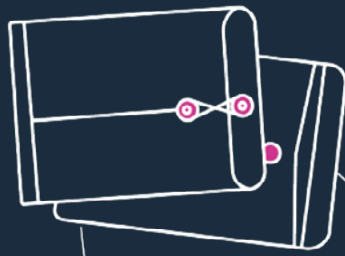
Commencing on: 3rd September 2018  
Ending on: 3rd December 2018

Signature

Date:	
To:	From:
RE: <input type="radio"/> Our Pro-Forma Invoice# _____ Dated _____ <input type="radio"/> Your Purchase Order# _____ Dated _____ <input type="radio"/> Commercial Contract# _____ Dated _____	
In connection with your above-referenced purchase, the following term and conditions are for inclusion in your irrevocable letter of credit. We are providing you with these details as a confirmation of our understanding of the terms of sale concerning this transaction. If these details do not agree with your understanding of if you are unable to comply with these terms and conditions, please notify us prior to the issuance of your letter of credit to avoid unnecessary delays and costs. Thank you for your patronage and cooperation.	
1. The letter of credit must be issued no later than _____ by a bank acceptable to us. 2. The letter of credit must be irrevocable and be subjected to the 2007 Revision of the Uniform Customs and practice for Documentary Credits published by the International Chamber of Commerce. 3. The letter of credit must state that it is available with any bank by negotiation. 4. The letter of credit must be opened with full details by SWIFT	
In favor of: _____ Attn: _____ Telephone: _____	
We will not initiate shipment until the actual letter of credit is received but it may expedite processing if you will fax a copy of the letter of credit to _____ at _____. This must be a copy of your bank's actual SWIFT message sent to the advising bank. A copy of your letter of credit application is not sufficient.	
5. The letter of credit must be payable in U.S. dollars for <input type="radio"/> up to an amount of _____ <input type="radio"/> an approximate amount of _____	

## Letter Of Credit

A letter of credit is a financial instrument used in international trade to reduce the risk for both the buyer and the seller. It's issued by a bank on behalf of the buyer, guaranteeing payment to the seller upon presentation of specified documents, such as a commercial invoice, air waybill, or ocean bill of lading. The letter of credit ensures that the seller gets paid, provided they meet the terms and conditions of the agreement.



# International Shipping For *Small Businesses*

5



# Rules And Regulations

At first glance, international shipping can be challenging. Understanding customs declarations, extra papers, hazardous materials regulations, export controls, and other trade hurdles can seem impossible to overcome, but understanding them is crucial for a seamless shipment.

The most crucial part of every international shipment is an EORI number. The EORI number is a specific identification number and is mandatory for every shipment out of the UK.

The most crucial part of every international shipment is an EORI number. The EORI number is a specific identification number and is mandatory for every shipment out of the UK. Since every country has other rules and regulations, country shipping guides can be a helpful tool for understanding what paperwork is needed for your shipments. It tells you what paperwork you need for each country you want to ship to.

Under normal circumstances, other laws and rules you might have to consider are intellectual property law and trade agreements. Luckily, thanks to the World Options shipping portal, all you need to worry about when shipping a parcel or document are your EORI number and restricted items of countries.

For the rest, the World Options portal helps you fill out the commercial invoice and sends it digitally to the customs facility, where it'll be processed before the item arrives to speed up the process further.



## Shipping Costs and Transit Time

Finding the best service for you is crucial for a successful delivery. While many couriers are experts in international shipments, they all have another priority regarding delivery preferences.

While FedEx and TNT, for example, are experts in shipments to and from the USA, DHL is perfect for shipments to Africa and Europe. When choosing a shipping service, consider the time, cost and reliability you expect with your shipment.

# Packaging and Labelling

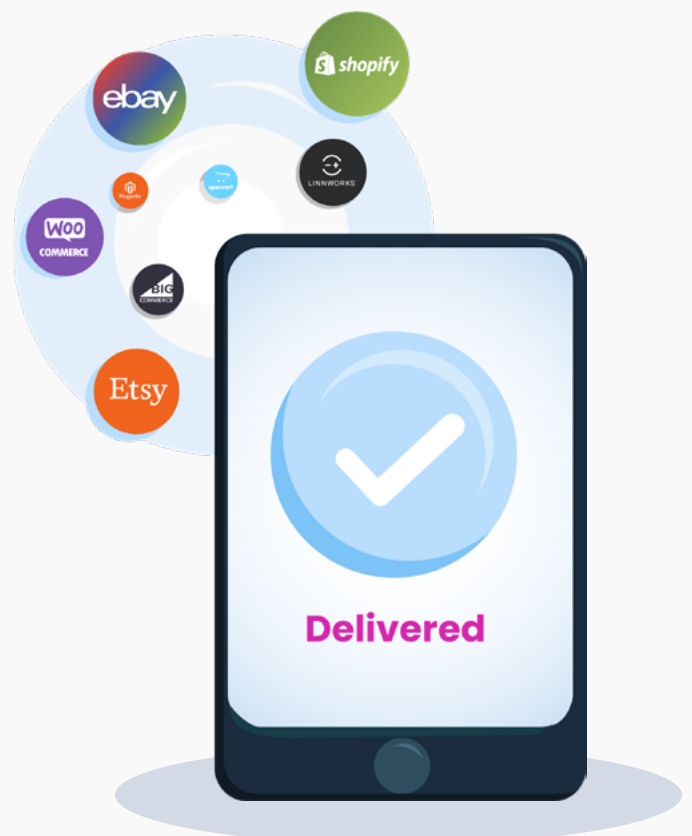


Especially for fragile items, packaging can make all the difference between a successful and unsuccessful delivery. Depending on the destination country, your parcel will go through many stages and facilities before arriving. A thick layer of bubble wrap, void fill, dividers, or other cushioning works magic if used for the right products. It is highly recommended to use a double-walled cardboard box for international shipments. The label also needs to be fully visible. Even if the parcel is too small to have the entire label on only one side, ensure to have at least the barcode is on a flat surface to avoid scanning errors.

## Insurance and Tracking

Insurance provides another peace of mind for your high-value shipments. However, when insuring your item, you must declare the material costs rather than the retail price. This is especially important when shipping bespoke products and pieces of art.

Besides insuring yourself for the case of loss, keeping an eye on your shipment can also help solve problems before they snowball out of control. The more detailed and up-to-date the tracking is, the better and quicker you can react when an error occurs.

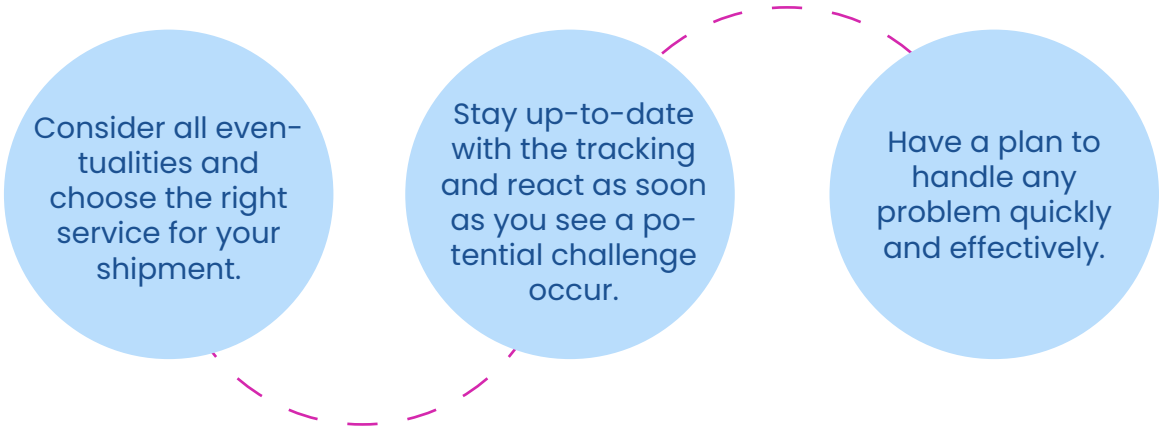


# Managing Potential *Risks and Challenges*

The longer the shipping process and the more facilities your parcel will stop before arriving at the destination, the more space there is for potential errors. Therefore, calculating in more time and having a plan B for any eventualities is advised.

Be aware of the current climate in the destination country and any surpassing countries as well. Shipping at a time when a country has loads of holidays, weather warnings, or political disagreements can quickly result in a faulty shipment.

Successful risk management starts before you even start shipping.



Consider all eventualities and choose the right service for your shipment.

Stay up-to-date with the tracking and react as soon as you see a potential challenge occur.

Have a plan to handle any problem quickly and effectively.

## Customer Service and *Support*

In case of a delay, providing excellent customer service can be the difference between a happy and a lost customer.

While this includes direct updates in case of a delay, a simple tracking link can often make a significant difference. 96% of customers are tracking their online delivery, with 43% even stating they're checking it daily. A tracking link helps keep your customer happy and reduces your "where is my order?" calls.

The quicker the resolution of shipping errors, the better the customer views customer service. As a World Options business customer, you have contact with our customer service team and direct lines to all our carriers, allowing for a speedy resolution.



# International Shipping On Shopify



6

Are you an online retailer or web store looking to expand your customer base internationally? Setting up international shipping options can be a game-changer for your business.

With Shopify, creating shipping zones and selecting the countries you want to ship to is simple and easy. In this article, we'll walk you through setting up shipping zones and customizing shipping rates for each zone.

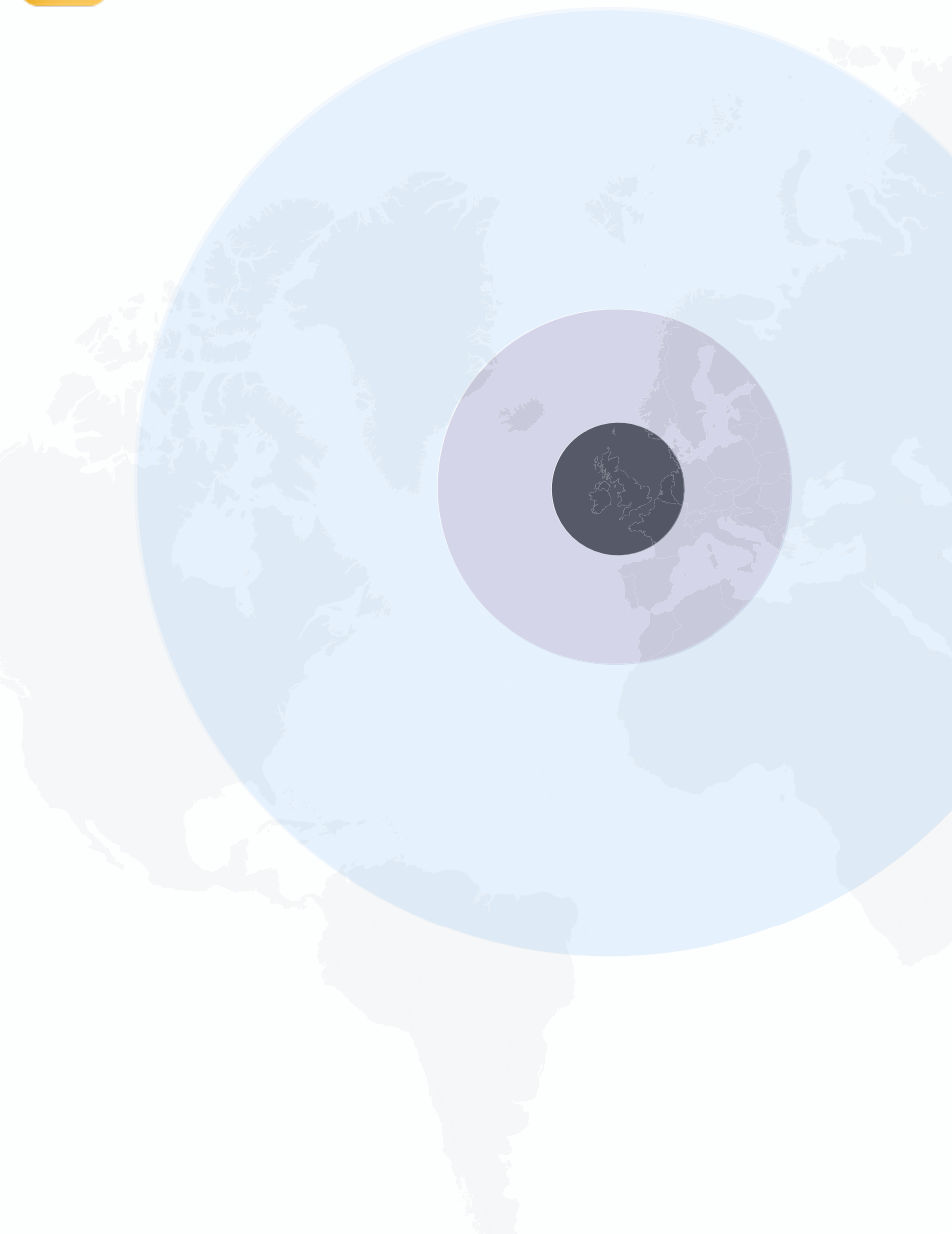
Whether you're shipping from the UK to the EU or the USA, you'll learn everything you need to know to get started with international shipping in Shopify.

# Setting Up International Shipping With Shopify



After setting up your shipping location and profile on Shopify is time to set shipping zones. Shipping zones let you map out specific areas you are happy to ship to and change the rates based on what area your customers are in. When your warehouse is in the UK, for example, EU countries could be zone one with a different shipping rate than the USA, which could be declared zone 3.

You still have to select every country you're happy to ship to so that potential customers from these countries can order your product. You can select and name your shipping zones in the "Manage Rates" Tab under "Shipping and Delivery".





# Choosing *The Right Shipping Carriers* And Service Levels For Orders

There isn't one perfect carrier for all international shipping. While you have plenty of options when shipping into the EU, shipping to the US or Australia, for example, can come with more considerations.

Even though you can ship items to Australia through the post office, it often results in delays as your parcel will be handed over to another facility every time your shipment crosses a border. Nobody wants to wake up to a postal worker delivering the Christmas gift you bought four months ago.

Knowing your carrier and their area of expertise can significantly impact not just the delivery time but also the level of service.



While UPS and FedEx are powerful when shipping into North America, DHL has built an excellent reputation for shipments into Africa and Asia.



If you start offering your products internationally, either go with only one additional area for one carrier or choose a shipping management system that allows you to get the best rates from all major carriers without any volume restrictions, like World Options.

# Automating and Streamlining Your *International Shipping Process*

The biggest worries when shipping internationally are customs, restrictions and commercial invoices. Still, as long as you have an [EORI number](#) and ensure your items are okay to send to this specific country, nothing is keeping you from taking your business internationally.

**Pull all orders straight from all your eCommerce platforms into the portal.**

**Automatically generated commercial invoices.**

**Send commercial invoices electronically**



# *Managing And Tracking* **Your International Shipments With Shopify**

Once you've sent your parcel, staying up-to-date and reacting as soon as an error occurs is essential. A real-time tracking system lets you keep updated with all your shipments and contact customer service when you spot an irregularity.

Keeping your customer updated throughout the shipping process is especially important for international shipments, as minor delays are more likely. Save yourself the "Where is my order" calls that take away time and money. Simply provide your customer with their very own [tracking link](#).

## *Maximising The Success* **Of Your International Shipments**

While it's essential to watch for errors occurring through your tracking page, you can take measures to ensure they don't happen in the first place.

## Packaging

If you ship anything that needs to be shipped in a box internationally, consider using a double-walled box to reduce the chance of the box breaking apart during transit. Depending on the item you send, extra protection can be beneficial.

## Labelling

Ensure to have the label on a flat surface on your parcel. If your package is too small to have the label on only one side, ensure you don't fold the barcode.

## Sealing

Besides using tape to close up your box, you can also use it to strengthen the corners and edges. This is especially recommended for shipping heavy items.



## Commercial Invoice

Make your item description as accurate as possible. Even though it might seem silly to explain the ins and outs of a t-shirt, it helps avoid any questions from the customs facility.

## Overcoming Common Challenges And Risks

As much as you're prepared, potential risks can always get in the way of your successful international shipment. Staying up to date with your tracking is the first step to resolving any issues quickly and effectively.

Shipping with World Options means you can entirely automate the shipping process and have contact with a dedicated account manager and our UK-based customer service team, who have direct lines to the carriers. Don't fight your way through different departments and online forms. Our customer service team will resolve the issue for you.



# International Shipping for *Large Items*

7

In today's globalised world, businesses and individuals increasingly need to ship large items internationally. Whether it's a shipment of heavy machinery for a construction project or a family relocating overseas, sending large items can be challenging due to complex logistics, customs regulations, and the sheer size and weight of the shipment.

This chapter will provide essential guidance on navigating the process, including selecting the right carrier and delivery service, correctly packaging and labelling your items, ensuring accurate documentation, managing risks, and utilizing tools and technology to streamline the process.

# Choosing The Right Shipping Carrier And Service Level

When shipping large items internationally, selecting the right carrier and parcel service is crucial.

Factors to consider include the carrier's experience and expertise in handling oversized shipments, its network of agents and partners, and the range of shipping options they provide, such as sea freight and road freight. It is essential to research carriers and compare their offerings, including:



**Transit Time**



**Insurance Options**



**Pricing**



**Service Level**

Most carriers offer various options, ranging from economy to expedited shipping. While faster service like next-day delivery may be more expensive, it could save time and reduce potential risks associated with longer transit times. [Learn more about the available carriers and services World Options offers.](#)

## Packaging and Labelling

Proper packaging and labelling are critical when shipping large items internationally. Start by ensuring that your items are securely packed in sturdy, high-quality packaging materials designed for heavy packages or oversized items. Use cushioning materials like bubble wrap and foam padding to protect fragile components.

Labels should be clear, easy to read, and placed on the outside of the package. Include essential information such as the shipper's and recipient's names, addresses, and contact information. Don't forget to include any special handling instructions.



**handle  
with care**



**keep dry**



**don't stack**



**this side up**



**fragile**

# Having Accurate And Complete Documentation

U.S. Principle Party In Interest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Exportation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation Reference No: \_\_\_\_\_

USPI: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ultimate Beneficial Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
Intended Use: \_\_\_\_\_  
Forwarding Agent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Agent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Export License: \_\_\_\_\_  
Port of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_  
Schedule B/HTS Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Licenses: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duties: \_\_\_\_\_  
I certify that the above information is true and correct.  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Country Government**  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
To: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_

RE:  Our Pro-Forma Invoice# \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Purchase Order# \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_  
 Commercial Contract# \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

In connection with your above-referenced purchase, the following terms and conditions are for inclusion in your irrevocable letter of credit. We are providing you with these details as a confirmation of our understanding of the terms of sale covering this transaction. If these details do not agree with your understanding of if you are unable to comply with these terms and conditions, please notify us prior to the issuance of your letter of credit to avoid unnecessary delays and costs. Thank you for your patronage and cooperation.

1. The letter of credit must be issued no later than \_\_\_\_\_ by a bank acceptable to us.  
2. The letter of credit must be irrevocable and be subjected to the 2007 Revision of the Uniform Customs and practice for Documentary Credits published by the International Chamber of Commerce.  
3. The letter of credit must state that it is available with any bank by negotiation.  
4. The letter of credit must be opened with full details by SWIFT

In favor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attn: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

We will not initiate shipment until the actual letter of credit is received but it may expedite processing if you will fax a copy of the letter of credit to \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ This must be a copy of your bank's actual SWIFT message sent to the advising bank. A copy of your letter of credit application is not sufficient.

5. The letter of credit must be payable in U.S. dollars for  
 up to an amount of \_\_\_\_\_  
 an approximate amount of \_\_\_\_\_

International shipping requires accurate and complete documentation to avoid delays and customs issues. Ensure you have all necessary documents, including commercial invoices, packing lists, and bills of lading.

Check the destination country's customs regulations to determine whether any additional documentation or permits are required, and ensure that your shipment complies with any applicable trade agreements or embargoes.

Visit the [World Trade Organization](#) website for more information on trade agreements and the [UK Government's Import and Export Guide](#) for guidance on import and export processes specific to the UK.

## Managing Risks And Challenges

Shipping large items internationally has inherent risks, including loss or damage, theft, and loss. Adequate insurance coverage is essential to protect your shipment and minimize potential losses. Choose an insurance policy that covers the full value of your items and addresses specific risks associated with international shipping, such as transit and customs delays.

It is also important to be aware of potential customs issues and delays. Familiarize yourself with the destination country's import regulations, and ensure your shipment complies with all requirements. Additionally, be prepared for unexpected delays due to weather, transportation issues, or other unforeseen events.



# Using Tools And Technology To Streamline And Automate Your International Shipping Processes



Leveraging technology can significantly simplify and streamline the process of shipping heavy items internationally. Many shipping carriers offer online platforms that provide real-time tracking, documentation management, and automated customs clearance. Utilizing these tools can help you save time, reduce errors, and improve overall efficiency when sending large or heavy parcels.

For more information on international customs regulations and standards, visit the [World Customs Organization website](#). If you're interested in learning more about sea and air freight regulations, consult the [International Maritime Organization](#) and [International Air Transport Association](#) websites, respectively.

Additionally, consider using third-party software solutions that integrate with your shipping carrier's platform. These tools can help automate label creation, customs documentation, and shipment tracking processes, further simplifying your international shipping experience.





**Are You Ready To  
Enter The World Of**  
*International Shipping*

**And Take Your  
Business To The Next Level?**



**Start Shipping**  
*Today*