

International Shipments

The first step in an international shipment is to contact your consignee to determine which documents are needed to clear the shipment through customs. A waybill and commercial invoice are always needed for an international shipment. Additional documents may include a certificate of origin, an import permit, or a declaration letter.

Most carriers provide an online waybill or you can pick one up at their respective kiosks (for DHL, FedEx, or UPS). Some freight forwarders will send you a letter of instruction (LOI) which you fill out and sign and the forwarder will complete the waybill on your behalf. You will need to keep a copy of the waybill or letter of instruction for your records. If you use a freight forwarder and fill out a letter of instruction, you should request a copy of the waybill from them. DEHS can assist with these issues. Contact DEHS at (502) 852-2956.

Commercial Invoice:

There are several methods for creating a commercial invoice. The major carriers offer an online tool to create one or you can create your own. A commercial invoice must include the shipper's name and address, the consignee's name and address, the items shipped and their quantity, and the value of the shipment. The commercial invoice must be signed by the shipper. Contact DEHS for a blank template you can use to create your own commercial invoice. You will send three copies of the invoice with your shipment in the document pouch outside of the package. Keep one copy for your records.

Census Bureau:

If the value of any single item on your commercial invoice is over \$2,500 you will have to file an export declaration with the US Census Bureau. Some carriers will do this for you for a fee or the Export Control Office can file it free. Contact Will Metcalf at least one week prior to shipping to file an export declaration.

Destination Considerations:

Some destinations may require you to supply a certificate of origin. The major carriers have an online tool to create one of these.

Check with your consignee prior to shipping to learn if an import permit is needed for your material in that country. If your shipment arrives in its destination country needing an import permit, you could be subject to fines and delays or your shipment could be returned or destroyed. When shipping biological materials it is helpful to include a declaration letter to help move the shipment through customs at its destination. This letter needs to be on the shipper's letterhead and state what the material is, where it is going, and how it will be used.

It is always a good idea to check into the import duties of your destination country. Import tariffs, VATs, and other taxes can add thousands of dollars to a transaction. Always confirm with

your consignee who is responsible for these destination charges. If they are your responsibility, you can find an estimate for these taxes at: [http:// export.gov/logistics/eg_main_018142.asp](http://export.gov/logistics/eg_main_018142.asp)

Export Controls:

Shipping items outside the U.S. could require a license from OFAC, the Department of State, or the BIS. Contact William A. Metcalf, Director of Export and Secure Research Compliance, before you ship internationally. Contact Will via e-mail at will.metcalf@louisville.edu or call him at 502-852-1708 if you have questions regarding international shipping.

An OFAC license takes six months to receive, a license from the Department of State takes three months, and a license from the BIS takes approximately one month, so allow plenty of time before you need to ship. Do not ship an item outside the United States without the proper licensing. If customs audits the shipment, and a license was required and not in place, you and UofL will be fined. Also, depending upon the item shipped, there could be potential criminal penalties. See the penalties section of this webpage for more details.

A relatively small percentage of total U.S. exports require a license from a governmental agency. License requirements are dependent upon an item's technical characteristics, the destination, the end-user, and the end-use. You and UofL, as the exporter, must determine whether your export requires a license. When making that determination there are four basic things we must know before it can be exported:

- What are you exporting? What is the item or information? (Is it controlled?)
- Where are you exporting or where is it going?
- Who will receive your item? Are they sanctioned?
- What will your item be used for or what is its end-use?

It is important to take time to prepare for the physical foreign shipment of information or items. While some things may be considered export controlled under EAR or ITAR, many things are not controlled. All items to be exported must be reviewed for:

1. Export control classification or category
2. Potential export to a [sanctioned country](#)
3. Potential export to an end-user of concern
4. Support of a prohibited end-use.

You may be required to obtain a license from the federal government for your export and in some situations, a license may not be granted. Please contact the Director of Export and Secure Research Compliance before shipping internationally.

Additionally, it is important to note that there may be duties and fees associated with foreign shipments. Please schedule and budget accordingly. Click [here](#) for more details regarding international shipments.