

Moving to Guatemala: Your Relocation Guide



By Appointment To
Her Majesty The Queen
Removals and Storage Contractor Abels

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THE ART OF MOVING

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TELEPHONE:	Country code 502 + Area code.
STANDARD TIME:	GMT -6 hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	120 V (60 HZ)
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Hepatitis B
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	1 Jan, 1 Apr 5 Apr Easter, 1 May Labour Day, 30 Jun Army Day, 15 Aug Assumption (Guatemala City only), 15 Sep, 20 Oct Revolution Day, 1 Nov All Saints' Day, 24 Dec Christmas Eve, (25 Dec Christmas Day, 31 Dec New Year's Eve
OFFICE HOURS:	0800-1800 Monday – Friday
BANK HOURS:	Monday – Friday 0900-1900; Saturday 0900-1300
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	110 Police 123 Ambulance
BRITISH EMBASSY:	Edificio Torre Internacional, Nivel 11 16 Calle 0-55, Zona 10 Guatemala City Tel: (502) 2380 7300 Email: embgranbretana@minex.gob.gt Web: http://ukinguatemala.fco.gov.uk
GUATEMALAN EMBASSY IN UK:	13 Fawcett Street London SW10 9HN Tel: (020) 7351 3042 Web: http://guatemala.embassyhomepage.com
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	Centro Cívico, 7A Avenida 1-17 Zona 4, Guatemala City 01004, Guatemala Tel: 2421 2810 Email: info@inguat.gob.gt Website: www.visitguatemala.com

Customs

To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household and personal effects into Guatemala. However, it is advisable to check with the authorities that documentation is in order, prior to despatch.

Agents or customers can not declare household goods and automobiles in the same OBL, even if both are coming in the same container, so each one has to present a different OBL.

You cannot declare household goods or automobiles in the same OBL Original Bill of Lading even if both are coming in the same container, so each one has to present a different OBL.

Agents must obtain the EXACT and CORRECT consignment instructions BEFORE, to send any shipment, and the consignee must have the exact same destination address as the Guatemalan NIT card (taxes ID card) as the customer or company who is paying the import duties and taxes for the shipment or who is importing the shipment with duties and taxes exemption.

Once the customs import policy is made and authorised by Guatemalan Customs it can not be corrected, so if the information is wrong and any customs officer refuses it, the customs agent (broker) has to obtain a legal authorization from customs authorities by a resolution that will take from 10 to 15 days, creating delays and demurrage on shipments.

Household Goods & Personal Effects

Documents required for Air and Sea shipments:

- Original owners' passport with entry stamp
- Air waybill or two originals of Bill of Lading
- Original Inventory / packing list in Spanish or English

All devices have number of series, make and style

- Delivery and billing instruction including insurance information
- NIT number (this is a personal identification number which must be obtained from the Finance Ministry in Guatemala City)

Documents required for Land shipments:

- Original of Cargo Manifest
- Original packing list in English or Spanish
- Original owner passport with entry stamp
- Original of International Transit Guide
- Delivery and billing instruction including insurance information
- NIT number

The original cedula (identification card) is needed if the shipper is Guatemalan, if foreigner they need the original passport.

Subject to taxes / duties payment.

New items will be considered as a commercial entry and therefore subject to normal customs duty, paying full taxes / duties. A commercial invoice is necessary and must cover duties / taxes which range from 5% to 40% of Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) value plus 12% of valued added tax. 12% of valued added tax.

Used items will be assessed by customs taking into consideration prices listed in the packing list and subject to physical inspection.

It is advised that insured values of the items DO NOT appear on the inventory or shipping manifest to enable maximum allowances for use factors.

Air, sea and land freights: Shipments are cleared directly in a bonded warehouse under informal entry, providing the original documents for clearing the shipments and all shipments are subject to a physical inspection from customs authorities. This could take between four to eight working days depending on the transportation mode and the size of the shipment.

It is necessary to unload the containers and trailer trucks, prior to customs clearance because these cannot remain closed in the warehouse.

Door to Door: Containers or trailer trucks could be cleared at bonded warehouse in Guatemala City, if customs authorities grant release and approve temporary entry. If an inspection takes place at the POE additional charges will be invoiced.

Customs may require completing entry and paying taxes/duties directly at POE.

Diplomats Removals

Same documents required as Household goods.

Diplomats of accredited foreign Embassies and Officials of International Organisations are exempt from customs taxes / duties.

All shipments are subject to customs inspection to proceed with customs. Diplomats have to submit a diplomatic franchise that should be processed by the Embassy or International Mission in Guatemala before the shipment release.

Wedding trousseaux, Inheritance

Same documents required as Household goods.

New furniture and household goods

Same documents required as Household goods.

Customs will estimate new goods values as a basis to calculate customs duties and taxes.

Works of Art, Antiques

Same documents required as Household goods.

It is prohibited to export pre-Colombian archaeological objects or colonial antiques.



Precious Metal objects (jewellery, coins)

Same documents required as Household goods.

Household appliances & electrical appliances

For all export and import of household goods that contain coolers / refrigerators and or air conditioning appliances, must obtain a special licence for the entry or departure.

For the process to obtain this licence the agent must submit the following information:

- Model of machine
- Make of machine
- Type of refrigerant used
- Year of manufacture
- NIT number (Guatemalan Tax Identification Number – this is a personal process for any Guatemalan or Expatriate)

Guatemala does not allow the entry of any of these applications containing gas R11 and R12.

At the same time any appliance produced before the year 2000 will most probably be declined to enter as well.

Without the license the articles will be retained by Customs.

The process for obtaining the licence takes approximately two – three business days and expires 15 days after the date of issue.

Presents, Souvenirs

Documents required same as Household appliances and electrical appliances.

Usually admitted duty free if quantities are reasonable according to customs criteria.

Carpet

Documents required same as Household appliances and electrical appliances.

Motor Vehicles

Documents required:

- Original of two bill of lading
- Original of commercial invoice
- Original of car title as proof of ownership
- Original owner passport with entry stamp
- Delivery and billing instructions including insurance information
- Copy of registration card
- Report of Car Mechanical Conditions
- NIT Number

Diplomats are duty free.

Non citizen and returning citizen will pay duties according to the model and the make of the automobile.

Customs officials to verify vehicle data such as make, model, engine and all serial numbers must examine all incoming motor vehicles. Duties will be based on Cost, Insurance and Freight value (CIF) as determined by Customs. Clearance of automobiles requires a minimum of two weeks.

The following information needs to be sent to the destination agent in the pre-advice package prior to the shipment dispatch.

- Chassis number
- Motor number
- Doors number
- Make
- Year
- Style
- Cylinder number
- Series number
- Fuel
- Colour
- Cubic capacity (CC)

If the agent does not receive the above information before arrival of the vehicle or if this information is incorrect the customer will have to pay US \$100 for inspection.

Other vehicles (bicycles, water vehicles)

Bicycles are the same as household goods documents required.

Large boats, yachts and other vehicles are same as motor vehicles.

Machines, appliances and spare parts

Documents required:

Commercial invoice – specifying the gross, legal and net weights and CIF value, in triplicate, legalized by Consulate with declaration of origin.

Alcohol, wine, tins and food

Documents required are same as household goods.

Arms, ammunition and dangerous objects

Documents required:

Sporting arms require special permit from Ministry of Defence prior to arrival of shipment.

All firearms, ammunition and explosives are prohibited.

Medicines, narcotics and drugs

Medicines are sold duty free without prescription in Guatemala, but narcotics and drugs are prohibited.

Plants

Documents required are the same of household goods and:

- Requires a Phytosanitary Certificate legalised by Consulate
- Foodstuffs: Certificate of Purity legalised by Consulate

Pets

Documents required:

- Original Airway bill
- Vaccination / Health Certificate from origin dated within 30 days prior to arrival

It is recommended that this Certificate be stamped by the Consulate at Origin and dated no later than 1 month prior to arrival of the pet.

Pets are subject to payment of duties.

Prohibited Articles

Importation:

Narcotics, drugs, pornographic material, firearms. Firearms need a special permit, requested from the Ministry of Defence

Exportation:

Articles, archaeological legitimate and colonial.

Fumigation of imported wooden crates

Guatemala Government adopted ISPM-15 (International standards for Phytosanitary Measures Publication 15) Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (aka NIFM-15) to standardize the treatment of wood packing materials used for the transport of goods.

Shipments into or out of the country in wooden packaging, need to have a Seal, certifying that the shipment has received the required treatment HT = Heated Treatment (a minimum wood core temperature of 56°C for a minimum of 30 minutes) or fumigation with Methyl Bromide (MT). The minimum temperature should not be less than 10°C and the minimum exposure time should not fall below 16 hours.

The treatments established in the present regulation have the intent to reduce the introduction and / or the dissemination of quarantine plagues associated to the wood packing. The wood packing material must be marked in a visible location on each article, on at least two opposite sides of the article with a legible and permanent mark in black ink. Labels and adhesives are not allowed.

If a shipment arrives without the seal it will be returned to the origin country at the shippers / origin Agents expense. The regulation DOES NOT apply to wood packing materials manufactured of:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or a combination thereof

- Plywood sheets and agglomerated sawdust sheet
- Oriented wooden fibre sheets
- Sawdust and wooden fibre

General Information on The Republic of Guatemala

Background

The Mayan civilization flourished in Guatemala and surrounding regions during the first millennium A.D. After almost three centuries as a Spanish colony, Guatemala won its independence in 1821. During the second half of the 20th century, it experienced a variety of military and civilian governments, as well as a 36-year guerrilla war. In 1996, the government signed a peace agreement formally ending the conflict, which had left more than 100,000 people dead and had created, by some estimates, some 1 million refugees. International disputes are annual ministerial meetings under the OAS-initiated Agreement on the Framework for Negotiations and Confidence Building Measures continue to address Guatemalan land and maritime claims in Belize and the Caribbean Sea; the Line of Adjacency created under the 2002 Differendum serves in lieu of the contiguous international boundary to control squatting in the sparsely inhabited rain forests of Belize's border region; Mexico must deal with thousands of impoverished Guatemalans and other Central Americans who cross the porous border looking for work in Mexico and the United States.

Geography

The northernmost of the Central American nations, Guatemala is the size of Tennessee. Its neighbours are Mexico on the north and west, and Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador on the east. The country consists of three main regions – the cool highlands with the heaviest population, the tropical area along the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, and the tropical jungle in the northern lowlands (known as the Petén).

Climate

Tropical; hot, humid in lowlands; cooler in highlands.

Population

It is estimated at 13,276,000.

Environmental Issues

There is deforestation in the Peten rainforest; soil erosion and water pollution.

Currency

Quetzal (GTQ; symbol Q).

100 centavos. Notes are in denominations of Q100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1, and 50 centavos. Coins are in denominations of Q1, and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 centavos.



Economy

Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America with a GDP per capita roughly one-half that of the average for Latin America and the Caribbean. The agricultural sector accounts for nearly 15% of GDP and half of the labor force; key agricultural exports include coffee, sugar, and bananas. The 1996 peace accords, which ended 36 years of civil war, removed a major obstacle to foreign investment, and since then Guatemala has pursued important reforms and macroeconomic stabilization. The Dominican Republic- Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) entered into force in July 2006 spurring increased investment and diversification of exports, with the largest increases in ethanol and non-traditional agricultural exports. While CAFTA-DR has helped improve the investment climate, concerns over security, the lack of skilled workers and poor infrastructure continue to hamper foreign direct investment. The distribution of income remains highly unequal with the richest 10% of the population accounting for more than 40% of Guatemala's overall consumption. More than half of the population is below the national poverty line and 15% lives in extreme poverty. Poverty among indigenous groups, which make up 38% of the population, averages 76% and extreme poverty rises to 28%. 43% of children under five are chronically malnourished, one of the highest malnutrition rates in the world. President COLOM entered into office with the promise to increase education, healthcare, and rural development, and in April 2008 he inaugurated a conditional cash transfer program, modeled after programs in Brazil and Mexico, that provide financial incentives for poor families to keep their children in school and get regular health checkups. Given Guatemala's large expatriate community in the United States, it is the top remittance recipient in Central America, with inflows serving as a primary source of foreign income equivalent to nearly two-thirds of exports or onetenth of GDP. Economic growth fell in 2009 as export demand from US and other Central American markets fell and foreign investment slowed amid the global recession, but the economy recovered gradually in 2010 and will likely return to more normal growth rates by 2012. President COLOM, in his last year in office, will likely face opposition to economic reform, particularly over a long-delayed tax reform and an IMF-recommended reform to strengthen the banking sector.

Education

Education is free and compulsory for six years. In 1997, the gross primary enrollment rate was 88.1 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 73.5 percent. However, only 30 percent of students who begin primary school in Guatemala complete this level of education. Children who do not attend school are concentrated in rural areas, and a disproportionate number of them are indigenous.

Religion

Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs.

Health

There are both public and private medical facilities in Guatemala City, but state-run hospitals tend to be underfunded and can be unhygienic. Private clinics should be used where possible. Comprehensive travel and medical insurance is strongly advised. Travellers should carry evidence of their insurance at all times, as doctors may be reluctant to treat them otherwise.

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Abels Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date Abels cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.