

# Moving to Saudi Arabia: Your Relocation Guide



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

# ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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Memb No: A001



FS 23942



198656



TELEPHONE:	Country code (966) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT +3 hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	380/220/127v. 3 phase, 60Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Inoculation against malaria, typhoid and polio recommended. A yellow fever certificate may be required.
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Aug 8, Sept 23, Oct 15
OFFICE HOURS:	Government offices 07.30-14.30 Saturday to Wednesday Private business 08.00-12.00 15.00-18.00 Saturday to Wednesday
BANK HOURS:	08.00-12.00 Saturday – Wednesday
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	999 – Police/Ambulance and Emergency
BRITISH EMBASSY:	Diplomatic Quarter POB 94351, Riyadh 11693 Tel: +966 (0) 1 4819 100 Fax: +966 (0) 1 481 0686 Web: <a href="http://ukinsaudi Arabia.fco.gov.uk/en/">http://ukinsaudi Arabia.fco.gov.uk/en/</a>
SAUDI ARABIA EMBASSY IN LONDON VISA SECTION:	30 – 32 Charles Street London W1J 5DZ Tel: 02079 173 000 Fax: 02079 173 255 Web: <a href="http://saudi Arabia.embassyhomepage.com/sitemap.htm">http://saudi Arabia.embassyhomepage.com/sitemap.htm</a>

## Customs

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

Country or Origin / Made in... must be mentioned (engraved or affixed – non removable sticker) on each item and also should be printed on the boxes. The certificate of Origin also must mention the same details.

If the shipment is originating from any European country, then the exact country of the item manufactured / produced must be mentioned in the Certificate of Origin instead of “European Union”. If one package / carton contain shipments from various countries, then each item should show its own country of origin.

If any shipment arrives without mentioning the above, then the authorities will NOT allow affixing the country of origin on the item and such cargo has to be returned (re-export) of the shipment to its origin at shippers / consignees’ cost without any prior notice, additionally there will be a penalty of SAR 5000 per shipment.

Any failure to follow these instructions will be considered as a serious offence towards the Saudi Arabian government, consequently the importer on record will be held fully responsible for whatever delays and costs that may occur, for example: port penalties, demurrages, detention charges extra manpower and related labour charges.

It is applicable for all shipments arriving at ports of entry Jeddah, Dammam and Riyadh.

## Household Goods

Documents required

From the Origin Agent

- Copy of airway bill by fax (for air shipments)
- Original bill of lading (for sea shipments)
- Descriptive inventory / packing list
- Itemised valued inventory with approximate cost of each item. (sea shipments require a valued inventory)
- Certificate of insurance (if applicable)

To the consignee at destination

- Authorisation letter/s attested by the Saudi Chamber of Commerce (formats to be provided to the consignee upon arrival at destination). For government hired employees, only the seal of the agency is required
- Copy of consignee’s passport with the entry visa page
- Copies of residence permit (Iqama) or Saudi National’s ID (Bataqa)

Valued over SR 10.000 (about US \$3000) all articles new and used subject to customs duties, assessed on their Cost Insurance and Freight (CIF) value.

Customs Duties vary from 5% to 20%.

Books and used clothing at reasonable quantities are exempted from duty.

If receipts or invoices are not available all items will be assessed by the Customs Authority based on local value.

All containerized shipments including personal must be on pallets or in lift vans, failure of which the Seaport Authority will impose a penalty for bad stowage (loose loaded).

Consignee or the owner of the shipment must be in Saudi Arabia at the time of Customs Clearance, otherwise, shipment will not be cleared.

## Electronic Goods

Documents required:

- Purchase receipt / invoice
- Descriptive inventory for air shipments must be attached with airway bill

Subject to customs duty (5% of CIF value)

In the absence of purchase receipts customs authorities will assess the goods based on local value.

## Diplomats Removals

Documents required:

- Authorisation Letter
- Copies of diplomatic ID and passport
- Customs Duty and Inspection Exemption Certificate

Diplomats shall obtain Duty & Inspection Exemption Certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, otherwise, their shipment will be considered as an ordinary cargo thereby, subjected to full physical inspection and duty payment.

## Prohibited Items

- All games of chance / gambling including chess sets, dice, backgammon and similar\*
- Animal skin in commercial quantity
- Weapons and firearms (real, ornamental or antique) including guns, ammunition, fireworks, spears etc. If imported owner will be subject to investigation that may result in fines or prison\*
- Military uniforms or military equipment of any kind\*
- Alcoholic beverages, including food items, which contain alcohol such as vanilla extract, cooking wines etc
- Books / Wine making kits, any other items used in the preparation of alcoholic beverages, and books on the manufacture of such drinks

- Any kind of narcotics or unidentified medicines
- Any type of radio transmitter or communications equipment (including receivers VHF, Marine or Police bands or walkie talkies)\*
- Stuffed animals, Statues, figurines, carving or objects of the human or animal form\*
- Pornographic materials and literatures to include fashion magazines with people wearing underwear or swimsuits
- Any foodstuffs containing alcohol, pork and related pork meat products etc
- Any book pertaining to religion other than Islam

Items marked \* can be re-exported at shippers / consignee's expense.

Bringing items without declaration, especially wines and / or any alcoholic beverages will be considered as a smuggled attempt, hence heavy penalty will be imposed. Aside from confiscation of the item, a penalty of US\$200.00 for a bottle of wine. For large quantities, the shipper will be brought to court and may be imprisoned.

#### **Subject to automatic confiscation.**

**All incoming shipments to Saudi Arabia are subject to rigorous full physical inspection (100%).**

#### **Goods Subject to Censorship**

- Exposed film, including prints, slides etc
- Records, books, magazines, pictures / photos, and other printed matters
- Personal computers, audio / video cd's diskettes, USB's, computer hard disks, printers
- Mobile or cellular phones
- Audio / video VHS / VCR / cassette tapes, phonograph recordings
- Or, any other items that store information

A penalty will be charged to the consignee for Cd's, VCR tapes and books confiscated after the censorship. (US\$135 each for cd's & vcr tapes, and US\$14 each for books) If such articles are in a Personal Effects & Household goods shipment, it is very likely that Customs Authority will remove them from the container for censorship or review. To reduce the time for clearance, please pack the above articles separately for easy access and cartons must be marked clearly and on the inventory, or you may send them as an air shipment. Check with your destination agent if the second delivery for censored articles will be made at no extra cost.

#### **Motors**

Documents required:

New and used cars:

- Title Certificate / Vehicle Registration
- Saudi Arabian Standard Organisation (SASO) Conformity certificate from the country of origin

- Police clearance / de-registrations from the country of origin
- Other proof of ownership i.e Purchase invoice

Vehicles over 5 years old are not allowed.

Customs duty for cars is 5% based on customs final assessed value.

Right hand drive cars are not accepted.

Expatriates are only allowed to bring in one car.

Any personal belongings are not allowed inside the car.

It is much better to obtain the SASO from origin. It is almost impossible to obtain one in Saudi Arabia shipment.

SASO Conformity Certificate may be secured in Saudi Arabia locally. SASO office may require replacement or conversion to some parts of the car to meet the SASO Standard at owner / consignee's expense. Application for the SASO Conformity Certificate may be rejected and may be required to re-export the car back to origin at owner's expense.

#### **Food**

We strongly recommend that shippers be advised not to ship any commercially prepared and purchased food product with your unaccompanied personal goods.

This includes: wines, spirits, beer, cider, spices, herbs, canned packed or wrapped foods, pet food, pastas, rice, food supplements, vitamins, fruit juices, carbonated / non carbonated drinks, milk, perishable foods, dry foods and any other item intended for human or animal consumption.

If the shipper insists on shipping food items, the specified information below must be gathered and provided for each food item imported. If the information is not provided, the food items may face refusal of entry, requiring segregation / manipulation of the shipment under customs supervision at a bonded facility, at substantial additional cost. Costs could be in the thousands of dollars and can not be anticipated. These costs will be the responsibility of the client.

- Product brand name
- Product classification
- Country of production
- Country of packaging
- Type of product (canned, bottled, packaged)
- Quantity

Ask for **Abels form QF565** for completing.

#### **Pets**

The importation of pets into Saudi Arabia is forbidden, but there are certain exceptions such as guide dogs and watch dogs. Non compliance results in serious consequences for you, the owner.



## General Information on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### Background

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and home to Islam's two holiest shrines in Mecca and Medina. The king's official title is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The modern Saudi state was founded in 1932 by ABD AL-AZIZ bin Abd al-Rahman Al SAUD (Ibn Saud) after a 30-year campaign to unify most of the Arabian Peninsula. One of his male descendents rules the country today as required by the country's 1992 Basic Law. King ABDALLAH bin Abd al- Aziz ascended to the throne in 2005. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saudi Arabia accepted the Kuwaiti royal family and 400,000 refugees while allowing Western and Arab troops to deploy on its soil for the liberation of Kuwait the following year. The continuing presence of foreign troops on Saudi soil after the liberation of Kuwait became a source of tension between the royal family and the public until all operational US troops left the country in 2003. Major terrorist attacks in May and November 2003 spurred a strong on-going campaign against domestic terrorism and extremism. King ABDALLAH has continued the cautious reform program begun when he was crown prince. The king instituted an interfaith dialogue initiative in 2008 to encourage religious tolerance on a global level; in 2009, he reshuffled the cabinet, which led to more moderates holding ministerial and judicial positions, and appointed the first female to the cabinet. The 2010-11 uprising across Middle Eastern and North African countries sparked modest incidents in Saudi cities, predominantly by Shia demonstrators calling for the release of detainees and the withdrawal from Bahrain of the Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsula Shield Force. Protests in general were met by a strong police presence, with some arrests, but not the level of bloodshed seen in protests elsewhere in the region. In response to the unrest, King ABDALLAH in February and March 2011 announced a series of benefits to Saudi citizens including funds to build affordable housing, salary increases for government workers, and unemployment benefits. To promote increased political participation, the government held elections nationwide in September 2011 for half the members of 285 municipal councils. Also in September, the king announced that women will be allowed to run for and vote in future municipal elections – first held in 2005 – and serve as full members of the advisory Consultative Council. The country remains a leading producer of oil and natural gas and holds more than 20% of the world's proven oil reserves. The government continues to pursue economic reform and diversification, particularly since Saudi Arabia's accession to the WTO in December 2005, and promotes foreign investment in the kingdom. A burgeoning population, aquifer depletion, and an economy largely dependent on petroleum output and prices are all ongoing governmental concerns.

### Geography

Saudi Arabia occupies most of the Arabian Peninsula in southwest Asia. The terrain is desert or semi desert plateaus,

which rise to mountains running parallel to the Red Sea in the west and slope down to plains in the southeast and along The Gulf in the east. Extensive coastlines on Persian Gulf and Red Sea provide great leverage on shipping (especially crude oil) through Persian Gulf and Suez Canal.

### Economic Aid Donor

There are current environmental issues such as desertification, the depletion of underground water resources, the lack of perennial rivers or permanent water bodies has prompted the development of extensive seawater desalination facilities, also the coastal pollution from oil spills.

### Climate

Weather conditions vary dramatically from one region to the next. Very hot and dry conditions characterize the Rub alkhalī (Empty Quarter) yet the Asin highlands are relatively cold and moist. The differences between daytime and night time temperatures can exceed 50 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer in many regions of the country. During the winter months overnight low temperatures approach the freezing mark at high altitudes.

### Population

Estimated at 27.6 million which includes around 5.5 million foreign workers in Saudi Arabia employed mainly in the oil and service industries. Over 80% of the population live in urban areas. The capital is Riyadh.

### Economy

Saudi Arabia has an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities. It possesses about one-fifth of the world's proven petroleum reserves, ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum, and plays a leading role in OPEC. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 80% of budget revenues, 45% of GDP, and 90% of export earnings. Saudi Arabia is encouraging the growth of the private sector in order to diversify its economy and to employ more Saudi nationals. Diversification efforts are focusing on power generation, telecommunications, natural gas exploration, and petrochemical sectors. Almost 6 million foreign workers play an important role in the Saudi economy, particularly in the oil and service sectors, while Riyadh is struggling to reduce unemployment among its own nationals. Saudi officials are particularly focused on employing its large youth population, which generally lacks the education and technical skills the private sector needs. Riyadh has substantially boosted spending on job training and education, most recently with the opening of the King Abdallah University of Science and Technology – Saudi Arabia's first coeducational university. As part of its effort to attract foreign investment, Saudi Arabia acceded to the WTO in December 2005 after many years of negotiations. The government has begun establishing six "economic cities" in different regions of the country to promote foreign investment and plans to spend \$373 billion between 2010 and 2014 on social development and infrastructure projects to advance Saudi Arabia's economic development.



## International Disputes

Saudi Arabia has reinforced its concrete-filled security barrier along sections of the now fully demarcated border with Yemen to stem illegal cross-border activities; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia continue discussions on a maritime boundary with Iran; Saudi Arabia claims Egyptian-administered islands of Tiran and Sanafir.

## Currency

The unit of currency is the Saudi Riyal (SAR) subdivided into 100 halala = 1 qurush. The major international credit cards are accepted by leading hotels, restaurants and shops, however, personal cheques are rarely accepted.

## Religion

Saudi Arabia's official religion is Islam, which forms the basis of the nation's legal system. There are two major religious holidays; Eid Al-Fitr, celebrating the breaking of the annual Ramadan Fast, Eid Al-Adha, celebrating the pilgrimage to Makkah. Saudi Arabia follows the Islamic calendar, which is based on lunar cycles. Thus the year is 354 days long. Friday is the weekly day of rest and worship.

## Social Customs

Saudi Arabia is the strictest of all Muslim countries and behavior in public is subject to inflexible rules. The practice of Islam dominates all aspects of life and you would be wise to study at least the elements of the religion if you are to gain an insight into Saudi society. The sexes are strictly segregated, e.g. in restaurants and hotel swimming pools. Topics of conversation to be avoided are politics, religion and any mention of female members of Saudi families.

The consumption and importation of alcohol is strictly forbidden in Saudi Arabia. Heavy fines including imprisonment will be applied for any person attempting to smuggle alcoholic goods into the country. During the month of Ramadan, which ends with Eid Al-Fitr, you should refrain from eating, drinking or smoking in public during the daytime and should take care not to embarrass Muslim visitors by, for example, offering them a cup of tea or a cigarette.

Throughout the year, Saudis stop all work for about 30 minutes to pray, five times a day, when the muezzinis call to prayer comes over the loudspeakers. This is seen as a time of quiet and privacy which foreigners are expected to respect. Times of the daily prayers are published in the English language newspapers.

When entertaining or being entertained by Muslims, it should be remembered that such items as food and cigarettes should be offered with the right hand only. One should also remember to keep one's feet firmly on the ground, as it is impolite to show the soles of your feet.

## Language

Arabic is the official language, although English is widely understood in the main towns. As a result of increasing Arabisation, all dealing and communications with government

departments must be in Arabic and it is necessary to have a reliable translator and interpreter, such a person will normally be provided by the sponsor or employer in Saudi Arabia.

## Education

The children of expatriates usually return to their own country for secondary educations, but there are plenty of suitable schools for the younger age groups. The following schools are among those suitable for the children of expatriates:

- Saudi Arabia International School, Jeddah. Tel: 693 8019
- SAIS, British Section, Riyadh. Tel: 491 4270

## Health

At present, piped water from desalination plants is provided to houses fairly cheaply, it is advisable to boil or purify this water, or else buy a filter which can be attached to the tap. As an alternative you can purchase water from tankers or buy bottled drinking water.

The country has undertaken massive development of its medical facilities. Some of Saudi Arabia's 250 hospitals are among the most advanced in the world. It is government policy to make health care available to all residents free from charge or for a nominal payment, but at present expatriates will generally require private treatment. Insurance is recommended though, for both you and your dependants, from an international insurance company such as BUPA, "Life Scheme". Tel: 01273 323 563.

## Television

Please note that western televisions do not work in Saudi Arabia, therefore televisions should be bought upon arrival.

## Media

There is some English radio / tv programming. There are two English language daily newspapers the Arab news and the Saudi Gazette.

## Mobile Phone Tips

To ensure you can still make and receive calls and messages abroad on your UK mobile, you need to change the network service to International roaming before you travel. Contact your UK mobile network provider to ensure your mobile phone is enabled for International Roaming. Do this well in advance as it can take up to 14 days and you can't do it from overseas. Check your existing handset will also work in the countries you are travelling to as this may not be the case particularly outside Europe. Check with your network provider for the current charges as they can be a lot higher.

*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.*