

# Moving to South Korea: Your Relocation Guide



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

# ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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**ABELS**<sup>TM</sup>  
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TELEPHONE:	Country code (82) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT +9 hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	110/220v AC Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Inoculation against typhoid and polio is recommended
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, 27, 28, 29, 30, Mar, 1, May 1, 3, 5 Jun 6, Aug 15, Oct 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 Dec 20, 25
OFFICE HOURS:	08.30-18.00 Monday – Friday 09.00 Saturday (depends on the business)
BANK HOURS:	09.30-16.30 Monday – Friday 09.30-13.30 Saturday
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	112 – Police 119 – Ambulance
BRITISH EMBASSY:	4 Jeong-dong, Jung-go, Seoul 100-120 Taepyeong no 40 Tel: (2) 232105500 Fax: (2) 27251738
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	Korea Tourist Association KNTC Building, 10 Da-dong, Chung-ku Seoul 100 Tel: (2) 757 0086
SOUTH KOREA EMBASSY IN LONDON:	60 Buckingham Gate London SW1E 6AJ Tel: 0207 227 5500/2 Fax: 0207 227 5503

## Customs

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

## Important Information

Please be advised of the following consignment instruction changes:

## Air and Sea Shipments

Your full name as in passport details, with Destination City now listed, e.g. Seoul (should match the city on your Korean customs documents) c/o your destinations agent's name, address, phone and fax numbers and email.

The shipment description must now be included on the OBL/AWB (Original Bill of Lading / Airway bill). "Used household goods" alone is not sufficient. Description should read, e.g. "Used household goods and personal effects (furniture, appliances, clothes, books, toys)" etc up to 200 characters. These items should be from the packing list and described in the manifest.

## Korean Customs Houses

Final designated destination cities for delivery will be the Customs Houses of either Seoul, Daejeon or Busan.

### 1. Seoul Customs:

Residence in Seoul and Incheon, Gyeonggi Province, Gangwon Province via POE Busan/Incheon

### 2. Daejeon Customs:

Residence in Daejeon, Chungchung Province, Gwangju & Jeolla Province via POE Busan

### 3. Busan Customs:

Residence in Busan and suburb area and Gyeongsang Province via POE Busan.

## Household Goods

Documents required:

For all:

- BL or AWB Copy
- Inventory list
- Customs Declaration Forms
- Power of Attorney
- Privacy Consent

## Foreigners:

- Passport Copy (Identification & Entry Stamp) from Client and accompanying family members

- Marriage certificate, employment letter (incl. start/end date), entry stamp copy

## Returning Koreans:

- Passport Copy from Client and accompanying family members
- Certificate of entry & exit from Client and accompanying family members
- Certificate of Family Relationship

## Requirement for Tuberculosis (TB) Test Certificate Submission - Effective as of March 2nd, 2016

Certificate of Health (Tuberculosis / TB) will be required for nationals of high TB-burden countries that reside in one of the high TB-burden countries for long-term visa applications (stay period of 91 days or longer).

(High TB-burden countries)

1. Nepal
2. East Timor
3. Russia
4. Malaysia
5. Mongol
6. Myanmar
7. Bangladesh
8. Vietnam
9. Sri Lanka
10. Uzbekistan
11. India
12. Indonesia
13. China
14. Cambodia
15. Kyrgyzstan
16. Thailand
17. Pakistan
18. Philippines

Note – Nationals of High TB-burden countries that do not reside in a High TB-burden country do not need the certificate (i.e. Chinese national living in Germany).

## Impact on the Foreign Employee / Assignee who will be working in South Korea:

1. If assignee entered Korea on March 2, 2016 or after: Short-term visa holders: required when applying for change of status or extension of stay period to a long-term status

Long-term visa holders (granted on March 1, 2016 or before) holders: required when applying for alien registration.

2. If assignee entered Korea on March 1, 2016 or before:

Diplomat (A-1), Foreign Government Official (A-2), and International Agreement (A-3) status holders

Children aged 5 and under.

Short-term status holders who apply for extension of stay period (without converting to long-term status).

Duty free entry:

Used household effects, excluding commercial commodities and new high value items.

Subject to duties:

- New furniture 22.5% - 54.8%
- New Carpet: 24.3%
- All brand new electrical items (including items used less than 6 months) 20% of Customs assessed value
- Tobacco products
- Used or new automobiles, boats, aircrafts, motorcycles
- Jewels

- Upright piano (free if over 6 months old): 20%
- Grand piano (free if over six months old for piano major diploma holder): 20%
- TV over 65” or a second TV over (29” – 49”)
- Second and next golf club: 8%
- Second and next ski: 20%
- Air cleaner: 20%

Goods must arrive at POE / AOE in Korea within six months of the owner’s arrival.

Clearance is supposed to take place at a bonded warehouse.

Personal effects cannot be customs cleared prior to the shippers arrival.

All incoming shipments excluding diplomatic are subject to open inspection by Korean Customs Authority.

### Household Goods and Vehicles for Diplomats

Documents required:

- Bill of Lading or Air Waybill Copy
- Packing list
- Passport copy
- Application for duty exemption issued by Foreign Affairs Ministry of Korea
- Power of attorney
- Automobile title

\* The Embassy or Organisation’s official stamp should be put on all pages of documents.

Customs duty exemption for vehicles, showing:

- VIN (Vehicle Identity Number)
- Year of car
- Model, brand
- Engine Number

Documentary clearance without physical inspection:

- The vehicle cannot be sold or transferred to non diplomatic individual for three years, however, sale or transfer between diplomatic individuals is authorised. In case of sale or transfer to non diplomatic individual within three years, customs duty/tax shall be charged by the Korean Customs
- The vehicle must be listed on the inventory with full technical specifications (make, model, plate number, year etc)

### Precious Metal Objects

- Subject to payment of duties

### Presents and Souvenirs

- Subject to payment of duties for high valued items

### Antiques and Works of Art

- Duty free entry unless they are national treasures

### Vehicle, Motorcycle and Mechanical Equipment

Documents required:

- Original title
- Original registration certificate
- Original purchase receipt or invoice
- Insurance policy (original or copy)

Subject to payment of duties.

Vehicle must be listed on the inventory with full technical specifications (make, model, plate number, year etc).

Must be registered under consignee name for at least three months at origin.

### Prohibited Items

- Drugs
- Firearms (can only be imported with a special permit from the proper Korean authority)
- Ammunition
- Pornographic material
- Imitation of bank notes and coins

### Wine and Alcohol

Duty free when according to the Korean Customs one bottle of wine or spirit per adult.

For exceeding quantities, the following Customs duty/tax rates apply based on Customs assessed value:

- Wine 68.25%
- Cognac 144.9%
- Whiskey 155.5%
- Beer 210.31%

### Food

No food in air shipment.

Small amount of dried & sealed food are okay in sea shipment.

Subject to payment of 20% duty if total amount is too large as part of household goods.

Duty free entry for small amounts. Subject to payment of 20% duty if total amount is too large as part of household goods. 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.

### **Plants, Vegetables**

Documents required:

- Quarantine certificate of the entrance administration office of airport

### **Pets**

Documents required:

#### **Under 3 months old dogs & cats from any country:**

- Microchip (ISO 11784/11785)
- Valid Official Health Certificate from Government official vet
- Including microchip number and the pet is healthy and fit to travel

#### **Over 3 months old dogs & cats from rabies free Country:**

- Microchip (ISO standard)
- Valid Official Health Certificate from Government official vet
  - Microchip number
  - Official vet must certify the pet is healthy and fit to travel

#### **Over 3 months old dogs & cats from non-rabies free Country**

- Microchip (ISO 11784/11785)
- Rabies antibody test between 30 days-24months prior to travel
  - Minimum waiting period from blood serum collection date is 30 days
  - Result should be equal or more than 0.5IU/ML
- Valid official health certificate from government official vet including;
  - Microchip number
  - Blood test result

- Laboratory details
- Official vet must certify the pet is in good health

#### **Dogs & Cats from Malaysia, Cats from Australia**

Official health certificate from Government including:

- Animal has been kept in a Hendra and Nipah virus free region

OR

- Animal has been kept in a Hendra and Nipah virus free area for 60 days prior to export and confirms a negative blood test result for Hendra and Nipah Virus within 14 days prior to import

There is no mandatory quarantine period unless pet does not meet the regulation. If in such case, pet will be quarantined until pet meet the regulation or returned to the origin country where it departs.

Dogs and cats – will be released only after being inspected by an animal quarantine official at the airport of entry. If the customs documents are prepared properly, dogs/'cats can be released within 24 hours. As it normally takes about 5-6 hours from arrival at AOE Incheon to delivery residence at Seoul, please arrange the airplane which lands at AOE in the morning time during weekdays.

Birds – five days of quarantine

#### **Firearms, Pistols, Rifles, Explosives, Swords, Drugs and Narcotics**

Special official permit is needed.

#### **General Information on the Republic of Korea (South Korea)**

##### **Background**

An independent kingdom for much of its long history, Korea was occupied by Japan beginning in 1905 following the Russo-Japanese War. In 1910, Tokyo formally annexed the entire Peninsula. Korea regained its independence following Japan's surrender to the US in 1945. After World War II, a democratic-based government (Republic of Korea, ROK) was set up in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula while a communist-style government was installed in the north (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK). During the Korean War (1950-53), US troops and UN forces fought alongside ROK soldiers to defend South Korea from a DPRK invasion supported by China and the Soviet Union. A 1953 armistice split the Peninsula along a demilitarized zone at about the 38th parallel. PARK Chung-hee took over leadership of the country in a 1961 coup. During his regime, from 1961 to 1979, South Korea achieved rapid economic growth, with per capita income rising to roughly 17 times the level of North Korea. South Korea held its first free presidential election under a revised democratic constitution in 1987, with former ROK



Army general ROH Tae-woo winning a close race. In 1993, KIM Young-sam (1993-98) became the first civilian president of South Korea's new democratic era. President KIM Dae-jung (1998-2003) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his contributions to South Korean democracy and his "Sunshine" policy of engagement with North Korea. President PARK Geun-hye, daughter of former ROK President PARK Chung-hee, took office in February 2013 and is South Korea's first female leader. South Korea held a non-permanent seat (2013-14) on the UN Security Council and will host the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. Discord with North Korea has permeated inter-Korean relations for much of the past decade, highlighted by the North's attacks on a South Korean ship and island in 2010, multiple nuclear and missile tests, and the exchange of artillery fire across the DMZ.

## Geography

The state consists of the southern half of the Korean Peninsula in east Asia and many islands lying off the western and southern coasts in the Yellow Sea. The terrain is mountainous, though less rugged than that of North Korea. Population density is high and highly urbanized, most people live on the western coastal plains and in the basins of the Han-gang in the northwest and the Naktong-gang in the southeast. South Korea has a continental climate, with hot, wet summers and dry, cold winters. Arable land is limited by the mountainous terrain, but because of intensive farming South Korea is nearly self-sufficient in food. Sericulture is important as is fishing, which contributes to exports. South Korea has few mineral resources, except for coal and tungsten. It has achieved high economic growth based mainly on export manufacturing. The main manufacturers are cars, electronic and electrical goods, ships, steel, chemicals and toys as well as textiles, clothing, footwear and food products. USA and Japan are the main trading partners.

International disputes: The Military Demarcation Line within the 4km wide Demilitarised Zone has separated North from South Korea since 1953; periodic maritime disputes with North Korea over the Northern Limit Line; South Korea and Japan claim Liancourt Rocks (Tok-do/Take-shima), occupied by South Korea since 1954.

## Climate

Korea's climate varies. Winters are cold and dry and summers are hot and humid, heavy rain falls throughout most of July.

## Currency

The unit of currency is the Won. Denominations in circulation are:

**Notes:** 1000, 5000, and 10,000 Won

**Coins:** 10, 50, 100 and 500 Won

Most of the major credit cards are accepted.

## Economy

South Korea over the past four decades has demonstrated incredible economic growth and global integration to become a high-tech industrialised economy. In the 1960s, GDP per capita was comparable with levels in the poorer countries of Africa and Asia. In 2004, South Korea joined the trillion-dollar club of world economies.

A system of close government and business ties, including directed credit and import restrictions, initially made this success possible. The government promoted the import of raw materials and technology at the expense of consumer goods and encouraged savings and investment over consumption.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 exposed long standing weaknesses in South Korea's development model, including high debt/equity ratios and massive short-term foreign borrowing. GDP plunged by 7% in 1998, and then recovered by 9% in 1999-2000. South Korea adopted numerous economic reforms following the crisis, including greater openness to foreign investment and imports. Growth moderated to about 4% annually between 2003 and 2007.

South Korea's export focused economy was hit hard by the 2008 global economic downturn, but quickly rebounded in subsequent years, reaching over 6% growth in 2010. The US-Korea Free Trade Agreement was ratified by both governments in 2011 and went into effect in March 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, the economy experienced slow growth – 2%-3% per year - due to sluggish domestic consumption and investment. The administration in 2015 faced the challenge of balancing heavy reliance on exports with developing domestic-oriented sectors, such as services.

The South Korean economy's long-term challenges include a rapidly aging population, inflexible labor market, dominance of large conglomerates (chaebols), and the heavy reliance on exports, which comprise about half of GDP. In an effort to address the long term challenges and sustain economic growth, the current government has prioritised structural reforms, deregulation, promotion of entrepreneurship and creative industries, and the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

## Education

There are a number of good schools suitable for expatriate children up to the age of 18. Most will want to see children's previous school records. There are bus services available at some schools.

## Housing

New houses and apartments are of a good standard and widely available to rent in Seoul and other cities. These usually have wood or tiled floors and unlike the traditional Korean houses, have western type heating systems using gas or electricity. Expatriate families generally prefer to rent a house rather than a flat, to ensure privacy and a quieter environment.



Rents are payable in US dollars and almost all properties are let unfurnished. Houses are usually detached and have either a garage or a carport. Most properties have high ceilings and large rooms.

## Language

The language of the country is Korean, which is a member of the Ural-Altaic group and also to the Mongolian and Manchurian but totally different from the Chinese and Japanese.

The alphabet is called Hangul which was developed in the 15th century, this makes it rather easier to learn than either Chinese or Japanese. Literacy is over 95%. Although spoken English is not well understood by the vast majority of the people in both town and country, it is spoken widely in the commercial and official circles and the English speaking business visitor will not normally require the services of an interpreter. The hosting of the Olympics in 1988 started a trend of learning English.

## Religion

Mahayana Buddhism is the principle religion. There are 12 million Christians, of whom the majority are Protestants but include 2.5 million Roman Catholics. Other religions include Confucianism, Taosim and Chundo Kyo, a religion peculiar to Korea which combines elements of Shamanism, Buddhism and Christianity. Some places of worship conduct their services in English.

## Medical Facilities

South Korea has a good medical service and expatriates report that there are suitable English speaking GP's, orthodontists and dentists available in Seoul. There are hospitals in the major cities staffed by well qualified doctors and nurses. Most large hospitals have special foreigners clinics, where medical staff have been trained in the US and Germany.

The Korean system is; go to one of the hospitals, register for a small fee and wait to be examined by a staff doctor. He will then prescribe medication, refer the patient to a specialist etc. Prescriptions are paid for at the counter and the medicine collected from the hospital pharmacy after showing the receipt. Note that it is usual for hospitals to request payment before treatment is started even when such treatment is needed urgently.

Mothers with young children should, if possible, take their husbands along to the clinic as doctors will be more inclined to give explanations if a man is present.

## Business

It is important to make business appointments in advance and if possible, a personal introduction should be arranged. At some official buildings foreign visitors are requested to enter by a side or rear door. Etiquette requires the use of the right hand only when giving or receiving and this applies particularly to visiting cards which are exchanged a lot.

Expatriates are advised to use cards with English on one side and Korean on the other. Business relationships are built on mutual trust and should be personalised. "Small talk" precedes business discussion so it's in order to ask Koreans about their families.

Koreans should never be spoken to by name without the prefix Mr, Mrs or Miss. Koreans have three names – the family or surname placed first and a name identifying the generation, usually the same for all male members of the clan, alternating in each generation to second or third place. A woman does not change her name when she marries. In Korean conversation she will be called 'Smith's wife' or her full name, so there is no confusion. First names are only used by close friends of the same age.

## Post

The Korean authorities still have the right to censorship mail, and this is sometimes exercised. Incoming packages must be cleared by customs. Post offices are open 0900-1700 Monday – Friday, 0900-1300 on Saturdays. Most mail is sent to PO Boxes as street addresses are hard to locate, although zip codes are now used and there are pre-printed boxes for these on envelopes. Both internal and international services are reliable. Local mail takes 1-3 days to arrive.

## Social Customs, Business Practices and Mode of Address

Koreans may appear to have been influenced by the West in the way they dress and speak English, but there is a thin line overlaying their 500 year culture. In practice there is little intermingling between Korean society and foreigners. Koreans bow when meeting people, but they shake hands when meeting foreigners. Expatriates spending some time in South Korea may be invited to a Korean home and will be offered a meal; the guest should take a gift (fruit, cake or flowers) for the hostess. Shoes must be removed at the door before entering.

*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.*