

# Moving to Venezuela: Your Relocation Guide



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

# ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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TELEPHONE:	Country code (58) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT -4 hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	110v AC 60Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Inoculation against Malaria, Yellow Fever, Typhoid and Polio recommended
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, 6, Feb 27, 28, Mar 19, Apr 13, 14, 19, May 1, 25, Jun 15, 24, 29, July 5, 24, Aug 15, Oct 12, Nov 1, Dec 8, 24, 25, 31
OFFICE HOURS:	08.00-18.00 (long mid-day break)
BANK HOURS:	08.00-11.30, 14.00-16.30 Monday – Friday
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	171 OR 160 – Emergency services
UK EMBASSY IN VENEZUELA:	Torre La Castellana, Piso 11 Avenida La Principal de la Castellana (Av. Eugenio Mendoza) La Castellana Caracas 1061 Web: <a href="http://ukinvenezuela.fco.gov.uk/en">http://ukinvenezuela.fco.gov.uk/en</a> Consular Email: <a href="mailto:Consular.Venezuela@fco.gov.uk">Consular.Venezuela@fco.gov.uk</a>
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	Centro Plaza Business Centre, Tower B, 16th Floor, Los Palos Grandes, Caracas Venezuela Tel: 0500 887 4 766 Web: <a href="http://www.venetur.gob.ve">www.venetur.gob.ve</a> Email: <a href="mailto:reservaciones@venetur.gob.ve">reservaciones@venetur.gob.ve</a>
VENEZUELAN EMBASSY IN LONDON:	1 Cromwell Road London SW7 2HW Tel: 020 7584-4206 Fax: 020 7581-2776 Web: <a href="http://www.embavenez-uk.org">www.embavenez-uk.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@venezlon.co.uk">info@venezlon.co.uk</a>
CONSULAR SECTION:	Tel: 02073 876 727

## Customs

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

### Household Goods

#### Required Documentation for Returning Venezuelan Citizens and Residents

- Valid passport showing recent entry stamp of Venezuelan immigration officer
- Descriptive Inventory with PBO's contents listed
- Certificate of Use, duly stamped by Venezuelan Consulate in origin, only if shipper is a returning Venezuelan citizen or a returning resident, after having lived abroad for at least one year
- Work letter from employer is helpful
- Original Bill of Lading / Airway Bill
- Copies of purchase invoices for all new items in the shipment
- Signature of shipper on Customs forms
- Copy of the shippers RIF (Fiscal Information Registry) document. This is required for both import and export shipments
- Air imports require notarisation of a customs letter
- Depending on status of shipper, sea imports may also require it

Importation is free of duties and taxes for returning Venezuelan citizens and returning residents if:

- They have obtained the stamped Certificate of Use at the Venezuelan Consulate in origin
- If the Customs official is satisfied that the contents are used household goods

The Customs officer and the National Guard will carefully inspect most shipments.

All others pay import duties and taxes, except diplomats.

Duties range from 5 to 20% of the Cost, Insurance and Freight value (CIF).

Import tax is 1% of the CIF value. VAT is 16% of the sum of the CIF value, duties and taxes.

Non Residents with a "Transeunte Visa3 (Business, Investor, Student, Work, etc) are **NOT** eligible to obtain the Certificate of Use at the Venezuelan Consulates or Embassies located in the origin country, in order to avoid payment of import customs duties and taxes on household goods and personal effects.

The household goods and personal effects have been used for at least six months and show use.

Customs clearance is rigorous and demanding. Most shipments are inspected.

Returning Venezuelans and Residents must obtain Certificate of Use before you leave the country of origin. If no certificate is presented to Customs, shipment will be subject to payment of duties. Certificates cannot be obtained locally.

### Important

You must arrive in Venezuela before the shipment in order to avoid problems with the customs.

### Unaccompanied Air Shipment

Same documents required as Household goods section.

If Certificate of Use is not available, expect to pay duties, taxes and VAT.

### Diplomats Shipments

Documents required:

- Diplomatic franchise
- Packing inventory
- Signature of shipper on Customs forms
- Passport
- Two Original Bill of Ladings / Airway bills

Respective Embassy must supply the diplomatic franchise before customs clearance.

Diplomats may include small amount of liquor in their shipments, however for large amounts a note requesting permission is to be submitted before the MRI ( Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores) confirming the amount of bottles.

Due to long process to obtain the diplomatic franchise, storage charges incur, as well as high container demurrage fees.

### Antiques (in Household Goods shipment)

Same documents required as Household goods section, including the stamped Certificate of Use.

Documented antiques pay high duties and taxes when shipped separately.

### Alcohol (in household goods and luggage shipments)

Prohibited without Sanitation Permit.

Diplomats may include small amount of liquor in their shipments, however for large amounts a note requesting permission is to be submitted before the MRI (Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores) confirming the amount of bottles.

Normally, one small box per sea shipment container is ignored by Customs, however, confiscation may occur.

### Food

Prohibited without Sanitation Permit.

Normally, one small box per container is ignored by Customs, however, confiscation may occur.



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.

### **Vehicles for Diplomats**

Documents required:

- Original passport
- Three Original Bills of Lading / Airway Bills
- Original invoice
- Original Certificate of Title
- Certificate of Origin

Supply a Diplomatic franchise.

### **Used Vehicles, (for non diplomats)**

Documents required:

- Original passport
- Three Original Bills of Lading
- Original invoice
- Original Registration Title
- Original Certificate of Use duly stamped by Venezuelan Consulate at origin
- Shipper's signature on Customs form supplied by the mover
- RIF document (Venezuela tax payers registration document)
- Certificate of Origin

Returning Venezuelan citizens and returning residents may import used cars after living abroad for at least one year and after having purchased the car at least eleven months in advance of import to Venezuela.

If the value of the car when brand new was over US\$20,000, duties will be 35% of the Cost, Insurance and Freight value (CIF) based on the present day value as dictated by the tax office (Seniat).

Import tax is 1% of the CIF value.

Non residents can NOT apply for a Certificate of Use, so you cannot import your used car.

Customs office determines the value.

The value for Customs purposes is not necessarily the value indicated on the original invoice.

It is recommended to the shipper to determine the value of the car at the tax office' Seniat in Caracas before shipping the vehicle. The tax office will assign (1) a present day value to the car and (2) the value when it was brand new.

Vehicle imported duty free cannot be sold for a period of three years.

Before shipping a car to Venezuela (2000 model or over), the shipper must present the Covenin and Senorca permits to Customs, otherwise clearance will be delayed and car may be confiscated.

These permits are to be obtained in Venezuela, prior to arrival of vehicle.

### **New and Used Vehicles (under a temporary import permit)**

Documents required:

- Application to Customs Office requesting a temporary import permit
- Remaining documents same as for used vehicles, except Certificate of Use

Only after the permit is granted, vehicle may be shipped to Venezuela.

Import tax is 1% of the CIF value.

For release from Customs, a bond may be posted through a local insurance company or a deposit may be made for the value of the duties.

Before shipping a car to Venezuela (2000 model or over), the shipper must present the Covenin and Senorca permits to Customs, otherwise clearance will be delayed and car may be confiscated.

These permits are to be obtained in Venezuela, prior to arrival of vehicle.

The temporary import permit is valid for six months. A request may be filed with Customs to extend the permit for one additional six months period, after which the car must be exported.

Only valid for tourists and / or holders of transit visas.

### **New Vehicles**

Documents required:

- Original passport

- Original purchase invoice notarised at origin
- Two original bills of lading / airway bill
- Original title
- Shippers' signature on Customs forms
- Shippers' RIF document

Import tax is 1% of the CIF value.

Import duties are 40% of the CIF value.

VAT is 12% of the sum of the CIF value, duties and taxes.

The vehicle must be brand new (no mileage).

The shipper must be at least 18 years old and be in Venezuela when the vehicle arrives.

Before shipping a car to Venezuela (2000 model or over) the shipper must present the Covenin and Senorca permits to Customs, otherwise clearance will be delayed and car may be confiscated.

These permits are to be obtained in Venezuela prior to arrival of vehicle.

### Motorcycles

Documents required:

- Original purchase invoice
- Original passport of shipper
- Shippers' signature on Customs form
- Shippers' RIF document

### Forbidden to Import

Certificate of Use issued by Venezuelan Consulate at origin for Venezuelan or returning residents is not valid for importing motorcycles.

### Motorcycles for Diplomats

Original diplomatic franchise.

Due to long process in obtaining the franchise, storage charges might occur.

### Firearms Drugs, Pornographic Material

Prohibited.

For firearms, apply to the Ministry of Defence before shipping. Prohibited in household goods shipments.

Shippers must realise that on their door to door shipments, duties, taxes, VAT, deconsolidation fees, airport and airline handling and storage, port fees, container rental and hoisting are not included in the prepaid destination services charge. Customs clearance is normally included. The shipper must be in the country when their shipment arrives in case the customs office wants to see their passport. No values should be declared on the shipping documents nor on the certificate of use, stamped by the Venezuelan Consulate at origin.

### Fumigation of Wood Packaging

A new resolution of the Minister of Agriculture and Land states that all imports and exports containing wooden crates, lift vans etc, have to have the Seal that certifies the treatment By Bromade Methyl (BM) or Heated Treatment (HT).

Any import coming into the country without the certification will be returned to the country of origin.

This does not apply to Paper products.

### General Information on Venezuela

#### Background

Venezuela was one of three countries that emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830 (the others being Ecuador and New Granada, which became Colombia). For most of the first half of the 20th century, Venezuela was ruled by generally benevolent military strongmen, who promoted the oil industry and allowed for some social reforms. Democratically elected governments have held sway since 1959. Under Hugo CHAVEZ, president from 1999 to 2013, and his hand-picked successor, President Nicolas MADURO, the executive branch has exercised increasingly authoritarian control over other branches of government. At the same time, democratic institutions have deteriorated, threats to freedom of expression have increased, and political polarisation has grown. The ruling party's economic policies have expanded the state's role in the economy through expropriations of major enterprises, strict currency exchange and price controls that discourage private sector investment and production, and over dependence on the petroleum industry for revenues, among others. Current concerns include: an increasingly politicized military, rampant violent crime, high inflation, and widespread shortages of basic consumer goods, medicine, and medical supplies.

#### International Disputes

Venezuela claims all of the area west of the Essequibo River in Guyana, preventing any discussion of a maritime boundary; Guyana has expressed its intention to join Barbados in asserting claims before the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that Trinidad and Tobago's maritime boundary with Venezuela extends into their waters; dispute with Colombia over maritime boundary and Venezuelan-administered Los Monjes islands near the Gulf of Venezuela; Colombian-organized illegal narcotics and paramilitary activities penetrate Venezuela's shared border region; in 2006, an estimated 139,000 Colombians sought protection in 150 communities along the border in Venezuela; US, France, and the Netherlands recognize Venezuela's granting full effect to Aves Island, thereby claiming a Venezuelan EEZ/continental shelf extending over a large portion of the eastern Caribbean Sea; Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines protest Venezuela's full effect claim.

## Geography

This South American country of 353,747 square miles lies along the northern shore of South America, between 0° and 12° latitude north and 60° and 73° longitude west. Virtually all of Venezuela's 3,000 kilometers of coastline borders the Caribbean waters. It is an interesting land with snow covered mountains and tropical regions, fertile valleys and great plateaus, prosperous cities and picturesque back-country.

## Climate

Caracas, with an average temperature of 70°F, is said to have a climate of 'eternal spring'. The rainy season is from May – November. Lower elevations are hotter, mountains can freeze at high altitudes. It is wise to have a wardrobe of both spring and summer weight clothing plus light sweaters and jackets.

## Population

23.2 million.

## Language

**Spanish:** and you are advised to learn it because although many Venezuelan's speak English (in the cities particularly), everyone does business in Spanish. All promotional materials, information, directives, etc are in Spanish. Interpreters can be hired hourly for a moderate fee.

## Currency

The national currency is the bolivar (bolivares plural) 1 bolivar (Bs) = 100 centimos and is available in the following units:

**Notes:** 500, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5 bolivares

**Coins:** 5, 2 and 1 bolivares, and 0.50, 0.25 and 0.05 centimos

## Economy

Venezuela remains highly dependent on oil revenues, which account for almost all export earnings and nearly half of the government's revenue. The country ended 2015 with an estimated 10% contraction in its GDP, 275% inflation, widespread shortages of consumer goods, and declining central bank international reserves. The IMF forecasts that the GDP will shrink another 8% in 2016 and inflation may reach 720%.

Falling oil prices since 2014 have aggravated Venezuela's economic crisis. Insufficient access to dollars, price controls, and rigid labour regulations have led some US and multinational firms to reduce or shut down their Venezuelan operations. Market uncertainty and state oil company PDVSA's poor cash flow have slowed investment in the petroleum sector, resulting in a decline in oil production.

Under President Nicolas MADURO, the Venezuelan Government's response to the economic crisis has been to increase state control over the economy and blame the private sector for the shortages. The Venezuelan government has maintained strict currency controls since 2003. On 17 February 2016, the Venezuelan government announced a

change from three official currency exchange mechanisms to only two official rates for the sale of dollars to private sector firms and individuals, with rates based on the government's import priorities. The official exchange rate used for food and medicine imports was devalued to 10 bolivars per dollar from 6.3 bolivars per dollar. The second rate moved to a managed float. These currency controls present significant obstacles to trade with Venezuela because importers cannot obtain sufficient dollars to purchase goods needed to maintain their operations. MADURO has used decree powers to enact legislation to deepen the state's role as the primary buyer and distributor of imports, further tighten currency controls, cap business profits, and extend price controls.

## Health

Many Venezuelan doctors have studied abroad and speak English. Upper and middle class health standards are very good in the country's main cities. There are many good general practitioners, specialists and clinics in Caracas. Fees are high and laboratory work is expensive. The US State Department requires yellow fever shots for its own personnel and recommends typhoid, tetanus and oral polio immunisations as well.

It is recommended that children have measles vaccinations and the regular triple vaccine (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus). Pharmaceuticals and medicines are easily available.

The water in the cities is chlorinated and safe to drink, but in the rural areas they drink only bottled water. Dental work is extremely expensive and it is advisable you have all necessary work done before you leave for Venezuela. It is also advisable to take a couple of pairs of eyeglasses, as the price of lenses and frames is very high.

## Transport

**Subway & Metrobus:** For the time being only Caracas boasts a subway system, but it is so clean and efficient that it is well worth the ride. You may ask for the layout of the subway in the stations which are equipped with ticket-vending and change machines and a multi-trip ticket service that allows you to exchange the subway tickets for the Metrobus.

**Taxis:** Taxis come in different colours and shapes, but are easily spotted by the sign on the roof that says 'Libre' or 'Taxis'. To hire a taxi, you may hail one on the streets or call by phone. There are taxi companies in the main cities and most are on call 24 hours.

**Buses:** Every city in Venezuela features an excellent urban and interurban bus service made up of buses, mini-buses and collective vehicles that serve pre-established routes and stops. The interurban service connects all Venezuelan cities. The central station is located in the Nuevo Circo of Caracas and every city has a terminal.



## **Radio & TV**

About 150 radio stations, commercial and government, operate in Venezuela, but only have four kilowatts of power. Nearly all are broadcast in Spanish. Two stations in Caracas offer several hours of English-language programming on week-days. Radio National plays classical music and there is a good FM Music station. Shortwave sets will pick up VOA, BBC and Armed forces programmes. Caracas has four TV stations, one of which is a government owned educational channel.

## **Newspapers**

A daily English newspaper called the Daily Journal is in publication. This gives updated news information along with information on clubs, sales, events etc.

*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.*