

Saudi Arabia Relocation Guide



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

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ISO 9001 - ISO 14001
OHSAS 18001



TELEPHONE:	Country code (00966) + Area code.
STANDARD TIME:	GMT + 3 hours.
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric.
ELECTRICITY:	Both 127V and 230V are in use.
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Recommended Hepatitis A and Typhoid.
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Eid Al Fitr (End of Ramadam, 2 days Eid Al Fitr Holiday 1st two days of the month of Shawwal, 4 days for the Eid Al Adha Holiday during the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, 23rd September – National Day.
OFFICE HOURS:	The Saudi working week begins on Sunday and ends on Thursday. Friday and Saturday are the official days of rest, but in certain cases Saturday might be considered as a working day. Office hours 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. during Ramadan), with some regional variation.
BANK HOURS:	9.30 am to 4.30 pm Sunday to Thursday.
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	Ambulance 997 Fire 998 Police 999
BRITISH EMBASSY IN SAUDI ARABIA:	Tayma Street Al Safarat Riyadh 11693 Tel: +966 11 481 9100
SAUDI ARABIA EMBASSY IN LONDON:	30 Charles Street Mayfair London W1J 5DZ Tel: 02079 173 000

Part 1 – Background 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 descendants rules the country today, as required by the country's 1992 Basic Law.

From 2005 to 2015, King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud incrementally modernized the Kingdom. Driven by personal ideology and political pragmatism, he introduced a series of social and economic initiatives, including expanding employment and social opportunities for women, attracting foreign investment, increasing the role of the private sector in the economy, and discouraging businesses from hiring foreign workers. These reforms have accelerated under King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz, who ascended to the throne in 2015, and has since lifted the Kingdom's ban on women driving and allowed cinemas to operate for the first time in decades.

The government held its first-ever elections in 2005 and 2011, when Saudis went to the polls to elect municipal councilors. In December 2015, women were allowed to vote and stand as candidates for the first time in municipal council elections, with 19 women winning seats.

Geography and Climate

Saudi Arabia contains the world's largest continuous sand desert, al-Rub al-Khali (the Empty Quarter), and the largest is the Najd, a central plateau, which rises from about 600 metres in the east to about 1,500 metres in the west. The capital, Riyadh, is located in the Najd. The Hijaz stretches along the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aqaba south to Asir and is the location of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Asir, extending south to the Yemen border, includes a fertile coastal plain. Inland mountains in the Asir region rise to more than 2,700 metres. The Eastern Province extends along the Persian Gulf and is the primary oil-producing region of the country. The oasis region of al-Ahsa occupies much of the Eastern Province.

Saudi Arabia's climate is generally hot and dry, although nights are cool, and frosts occur in winter. The humidity along the coasts is high. The inland areas of Najd, al-Qassim Province, and the deserts share a uniform climate. The temperature during the summer is high, reaching well over 45 °C, with generally cold nights. Extreme temperatures well below 0 °C are frequent in winter. The daily maximum temperature is mild during the short spring and autumn seasons, averaging about 29 °C.

The coastlines of Saudi Arabia along the Red Sea and Persian Gulf maintain a relatively constant maximum temperature (about 38 °C) throughout the year. Sandstorms driven by northwesterly winds persist for about three months each year, usually during late spring and early summer, on the eastern coast.

The southern region of Asir and the lower Hijaz regions are elevated, reaching up to 3,000 metres above sea level. The climate is cooler, with temperatures rarely rising above 35 °C. During the Indian Ocean monsoon season, in the autumn and spring, there is excessive rainfall. This region receives an average of 300 millimetres of rain during this season, or approximately 60 percent of total annual precipitation.

Population

As at February 2019 the population was estimated to be 33,914,250.

Economy

Saudi Arabia has an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities. It possesses about 16% 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 87% of budget revenues, 42% 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. Over 6 million foreign workers play an important role in the Saudi economy, particularly in the oil and service sectors.

Currency

The unit of currency is the Saudi Riyal (SAR) subdivided into 100 halala, and currently in circulation:-

Coins: 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 Halala plus 1 and 2 Riyal

Notes: 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 Riyal

Religion

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an Islamic theocratic monarchy in which Sunni Islam is the official state religion based on firm Sharia law and non-Muslims are not allowed to hold Saudi citizenship.

Language

Arabic is the official language of Saudi Arabia, English is widely spoken. It is used in business and is a compulsory second language in schools.

Education

The Ministry of Education manages the school education in Saudi Arabia, and there are state-run as well as private schools. The state schools follow a Saudi general curriculum that is mainly in Arabic and more focus is put on Islamic education. In the start of grade 4, English is introduced in state schools. In private schools, English is taught from starting, i.e. from kindergarten. In Saudi Arabia, there are separated classes for female and male students.

Public education in Saudi Arabia starts with primary education that lasts for 6 years and is compulsory, followed by intermediate and secondary education lasting 3 years each. Education in Saudi Arabia is free at all educational levels.

Only locals and naturalised Arabs are allowed to send their children to Saudi public schools.

Health

Health insurance is mandatory for all non-nationals. Note that the provision of health insurance is generally a necessity before visas or work permits will be granted.

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.

Part 2 – Saudi Arabia Import Customs Regulations

To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household goods and personal effects into Saudi Arabia.

General Information

- You must have arrived in Saudi Arabia prior to the arrival of your household and personal effects
- Because all items imported into Saudi Arabia must be shipped on pallets or in lift vans, we are not normally able to load a shipping container at your origin home
- All items valued over SR 10,000 (approximately US\$ 3,000) are subject to Customs duty, and payment is assessed on the cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value
- If receipts/invoices are not available, all items will be assessed by the Customs authorities based on local value
- The following items are restricted and dutiable
- Electrical appliances – 5%
- Audiotapes, videotapes, CDs/DVDs – 5%
- Furniture – 15%
- All similar items manufactured in Saudi Arabia – 5%

- Books and used clothing in reasonable quantities are exempt from duty payments
- All consignments imported into Saudi Arabia are subject to rigorous full physical inspection

Documents Required

- Detailed Packing List (prepared by ourselves)
- Itemised valued Inventory
- Certificate of insurance (if applicable)
- Authorisation letter attested by the Saudi Chamber of Commerce (formats will be provided to you by our partner company in Saudi)
- Copy of Passport with the entry visa page
- Copies of Residence Permit (Iqama) or Saudi National's ID (Bataqa)

Electrical/Electronic Appliances

All subject to customs duty (5% of CIF value), and in the absence of purchase receipts the Customs Authority will assess the goods based on local value.

Diplomats Removals

General Information

Diplomats must obtain Duty and Inspection Exemption Certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, otherwise the shipments will be considered as ordinary cargo and subject to full physical inspection and duty payment.

Documents Required

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

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
- 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. We do ask that you do not include foodstuffs of any description in your consignment
- 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 smuggling 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.

Goods Subject to Censorship

- Exposed film, including prints, slides etc
- Records, books, magazines, pictures / photos, and other printed matters
- Personal computers, audio / video cds diskettes, USBs, 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 CDs. DVDs and 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.

Motor Vehicles

All cars imported into Saudi Arabia must be left hand drive and not older than five years of age. For expatriates only one car can be imported. Cars are subject to duty based at about 5% of Customs assessed value. Personal items are not allowed to be shipped inside the car.

Documents required:

New and used cars:

- Title Certificate / Vehicle Registration
- Saudi Arabian Standard Organization (SASO) Conformity certificate from the country of origin. It is advised that you obtain this certificate at Country of origin. It is almost impossible to obtain in Saudi Arabia, and also application for the certificate may be rejected resulting in you having to re-export the car back to the UK at your own expense.
- Police clearance / de-registration from the country of origin
- Other proof of ownership i.e. Purchase invoice

Pets (dogs, cats, etc.)

We work with a number of Pet Relocation Companies who can help you import your pet to Saudi Arabia.

Please contact us if you wish to be put in contact with our partners.

Endangered Species

A CITES certificate is normally required. There is a worldwide ban on the movement of Ivory without a CITES Certificate. **Please note old pianos usually have ivory keys and a CITES certification will be required.**

For information on obtaining a CITES certificate please visit:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-import-and-export-permit>

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