

USA Relocation Guide



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

ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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INTERNATIONAL
MOVER



Memb No: A001



FS 23942



198656



ISO 9001 - ISO 14001
OHSAS 18001

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| TELEPHONE: | Country code (001) + Area Code. |
| STANDARD TIME: | Varies over 6 time zones. New York GMT -5 hrs. Los Angeles GMT -8 hours. |
| WEIGHTS & MEASURES: | MUS imperial with gradual voluntary conversion to metric. |
| ELECTRICITY: | 110/120v AC, 60Hz, plugs are flat 2 pin types. |
| INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: | Inoculation and vaccination certificate not required for EU citizens. |
| FEDERAL HOLIDAYS: | New Year's Day. Birthday of Martin Luther King 3rd Monday in January. Washington's Birthday 3rd Monday in February. Memorial Day last Monday of May. Independence Day 4th July. Labor Day 1st Monday in September. Columbus Day 2nd Monday in October. Veterans Day 11th November (if fall on a weekend either a Friday or Monday). Thanksgiving Day 4th Thursday in November. Christmas Day 25th December. |
| OFFICE HOURS: | Now vary between 8am and 6pm. |
| BANK HOURS: | Normally 08.30-17.00 Mon to Fri. 09.00-12.00 hours Saturday. |
| EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: | 911 – Police/Ambulance/Fire Service Emergency. |
| UK EMBASSY: | UK Embassy 3100 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington DC 20008 Tel: +1 (202) 462 1340 |
| US EMBASSY IN LONDON: | 24 Grosvenor Square London W1A 1AE Tel: 02074 999 000 |

Part 1 – Background Information on The USA

Background

Britain's American colonies broke with the mother country in 1776 and were recognized as the new nation of the United States of America following the Treaty of Paris in 1783. During the 19th and 20th centuries, 37 new states were added to the original 13 as the nation expanded across the North American continent and acquired a number of overseas possessions. The two most traumatic experiences in the nation's history were the Civil War (1861-65), in which a northern Union of states defeated a secessionist Confederacy of 11 southern slave states, and the Great Depression of the 1930s, an economic downturn during which about a quarter of the labour force lost its jobs. Buoyed by victories in World Wars I and II and the end of the Cold War in 1991, the US remains the world's most powerful nation state. Since the end of World War II, the economy has achieved relatively steady growth, low unemployment and inflation, and rapid advances in technology.

Geography

The USA comprises of forty eight adjoining states in North America bound by Canada, Mexico the states of Alaska to the northwest of Canada and Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean. The populous eastern states consist of the Atlantic coastal plain (which includes Florida peninsula and the Gulf of Mexico coast) and the Appalachian Mountains. The central states form a vast interior plain drained by the Mississippi – Missouri river system. To the west lie the Rocky Mountains separated from the Pacific coastal ranges by the intermontane plateaus. The coastal ranges are prone to earthquakes. Hawaii is a group of some twenty volcanic islands. The world's third-largest country by size (after Russia and Canada) and by population (after China and India). Mount McKinley is the highest point at 6194 metres and Death Valley the lowest point at -86 metres on the continent.

The USA has abundant natural resources: coal, copper, lead, molybdenum, phosphates, uranium, bauxite, gold, iron, mercury, nickel, potash, silver, tungsten, zinc, petroleum, natural gas and timber. About 20 per cent of the land can be used for crops, over 25 per cent is suitable for livestock rearing and over 30 per cent is forested. Cotton is the major industrial crop. The main industries are petroleum, steel, motor vehicles, aerospace, telecommunications, electrics, food processing, chemicals and consumer goods. Tourism is a major foreign currency earner with around 45 million visitors a year, other industries are banking and finance.

Natural hazards are Tsunamis, volcanoes, and earthquake activity around the Pacific Basin, hurricanes along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts, tornadoes in the Midwest and Southeast, mud slides in California, forest fires in the west, flooding and permafrost in northern Alaska, a major impediment to development.

Environment issues are: air pollution resulting in acid rain in both US and Canada, the US is the largest single emitter of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, water pollution from runoff of pesticides and fertilizers, very limited natural fresh water resources in much of the western part of the country require careful management, and desertification.

Population

The United States (which includes Alaska and Hawaii) is the third-largest country in the world, and as such, boasts the third largest population (326,625,791 July 2017) after China and India. It is a land of many different cultures, customs and ethnic groups. This broad mixture of people has allowed the United States to develop a unique multi-cultural society.

Climate

Conditions range between arctic in Alaska to desert in the intermontane plateaus. Most of the U.S is temperate, though the interior has continental conditions.

Economy

The US has the most technologically powerful economy in the world, with a per capita GDP of \$57,300. US firms are at or near the forefront in technological advances, especially in computers, pharmaceuticals, and medical, aerospace, and military equipment; however, their advantage has narrowed since the end of World War II. Based on a comparison of GDP measured at purchasing power parity conversion rates, the US economy in 2014, having stood

as the largest in the world for more than a century, slipped into second place behind China, which has more than tripled the US growth rate for each year of the past four decades.

In the US, private individuals and business firms make most of the decisions, and the federal and state governments buy needed goods and services predominantly in the private marketplace. US business firms enjoy greater flexibility than their counterparts in Western Europe and Japan in decisions to expand capital plant, to lay off surplus workers, and to develop new products. At the same time, businesses face higher barriers to enter their rivals' home markets than foreign firms face entering US markets.

Long-term problems for the US include stagnation of wages for lower-income families, inadequate investment in deteriorating infrastructure, rapidly rising medical and pension costs of an aging population, energy shortages, and sizable current account and budget deficits.

The onrush of technology has been a driving factor in the gradual development of a "two-tier" labor market in which those at the bottom lack the education and the professional/technical skills of those at the top and, more and more, fail to get comparable pay raises, health insurance coverage, and other benefits. But the globalization of trade, and especially the rise of low-wage producers such as China, has put additional downward pressure on wages and upward pressure on the return to capital. Since 1975, practically all the gains in household income have gone to the top 20% of households. Since 1996, dividends and capital gains have grown faster than wages or any other category of after-tax income.

Imported oil accounts for nearly 55% of US consumption and oil has a major impact on the overall health of the economy. Crude oil prices doubled between 2001 and 2006, the year home prices peaked; higher gasoline prices ate into consumers' budgets and many individuals fell behind in their mortgage payments. Oil prices climbed another 50% between 2006 and 2008, and bank foreclosures more than doubled in the same period. Besides dampening the housing market, soaring oil prices caused a drop in the value of the dollar and a deterioration in the US merchandise trade deficit, which peaked at \$840 billion in 2008. Because the US economy is energy-intensive, falling oil prices since 2013 have alleviated many of the problems the earlier increases had created.

The sub-prime mortgage crisis, falling home prices, investment bank failures, tight credit, and the global economic downturn pushed the US into a recession by mid-2008. GDP contracted until the third quarter of 2009, making this the deepest and longest downturn since the Great Depression. To help stabilise financial markets, the US Congress established a \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) in October 2008. The government used some of these funds to purchase equity in US banks and industrial corporations, much of which had been returned to the government by early 2011. In January 2009, Congress passed and President Barack OBAMA signed a bill providing an additional \$787 billion fiscal stimulus to be used over 10 years - two-thirds on additional spending and one-third on tax cuts - to create jobs and to help the economy recover. In 2010 and 2011, the federal budget deficit reached nearly 9% of GDP. In 2012, the Federal Government reduced the growth of spending and the deficit shrank to 7.6% of GDP. US revenues from taxes and other sources are lower, as a percentage of GDP, than those of most other countries.

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan required major shifts in national resources from civilian to military purposes and contributed to the growth of the budget deficit and public debt. Through 2014, the direct costs of the wars totaled more than \$1.5 trillion, according to US Government figures.

In March 2010, President OBAMA signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, a health insurance reform that was designed to extend coverage to an additional 32 million Americans by 2016, through private health insurance for the general population and Medicaid for the impoverished. Total spending on healthcare - public plus private - rose from 9.0% of GDP in 1980 to 17.9% in 2010.

In July 2010, the president signed the DODD-FRANK Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, a law designed to promote financial stability by protecting consumers from financial abuses, ending taxpayer bailouts of financial firms, dealing with troubled banks that are "too big to fail," and improving accountability and transparency in the financial system - in particular, by requiring certain financial derivatives to be traded in markets that are subject to government regulation and oversight.

In December 2012, the Federal Reserve Board (Fed) announced plans to purchase \$85 billion per month of mortgage-backed and Treasury securities in an effort to hold down long-term interest rates, and to keep short-term rates near zero until unemployment dropped below 6.5% or inflation rose above 2.5%. In late 2013, the Fed announced that it would begin scaling back long-term bond purchases to \$75 billion per month in January 2014 and further reduce them as conditions warranted; the Fed ended the purchases during the summer of 2014. In 2014,

the unemployment rate dropped to 6.2%, and continued to fall to 5.5% by mid-2015, the lowest rate of joblessness since before the global recession began; inflation stood at 1.7%, and public debt as a share of GDP continued to decline, following several years of increases. In December 2015, the Fed raised its target for the benchmark federal funds rate by 0.25%, the first increase since the recession began. With US GDP growth below 2%, the Fed has opted to raise rates three times since then, and in mid-June 2017, the range for the target rate stood at 1% to 1.25%.

Currency

The unit of currency is the US dollar (\$) which is made up of 100 cents and available in the following denominations:

- Notes: \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100
- Coins: 1 cent, 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents

Language

The majority of people speak American English, although Spanish is spoken in a number of Southern States.

Religion

The USA has a vast multi national culture and all religions are represented.

Education

Education is free and compulsory. Compulsory education is normally for 12 years (12 grades) and usually begins between the age of 5 or 6, until age 16, although some States have compulsory education until the age of 17 or 18.

Health

There is no free health care provided by the Government and most Americans take out a private health insurance. Health facilities are extensive and modern except in some rural areas.

Eating Out

It is customary to leave a tip (service charge) of at least 15% when eating out in restaurants. Unless specially invited to eat out at a host's expense, Americans pay for their own meals when dining with friends. If you are invited out, but your host does not offer to pay for your meal, you should be prepared to pay for it or decline the invitation.

The drive-in or fast food restaurants are very popular providing an inexpensive hot meal in less than five minutes.

Travel

There is a good extensive network of highways throughout the States. An international Driving License is needed and you should be familiar with the American road signs. Public transport is usually available especially in the larger cities and air travel is often used for long distances – an extensive train network does not exist. You should always make careful plans when traveling and make a flight and hotel reservations in advance. Be vigilant and:

- Do not carry large amounts of cash.
- Do not walk alone at night.
- Lock your car/hotel/apartment door.
- Do not leave your possessions unattended.

Measurements

The Americans have not yet succumbed to the metric system of weights and measurements and still use the imperial system. US measure Approx. metric equivalent:

- 1 mile = 1.6 kilometer.
- 1 yard (3 feet) = 0.91 meter.
- 1 foot (12 inches) = 30.48 centimeters.
- 1 inch = 2.54 centimeters.

- 1 acre = 0.41 hectares.
- 1 pound (16 ounces) = 373 grams.
- 1 ounce = 28.35 grams.
- 1 gallon (4 quarts) = 3.781 litres.
- 1 quart (4 cups) = 951 grams.
- 1 cup = 241 grams.
- 32(Fahrenheit) = 0(Centigrade).
- 68(Fahrenheit) = 20(Centigrade).
- 95(Fahrenheit) = 35(Centigrade).

To determine the Celsius(C) temperature equivalent from the Fahrenheit (F) scale, subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit temperature and divide the number by 1.8.

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 – Customs Regulations

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

Shipments to the USA cannot arrive before the owner of the goods. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in clearance delays and possible additional charges.

Duty free if removal goods consist of used household effects which have been in the owner's use and possession abroad for at least one year, and which will keep on being used by the owner in the new residence.

Quite a number of shipping containers are sent for x-ray which does result in a delay in clearance at the port of entry. The cost of this inspection is not included in our quotation. Containers are usually cleared following the x-ray, but some containers are called for inspection, which can result in further delays and cost. We regret this situation but please be assured Abels and our American Partner Offices will do everything possible to minimise any inconvenience and additional cost. These US Customs operating procedures are beyond our direct control.

The following documents are required by us prior to shipping/or airfreighting your personal and household effects.

Documents Required

- Copy of Passport and Copy of visa if non USA Passport Holder.
- The completed ISF form (Importer Security Filing) which has to be lodged by us at least 24 hours prior to vessel loading. We will supply this form.
- Copy of passport for all family members.
- U.S Customs Form 3299 (Importer's Declaration) Supplied by us.
- Supplemental Declaration Form supplied by us.
- Inventory of goods prepared by us. For owner packed items a detailed inventory is required, the words miscellaneous or sundry Items cannot be used. Please note it is preferable for items to be packed by ourselves.
- Power of Attorney form supplied by us.

Diplomatic Goods – US citizen

Same as Household goods and personal effects.

Duty free entry however X-ray exam possible.

Diplomatic goods – non US citizen diplomats

Documents required:

- DS1504, POA required.

Duty free entry X-ray examination / Inspection is possible.

Importer's U.S. Consulate or United Nations Mission's Office must initiate the request for free diplomatic entry.

Items owned less than one year

Document required:

- Separate declaration on 3299 Part IV D.

Subject to US duties / fees.

Need an itemised list with description, value and country of manufacture.

Wedding Trousseaux

Liable to assessment of customs duties.

Documents required in addition:

- Separate declaration on reverse side of customs form 3299

Inheritance

- Relevant extract of the Will or death certificate.
- Copy of inventory.
- Letter of inheritance from the inheritor.
- All other documentation as for importing normal household and personal effects.

Duty and taxes are not normally charged if the inheritor writes a letter confirming that they grew up with the items and that these were in their immediate household.

If the items were not in the inheritor's immediate household while they were growing up, items may be subject to taxes and duties.

If deceased is US citizen and items are travelling as part of their estate, items are entitled to enter the U.S duty free.

Please note although items may be allowed to entry duty and tax free, the US Customs Authorities may make a charge for the clearance of the items.

Works of Art and Antiques

If owned by shipper for at least one year and are for personal use only, no proof of antiquity is required.

If not part of household and personal effects shipment, Antiques require production of a certificate of antiquity showing approximate date of production, and U.S Customs has the right to order antiques to US Customs appraiser's stores for an independent appraisal.

If not part of household and personal effects shipment, articles must be at least 100 years old to be considered antique and admitted duty free.

Antiques and works of art imported into the USA for resale are subject to different regulations.

Jewellery and Precious Metal

No separate documents required unless owned less than one year

Silverware and ornaments are duty free when imported as part of normal household goods.

Jewellery **must not** be included with household goods but should accompany owner.

Computers / Electronic equipment

If owned at least 1 year (and not for resale) – no special requirements.

Motor Vehicles

IMPORTANT:- Generally, unless a vehicle has been manufactured in the USA for the U.S Market i.e to U.S specification it will **NOT** be allowed entry. The only exemption is for classic cars over 25 years old.

Motor Vehicles including motorcycles, and trailers – Conforming to US DOT / EPA Regulations

Documents required

- Proof of ownership (copy of US title or vehicle registration in Importers name).
- Vehicle must be free of all dirt / debris (including engine).
- Copy of U.S Title, Certificate of Origin Vehicle Registration or letter from manufacturer's U.S Representative stating that vehicle was originally manufactured to meet U.S Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Transportation standards.
- Proof that the vehicle conforms to US DOT/EOA Regulations.
- Vehicles 25 or more years old are exempt from Environmental protection Agency and Department of Transportation standards.

If your vehicle does meet the US criteria then the options that are available to you when shipping motor vehicles or mechanical equipment powered by internal combustion engines (autos, ATVs, motorcycles, lawn mowers, etc) are:-

- (1) **Ship via RO/RO:** Able to roll-on/roll-off a vessel/cargo ship. Fuel tank may not contain more than 1/2 tank. This is the most cost-effective method of moving vehicles, less risk is involved.
- (2) **Send as Non-Hazardous cargo in an Ocean Container:** The fuel has to be drained and the engine run until it stalls. This is risky, however, as it may cause harm to the vehicle. You should consult your mechanic or dealer for advice on the effects of running the motor/vehicle in question dry of fuel.
- (3) **Send as Hazardous cargo in an Ocean Container:** Most expensive option. In addition to the normal shipping charges and the higher ocean freight contract rates, a substantial Hazardous Goods fee is assessed to cover the costs of inspections / certifications / declarations, as well as, the HAZARDOUS & WARNING placards that are required by the D.O.T.

Boats with engines

Duty free if part of household goods, owned at least one year and not for re-sale.

Subject to the same rules and regulations as cars.

Boats without Engines – the same regulations are ordinary removal goods.



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Food – pantry goods / dry goods (spices)

Please **do not** include food in your consignment

Food can cause additional exams and delays which end with increased costs.

Wine and Alcoholic Beverages (can only be imported into a few US states – check for clarification) and cannot be shipped in a groupage shipment

It is recommended that alcohol is not included in your shipment additional examination and delays with increased costs will be incurred.

Documents required if you do decide to ship alcohol

- Descriptive inventory - type ie: White wine / bourbon, size of bottle, alcohol content, value per bottle. Inventory should state "For Personal Use Only".

Must include:

- Manufacturer's name and address.
- Production address.
- FDA Code.
- Type of packaging.
- Brand name.
- Quantity.
- Value of alcohol.
- State permit may be required.
- Check with final destination state for the laws that apply.

Subject to various rates of duty and taxes.

Please note as mentioned above we do discourage the importing of wine and alcoholic beverages. Some states prohibit entry and Customs will confiscate. In other cases, importation will increase the time, cost and exams of the customs clearance process.

Firearms

Firearms cannot be shipped with your household and personal effects. They have to be shipped separately, via a Firearms Dealer.

Pets

Please see further information for relocating pets to the USA:

<https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/index.html>

Prescription Medicine / Over the counter Medicine (for personal use only)

Prescription medicines are allowed if accompanied by a doctor's prescription and no more than a 3 to 6 month supply.

Over the counter medicines are allowed in reasonable quantities.

Prohibited Articles

- Narcotics.
- Drugs and medicines without prescriptions.
- Plants.
- Explosives and other dangerous goods (or special permit).
- Animal products (unprocessed furs, skins, trophies etc.).
- Ivory – **Please note nearly all old pianos have ivory keys, and can only be imported after obtaining a CITES certificate. For Information on obtaining a CITES certificate then please visit: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-importand-export-permit>**
- Pornographic materials.
- Illegal drugs.
- Hoverboards (only allowed on a temporary basis, with a bond posted).

Fumigation of imported and exported wooden materials

USA has adopted the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM-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.

Any shipments in wooden packaging will have to have a Seal which certifies that the shipment has received the required treatment Heat Treated (HT) a minimum wood core temperature of 56 degrees centigrade for a minimum of 30 minutes or Methyl Bromide treatment the minimum temperature should not be less than 10 degrees centigrade and the minimum exposure time should not fall below 16 hours.

The wood packing material must be marked in a visible location on each item, on at least two opposite sides of the item with a legible and permanent mark in black ink. Labels and adhesives are not allowed.

This 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 fibres.

Recommended not to use Burlap coverings / bags, they will cause problems with USDA – especially in air shipments.

If on a work visa, then the rules for importing a car are more relaxed. The vehicle will be imported on a temporary basis for the duration of the work visa. When your work visa expires or you obtain permanent residence the vehicle will need to be re-exported.