



Puerto Rico

CAPITAL

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

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CURRENCY

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Guide version: V2 draft**Disclaimer**

This Country Guide reflects information believed to be correct at the time of publication. Regulations, procedures and charges are subject to change. IAM does not accept liability for errors, omissions, inaccuracies or misinterpretations in this guide. The information provided should not be considered as having been provided or sanctioned by the customs authorities of the country or territory concerned.

Important Note

TERRITORY NOTE: Puerto Rico is an unincorporated US territory and commonwealth. Shipments from the US mainland to Puerto Rico are treated as domestic movements -- no customs clearance is required, though Hacienda (Puerto Rico's Treasury Department) clearance applies. Shipments from all foreign countries are subject to US federal customs regulations administered by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), with the additional requirement of Hacienda clearance. Puerto Rico uses the US dollar and follows US federal law, but has its own local tax authority.

Overview

Duty-Free Eligibility

Duty-free conditions. Household goods must have been used in the owner's household for at least 12 months prior to shipment from the origin country. The owner must hold a valid long-term US visa (not a B-1/B-2 visitor's visa) to import household goods duty-free. Visitors on short-term visas may import personal effects only (clothing, toiletries, camping gear, etc.).

Documents

Required Documents

- **Copy of passport**
- **Copy of visa (non-US citizens / permanent residents) or copy of permanent resident card**
- **US Customs Form CF-3299 (Declaration for Free Entry of Unaccompanied Articles)**
- **US Customs Service Supplemental Declaration for Unaccompanied Personal and Household Effects**
- **Detailed inventory in English (do not use "packed by owner," "PBO," "miscellaneous," or "contents unknown"; all PBO boxes must have descriptive item listings)**
- **Original bill of lading (OBL) or air waybill (AWB)**
- **I-94 arrival record (non-US citizens; some ports require a copy of the card)**
- **Power of attorney (POA) for the customs broker**
- **Importer Security Filing (ISF) -- must be filed prior to vessel sailing from the last foreign port for all ocean shipments**
- **Government-issued photo ID**
- **Copy of Social Security card**
- **Signed Hacienda Declaration Letter (Puerto Rico Treasury Department clearance)**
- **All of the above plus DS-1504 form submitted to the US Department of State by the diplomat's consulate or embassy at least 10 days prior to shipment arrival**
- **Brokers may not clear customs on CF-3299 entries for A-1 visa diplomats**
- **Hacienda clearance documents (government-issued photo ID, Social Security card copy, signed Hacienda Declaration Letter)**
- **No US CBP customs entry required**

Household Goods — Specific Information

Items owned less than 12 months are generally dutiable. These must be listed in detail on the reverse of CF-3299, including item description, quantity, material, value in USD, and country of origin.

ISF filing. For ocean shipments, the ISF must be filed before the vessel departs the last foreign port. Failure to file timely results in CBP penalties. Ensure the origin agent coordinates ISF filing with the destination broker well in advance.

Examinations. CBP and other government agencies may require physical or X-ray examination of shipments. Examination costs typically range from USD 200 to USD 1,700 or more for a full container load (FCL) and are for the importer's account.

Hacienda clearance. Unlike the US mainland, all shipments into Puerto Rico -- including those from the US -- require clearance from Hacienda (Puerto Rico's Department of the Treasury). The Hacienda Declaration Letter must be signed by the importer and submitted with the required ID documents.

ISPM 15. All wood packaging materials must comply with ISPM 15.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia
- Tuna (certain restrictions apply under US law)
- Pornographic materials
- Haitian animal hide drums
- Cuban cigars (subject to current OFAC regulations; confirm current status with destination agent)
- Blank tapes and CDs of Iranian origin
- Absinthe
- Counterfeit items or goods improperly using a federally registered trademark
- Products made from dog or cat fur
- Flavored cigarettes including cloves
- Most turtles and monkeys
- Species prohibited under CITES without valid permits

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Puerto Rico follows US federal customs regulations. The following categories require particular attention:

Alcohol. The import of alcohol is governed by both federal and Puerto Rico local laws. Federal rules generally permit a reasonable quantity in a household goods shipment; excessive quantities may require a licensed alcohol importer to file a commercial entry. Puerto Rico's own regulations must also be consulted.

Food items. Import is strongly discouraged. Food products require a detailed inventory for FDA filings and appropriate duty payment.

Plants and seeds: import permit required from APHIS.

Soil: import permit required.

Meats and meat byproducts (including bouillon soups): restricted; inspection required.

Medications: personal-use quantities generally permitted with documentation; controlled substances require DEA authorisation.

Fruits and vegetables: subject to USDA/APHIS inspection; many items restricted.

Firearms and ammunition: ammunition should not be shipped (hazardous goods). Firearms previously owned and exported from the US can generally be imported with proof of US origin (prior registration with CBP before export is strongly recommended). Foreign-purchased firearms typically require an ATF permit filed at least 6 weeks before the shipment's arrival; the customs broker must be named on the ATF application from the outset. Consult the destination agent before shipping any weapons.

Antiques: items at least 100 years old are duty-free; the circa date must appear on the invoice. Iranian-origin carpets used in the foreign household for at least 12 months are generally approvable, but note that the US maintains an embargo on Iranian-origin goods subject to change.

Fish and wildlife / CITES items: ivory, skins, feathers, shells, and other wildlife products are regulated by US Fish and Wildlife Service. Many require CITES permits that must be obtained before the shipment leaves the origin country. Provide the destination agent with the common name, scientific name, and country of origin for any such items well before shipment.

Goods from embargoed countries: require a license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Textiles and clothing: subject to US textile import regulations; quantities beyond personal use may require formal entry.

Gold: must be declared.

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Copy of US title or registration (ownership names must match the importer's name)**
Vehicles previously registered in the US (returning owner):
- **Completed EPA form 3520-1, DOT form HS-7, and CBP form 7501**
Vehicles previously registered in the US (returning owner):
- **Original bill of lading**
Vehicles purchased abroad (foreign origin):
- **Bill of sale or pro-forma invoice with statement of value (must include vehicle description, VIN, model, and year of manufacture)**
Vehicles purchased abroad (foreign origin):
- **Title of ownership translated into English**
Vehicles purchased abroad (foreign origin):
- **DOT form HS-7**
Vehicles purchased abroad (foreign origin):
- **EPA form 3520-21 (if applicable)**
Vehicles purchased abroad (foreign origin):
- **Proof of EPA/DOT conformity by one of: US title/registration; letter of conformity from the manufacturer; foreign military sales contract confirming US EPA/DOT compliance; or exemption documentation for vehicles 25 model years old or older**
Vehicles purchased abroad (foreign origin):
- **EPA permission letter obtained prior to shipping**
Non-residents importing temporarily (tourist):
- **Additional port-specific declarations (some ports require a bond of up to three times the vehicle's value)**
Non-residents importing temporarily (tourist):

Specific Information

EPA/DOT compliance. Vehicles less than 25 model years old that were not previously titled in the US must comply with US EPA and DOT regulations. Bringing a non-compliant vehicle into compliance through an ICI (Independent Commercial Importer / certified conversion shop) is expensive and time-consuming; it is generally not economically worthwhile. Non-complying vehicles should be sent separately from household goods to avoid holding up the entire shipment.

25-year exemption. Vehicles 25 model years old or older with their original drivetrain are generally exempt from EPA/DOT requirements.

Temporary import (tourists). Non-US residents may import a vehicle for up to 12 months; no extension is permitted. The vehicle must be exported before the 12-month period or it is subject to seizure. It may not be sold or offered for sale during the temporary import period.

Marine engines and generators are also subject to EPA requirements; EPA form 3520-21 is normally required.

Strong recommendation: Consult the destination agent before shipping any non-US-compliant vehicle. Confirm ICI shop availability and costs before making the decision to ship.

Pets

Requirements

- **ISO 11784/11785-compliant 15-digit microchip**

From all countries (international shipments):

- **Rabies vaccination administered between 28 days and 6 months before entry (dogs and cats); recorded on a rabies certificate, government-issued vaccination booklet, or EU Pet Passport**

From all countries (international shipments):

- **Health certificate (Certificate of Veterinary Inspection) issued by a licensed veterinarian within 30 days of entry, endorsed by a government veterinarian; a Spanish-language version is strongly recommended; endorsement is not required for shipments from the US mainland**

From all countries (international shipments):

- **Parasite treatment (internal and external) administered by a veterinarian within 72 hours of departure**

From all countries (international shipments):

- **Rabies titer test (FAVN or equivalent); not mandatory for Puerto Rico but strongly advised**

From high-rabies countries (recommended, not required):

Specific Information

No quarantine if compliant. Pets meeting all requirements are not quarantined. Non-compliant pets face quarantine, return to origin, or euthanasia at the importer's expense.

No import permit required for personal pets accompanying their owners. Commercial imports require an import permit.

No rabies titer test required. Puerto Rico does not mandate a rabies titer test from any country, but one is strongly recommended for pets from high-rabies countries.

Unvaccinated puppies and kittens under 4 months of age may enter from rabies-free or rabies-controlled countries with a health certificate. Once the animal reaches 3 months of age, it must be vaccinated for rabies and wait 30 days before entry.

Breed restrictions lifted. Puerto Rico ended its ban on American Staffordshire Terriers, Staffordshire Terriers, Pit Bulls, and their crosses in July 2018. Owners remain responsible for their pet's behaviour.

Port of entry. Pets entering by air must arrive at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) in San Juan. Advance notice to veterinary officials is required, especially for arrivals outside normal business hours.

Recommended vaccinations for dogs: distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus.

Recommended vaccinations for cats: feline viral rhinotracheitis, panleukopenia, feline leukemia.

Other animals. Most turtles and monkeys are not permitted entry into the US or its territories. Poultry requires an APHIS import permit. Exotic species may be subject to CITES controls. Consult the destination agent and APHIS (aphis.usda.gov) before shipping any animal other than a domestic dog or cat.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air and sea shipments.

Puerto Rico is served by sea through the ports of San Juan, Ponce, and Mayagüez. The Port of San Juan handles the majority of household goods freight. Air freight moves through Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) in San Juan.

The ISF must be filed before the vessel departs the last foreign port. Coordinate with the destination broker as early as possible; late filing triggers CBP penalties.

The Hacienda Declaration Letter and supporting ID documents must be signed and ready before the shipment arrives. The destination agent should provide the Hacienda package to the importer well in advance.

Do not use "miscellaneous," "contents unknown," "PBO," or any vague descriptions on the inventory. CBP examiners will flag these and may require a full physical examination at the importer's cost.

CBP examinations are a routine risk in Puerto Rico. Budget for potential examination costs of USD 200 to USD 1,700+ for an FCL shipment. Examinations are more likely when inventories are vague or when shipments originate from flagged origins.

For shipments from the US mainland: no CBP customs entry is required, but Hacienda clearance is still mandatory. Ensure the destination agent is briefed on the domestic vs. international distinction so the correct documentation package is prepared.

Cultural & Other Information

- [OpenFactBook -- Puerto Rico](#)
- [Wikipedia -- Puerto Rico](#)
- [US Customs and Border Protection -- cbp.gov](#)
- [Hacienda \(Puerto Rico Treasury\) -- hacienda.pr.gov](#)
- [USDA APHIS Pet Travel -- aphis.usda.gov](#) *(WAF-protected; accessible in browser)*
- [PetTravel.com -- Puerto Rico Pet Import Requirements](#)
- [embassypages.com/puertorico](#) *(WAF-protected; accessible in browser)*
- [FIDI Import Customs Guide -- Puerto Rico \(October 2023\)](#)
- [IAM Baseline PDF -- Puerto Rico \(November 2015\)](#)

Puerto Rico is an archipelago in the Caribbean Sea comprising the main island and several smaller islands. The population is approximately 3.2 million, making it one of the most densely populated territories in the world. The capital is San Juan. Spanish and English are both official languages. Puerto Rico has been a US territory since 1898 and its residents are US citizens, though the island does not have voting representation in the US Congress and cannot vote in presidential elections. The economy is based on pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, tourism, and financial services. Puerto Rico has its own constitution and government but is subject to US federal law. The territory has faced significant economic challenges and debt restructuring since the mid-2010s, compounded by damage from Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers](#)

<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Puerto+Rico&lat=18.22&lng=-66.59&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Puerto+Rico>

- [Foreign Embassies / Consulates](#)

<https://www.embassypages.com/puertorico>

- [Puerto Rico's Representation Abroad](#)

<https://www.usembassy.gov>

As a US territory, Puerto Rico has no independent foreign representation. Consular services are provided through US embassies and consulates worldwide.

IAM Country Guide: Puerto Rico