

Arta's Guide to Customs Clearance

How do we file customs information for your shipments?

Arta processes all shipments as commercial transactions and lists the content as merchandise. Sellers provide Arta with all required information for customs clearance.

Arta passes any provided EEI information via API during the label purchase process to the parcel carrier. This allows for customs information to be sent to the carrier ahead of the package's arrival at the destination location and starts the customs clearance process early.

Every country has its specific requirements/regulations when importing and exporting. We utilize DHL, FedEx, and UPS broker services to clear shipments. All shipments are processed as DDU (delivered duties unpaid) meaning the recipient is responsible for payment on these.

You may be contacted directly during clearance by the common carrier. You can always check with Arta if outreach seems suspicious before providing sensitive information.

Steps of a standard customs clearance process

1. Shipping documents are sent electronically using the provided information and tied to the package label/tracking number.
2. The package is picked up and scanned by the parcel carrier.
3. The package arrives at the origin hub and the paperwork is verified.
4. The package departs to a sorting hub and is processed.
5. The package is forwarded to an export gateway for paperwork verification, manifesting, and data entry. Flight departs.
6. The shipment arrives at the import gateway. Customs determines the duties and taxes & VAT rate that the shipment will be imported under. The duties amount is determined by the customs authority of each country and is calculated based on the HTS code, country of origin, and value of the items. Contact is made via phone or email to have the balance paid. These fees are to be paid by the recipient before shipment release.
7. The Customs clearance process is completed. The shipment is forwarded to the destination hub or delivery station.
8. Package delivered by courier to final destination.

Frequently asked questions

How are fees determined?

Customs agencies use the commodity, quantity, value, country of manufacture, and other factors to determine duties and tax charges for international shipments. VAT rates are set by the destination country.

The most common factors are listed below.

- HTS Code
- Country of Origin
- Valuation – market value, what the client paid for the item.

These details are all sent to customs based on information from the seller.

How do I qualify for lower Duties & Taxes?

Certain countries have allowances on certain goods (original artwork/antiques) for lower D&T rates. If you are expecting a lower rate for your shipment, please note this on the shipment prior to booking. Many countries require specific HTS codes and additional documentation like art declarations, certificates of authenticity, and certificates of origin to grant the lower rates. Please note that a lower rate is not a guarantee as it is up to the discretion of customs and current customs regulations. You can also dispute customs charges after payment and request an adjustment.

What are the most common mistakes?

Any of the following can cause delays or holds in the customs clearance process that will take additional time and documentation to resolve.

- Incomplete names
- Incomplete addresses
- Incorrect or incomplete HTS code
- The description of items is not detailed enough
- Mismatching information on item value
- Incorrect contact information or no responses to calls or emails.

Each country's customs authority has different requirements or regulations. At any time, during the customs clearance process, customs authorities can hold inspections of the shipment. Arta has no control if something is pulled by customs for further review or examination by another regulatory authority before your shipment can proceed to a delivery facility.

Countries with specific requirements

This list is not comprehensive. Customs authorities in every country have the right to request additional documentation.

AUSTRALIA - For artwork with wooden components, follow "Coal & Firewood" rules. Antiques are duty free, however must have a Certificate of Antiquity issued by a registered Antique dealer accompanying the shipment.

CANARY ISLANDS - Only applicable to items with more than 100 years of antiquity. Items with Certificate of the Antiquity (issued by the seller) can benefit from a reduced VAT rate. Antiques, which legal origin cannot be properly certified (eg. pillaged iraqi cultural heritage), prohibited.

FRANCE - Antiques must be accompanied by an antique certificate and a mention in the invoice. Works of art must have a mention as if original or replicate. Originals must be signed and/or numbered and must not exceed +6 copies.

NIGER - Certificate of Origin required. Must be conformed to the established norms of French Regulations.

SPAIN - Only applicable to items with more than 100 years of antiquity. Items with Certificate of the Antiquity (issued by the seller) can benefit from a reduced VAT rate. Antiques, which legal origin cannot be properly certified (eg. pillaged iraqi cultural heritage), prohibited.

SWITZERLAND - Restricted cultural property if it has an origin of:

- Turkey
- Mexico
- Peru
- China
- Cyprus
- Egypt
- Columbia
- Greece
- Italy