

# China Inbound Shipments Clearance Tips



## Musts:

### Air waybill (AWB) preparation:

- The shipping profile (weight, number of packages, value, currency, and payer information) must be correct. Make sure all the information on various clearance paperwork is consistent; otherwise, a revised shipping profile will be required to get customs approval, causing serious delays.
- For handwritten AWBs (air waybill), make sure each copy is clear and legible. For FedEx automation users, double check the number of pieces and value, as the shipper sometimes forgets to change the last shipping record.
- Make sure the AWB has a reachable consignee contact, including extension number, mobile phone, and email address so that destination gateway personnel can easily contact the consignee to inform him/her about the shipment arrival and check necessary clearance paperwork over the phone.
- The postal code must be correct in order to avoid the shipment being missorted to another location.
- The declared value must be the same as the invoice value, and please note the currency. It's very difficult to revise the declared value once a shipment reaches its destination gateway, regardless of whether the final value will be higher or lower.
- Fill in the HS code if you know it in order to avoid unnecessary inspections and possible customs delays.
- If a customer is shipping more than one shipment in a day, ensure the right AWB is on each package.
- Fill in the correct payer information for the freight charge and duty & taxes, including the FedEx account details.

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## Invoice preparation:

- The invoice should include a detailed description of the goods, value, quantity, unit price, amount, currency, country of origin (COO). Recommend to use CIF (Cost + Insurance+ Freight) trade term.  
**Note:** The declared value must be reasonable (and at market price), otherwise Customs will ask the consignee or shipper to provide value evidence.
- If the shipper sells goods to the consignee, please fill in the P/O (purchase order) number.
- Garments, shoes, handbags, purses and glasses must include brand information regardless of whether it is declared as a sample, formal entry, personal effects or return.
- Products with different COOs, specifications or models should be listed separately on the invoice.
- The invoice must have the same shipper and consignee name, telephone number, email address, company name and address as the AWB.
- The invoice should have the shipper's signature or company chop.
- Use the correct quantifier for the goods.
- Use a common product description (e.g. toy/tops/shoes/integrated circuits), not an internal model number.
- Provide a detailed description of the composition and usage for raw materials/chemicals/powders/liquids.

## Packing List:

- For an MPS (more than one package under one air waybill) or a shipment weighing above 100 kgs, the shipper must provide a Packing List (PL).
- The title must be "Packing List". The shipper cannot use delivery note, packing slip or other terms instead of packing list.
- The packing list must correctly and clearly describe the goods, the quantity along with the net weight and gross weight for each carton. The packing list must also have the total net weight, the total gross weight, and the packing method. If the shipper is sending more than one kind of goods, the shipper must provide a packing list.
- The commodities under the same HS code should be calculated/ listed together.
- The packing list must have the shipper's signature or company chop.

## Commodities subject to special requirements:

The import of the below commodities requires a special license, documentation either at the origin or destination or special clearances procedures. Please contact your local FedEx Customer Service Hotline or responsible Sales Representative for more details before shipping.

- Shipments with wooden packaging;
- Used mechanical and electrical products;
- Medical devices;
- Animal products;
- Plant products;
- Biological products;
- Cosmetics;
- Pre-packaged food;
- Drugs and Medicine;
- Beta tapes, cinema film, and audio/video publications;
- Commercial purpose publications (books/ magazines with an ISBN:International Standard Book Number);
- Some electronics and machinery products;
- Battery products;
- Toys;
- Paints; and,
- Exhibition and other Temporary in Bond (TIB) shipments requiring import deposits to customs for import entry (FedEx only offers BSO service).
- Wine



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## Other tips:

- The shipper must provide an AWB and Invoice for all non-document shipments.
- Personal effects
  - \* A clear packing list is very important; the packing list should include a clear product description, quantity, brand, material, unit value, and total value.
  - \* The value limitation for each personal shipment sent to/from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan is RMB800 or a single item can be sent with a value of more than RMB800; For example, if shoes, pens and clothes are sent, the total value cannot be more than RMB800, but if one laptop or one mobile phone is sent, there is no value limitation.
  - \* The value limitation for each personal shipment sent to/ from countries and regions other than Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan is RMB1,000 or a single item can be sent with a value of more than RMB1,000. For example, if shoes, pens and clothes are sent, the total value cannot be more than RMB1,000, but if one laptop or one mobile phone is sent, there is no value limitation.
  - \* The net weight of food must be provided.
  - \* A doctor's prescription is required for medicines.
- The shipper is advised to inform the consignee of the commodity, value, trade type, contract, etc. before the shipment is sent out. Even better, the shipper should ask the consignee to review the invoice and packing list, so that consignee can pre-check what special documents or certificates are needed for China inbound clearance. This is particularly important when the consignee has no import permit, as he/she must find an agent to prepare all the import clearance paperwork, and some license applications take a long time (for example CCC :China Compulsory Certification and energy labels). Ideally, goods that may need special certificates should be shipped separately.
- If a B2C shipment is shipped to an individual and the CIF (cost, insurance, freight) is less than CNY 1,000, subject to the provision of documents and materials in compliance with customs' requirements, it can be cleared as a personal shipment. If the individual has an IOR (Importer of record), KJ3 mode (express mode, non-formal entry) can be used, with the consignee's confirmation and subject to the provision of documents and materials in compliance with customs' requirements. But the shipment may be required formal entry by customs.
- Repair and Return  
For overseas repaired shipments, which need to be returned to China, both exporting (goods to be repaired) from and re-importing (repaired) into China must be declared as formal entry and indicated as "repair and return". When the repaired shipment is returned to China, the consignee will be asked to provide the previous export declaration form to prove it's a "repair and return" shipment and duty & tax will be calculated upon the repair cost indicated on the Commercial Invoice; otherwise, China Customs will consider the shipment to be evading inbound duty.
- Exhibition shipments  
Exhibition shipments must follow special customs procedures, using either TIB entry or a self-designated broker declaring at the Exhibition Center Customs to enable duty and tax exemption. In both cases, FedEx China will not handle import clearance, unless the customer agrees to change the shipment to dutiable entry.

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## Must Notes:

- Purposely split the shipment into multiple shipments to one consignee on the same day in order to circumvent the formal entry process.
- Use a combined invoice for several AWBs (air waybills). Destination gateways will have to perform a manual data consolidation, which will delay the shipment for an additional week.
- Under-declare shipments, especially high-weight, low-value parcels. For example, if the declared value of a 100-kilo shipment is USD\$20, Customs may consider it under-declared.
- Combine personal effects and commercial shipments together because they fall under different clearance classifications. When selected for customs inspection, the result will be either the shipment is returned to the shipper or the personal goods must be abandoned. The return process takes around one month. Partially abandoned shipments require a Customs officers' approval, which will take one week.
- Use wooden packaging without the IPPC (Internationals Plant Protection Convention) or with an IPPC that is from a country different from the product COO. To do so will result in the wooden packaging being destroyed, which will incur additional cost to be borne by the consignee.
- Import DG (Dangerous Goods) by express. For example, hazardous chemicals, infectious or toxic biological substance, batteries or battery-type products classified by IATA as DG, radioactive material, and corrosive substance, etc.
- Import used clothes/garments or damaged/broken electronic & machinery products (such as used medical devices and auto engines). (Note: This prohibition does not include personal effects shipments or shipments into China for repair purposes (i.e. TIB import entry for repair purposes). Some damaged/broken electronic & machinery products may be imported on condition that the Pre-Shipment Inspection (PSI) for the second-hand goods is completed before shipment (3 months prior to the shipment date).

The information is for reference only. For details, please refer to [english.customs.gov.cn](http://english.customs.gov.cn).



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