



Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

CAPITAL Kinshasa	OFFICIAL LANGUAGE French	CURRENCY Congolese Franc (CDF)
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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.

Overview

Customs Clearance

- Sea shipments: 3 to 5 weeks - Air shipments: 2 to 3 weeks

Duty-Free Eligibility

Duty exemption for corporate clients, NGOs, and returning Congolese citizens: Personal effects and one vehicle may be imported exempt from duties and taxes if they arrive within 6 months of the shipper's arrival in the DRC. After 6 months, both personal effects and vehicle are treated as commercial imports subject to full duties and taxes.

Import tax on exempt shipments: Even when exempt from duties, a 1% tax on CIF value applies for corporate clients, NGOs, and returning Congolese citizens. Diplomats pay 0.1%.

Non-exempt shipments: If the shipment does not qualify for exemption, or if the required documents cannot be provided, customs duties and taxes total approximately 48% of FOB value.

Shipment limits:

- Corporate clients and NGOs: one small air shipment (less than 4 cbm) and one sea shipment may be exempted. Two air shipments or two sea shipments will not both be exempted.
- Returning Congolese citizens: only one sea OR one air shipment is allowed.

Food, alcohol, cleaning products: Cannot be exempted from duties and taxes and will be treated as merchandise. Only diplomats are exempted on these categories.

Documents

For Corporate Clients (Foreign Expatriates)

- Copy of valid passport (including pages showing name, visa, and DGM entry stamp)
- Detailed inventory in French, dated, valued, and signed by the shipper
- Original certificate of change of residence
- Work card
- First settlement certificate (Attestation de Première Installation, issued by DGM in the DRC)
- Service certificate or employment contract (supplied by the employer)
- Settlement visa (supplied by DGM in the DRC)
- Tax number (obtained from the Finance Ministry)

For NGO Personnel

- Copy of valid passport (including visa and DGM entry stamp)
- Detailed inventory in French, dated, valued, and signed by the shipper
- Framework contract (agreement between the government and the NGO specifying that the NGO can import personal effects)
- Ministerial agreement (between the relevant Ministry and the NGO, renewable every two years, specifying that the NGO can import personal effects)
- Ordinary settlement visa
- First settlement attestation (issued by DGM)
- Service certificate or employment contract
- Tax number (from Finance Ministry)

For Diplomats

- **Copy of valid passport (including visa and DGM entry stamp)**
- **Detailed inventory in French, dated, valued, and signed by the shipper**
- **Service certificate or employment contract**
- **Diplomatic visa**
- **Tax number of the Embassy**
- **VAT number of the Embassy**

For Returning Congolese Citizens

- **Copy of valid passport (including visa and DGM entry stamp). The original passport must be presented at Customs during clearance.**
- **Detailed inventory in French, dated, valued, and signed by the shipper**
- **Original certificate of change of residence issued by the DRC embassy in the country of origin**
- **End of service certificate issued by the employer at origin**

Household Goods — Specific Information

BIVAC pre-shipment inspection: If the declared value of items exceeds USD 2,500, a BIVAC (Bureau Veritas) inspection request is required. Without a BIVAC certificate, a fine of 100% of customs duties is imposed on top of the duties and taxes.

Personal property (including motor vehicles) imported by returning DRC residents is exempt from pre-shipment inspections per Trade.gov.

Document lead time: All original documents must reach the destination agent at least 15 days before the shipment's arrival for sea shipments, and 7 days for air shipments.

All shipments (air and sea) are generally subject to customs inspection.

DRC tariff structure: Three bands apply: 5% for equipment/raw materials; 10% for consumer food/industrial inputs/spare parts; 20% for clothing, furniture, cigarettes, finished products. Additional levies include: administrative fee (2% CIF), OCC fee (1.5% CIF), OGEFREM (0.58% CIF), FPI (2% CIF), BIVAC inspection fee (1.5% FOB). VAT is 16%.

GUICE electronic platform: All pre-customs clearances for imports, exports, and transit of goods at pilot sites in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Matadi, Goma, Boma, and Kisangani must be performed

electronically via <https://segucercd.com/>.

Sydonia World: The customs software system covers most customs offices and has reduced clearance times, though implementation remains incomplete across the country.

Currency: Congolese Franc (CDF). The U.S. dollar is widely used in parallel.

Language: French is the official language. All customs documentation must be in French.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Firearms and ammunition **PERMIT REQUIRED**
- Unlawful drugs
- Counterfeit goods
- Products from endangered species without CITES documentation **CITES**

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Items always subject to duties within household goods (even for exempt shipments):

- Food
- Alcohol (all alcohol is subject to import duties and taxes; only diplomats are exempt)
- Cleaning products
- Any items deemed commercial in nature

Traveler's duty-free allowances: Contact the destination agent for current personal baggage allowances.

Pre-shipment inspection required: For all imports valued at USD 2,500 FOB or more (via BIVAC). Without a BIVAC certificate, a 100% fine on customs duties applies.

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Vehicle registration card**
- **Declaration of value or purchase invoice (dated at least 6 months before the shipment's arrival; required for all customer categories)**

Specific Information

Vehicle exemption: One vehicle may be imported exempt from duties and taxes (alongside personal effects) if it arrives within 6 months of the shipper's arrival. A vehicle shipped alone (without personal effects) will NOT be exempted.

Duty rates for non-exempt vehicles: Taxes range from approximately 8% to 46% of CIF value, depending on age, weight, and engine power.

OBL requirements: The bill of lading must show chassis number, engine number, cubic capacity, year of manufacture, brand, and model.

Fiche Electronique: An electronic tracking form required for import documentation. The destination agent processes this.

Driving: Driving is on the right-hand side of the road.

Pets

Requirements

- **Veterinary health certificate stating the animal is free from ticks and has not been exposed to contagious diseases (issued within 15 days of import)**
- **Rabies vaccination certificate (current)**
- **Import permit from the DRC veterinary authority (confirm with destination agent)**

Specific Information

Health certificate timing: Must be issued within 15 days of import. Must state the animal is free from ticks and has not been exposed to contagious diseases.

Rabies vaccination: Required. The DRC is classified as a high-risk country for dog rabies by the CDC.

CDC re-entry implications: Dogs returning to the United States from the DRC must meet CDC requirements for dogs from high-risk countries. Obtain the Certification of U.S.-Issued Rabies Vaccination form before departing the U.S.

Veterinary services: Extremely limited outside Kinshasa. Complete all vaccinations and treatments before travel.

USDA APHIS: No DRC-specific pet travel page exists on the APHIS website. For pets originating from the U.S., consult the APHIS "Pet Travel: Unknown Requirements" page and contact the DRC

veterinary authority through the destination agent.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially regarding the 6-month exemption window and BIVAC requirements.

6-month exemption window is critical. If the shipment does not arrive within 6 months of the shipper's arrival, it loses exempt status entirely and is treated as a commercial import at approximately 48% FOB. This is the single most important deadline.

Vehicle must accompany personal effects. A vehicle shipped alone will not receive the duty exemption. It must be part of the same import as the household goods.

Document lead time: 15 days for sea, 7 days for air. Late documents mean late clearance and additional storage charges.

French-language inventory required: Detailed, valued, dated, and signed by the shipper in French.

Ports of entry: The primary sea port is Matadi (on the Congo River, approximately 350 km from Kinshasa). Air freight arrives at N'djili International Airport (FIH) in Kinshasa. Other major entry points include Lubumbashi (for shipments from southern Africa via Zambia), Goma, and Kisangani.

Transit from Matadi to Kinshasa: Overland road transport, approximately 350 km. Road conditions vary; allow additional time.

Security environment: The U.S. State Department issues a Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) advisory for the DRC, with Level 4 (Do Not Travel) for North and South Kivu provinces due to armed conflict, terrorism, and kidnapping. Security conditions directly affect logistics in eastern DRC.

Airport departure fees: All departing international travelers must pay official fees when checking in (approximately \$55 for international flights, \$10 for domestic). Unofficial "fee" demands from immigration and security personnel have been reported.

Corruption risk: The DRC remains a challenging customs environment. Unofficial demands for payments, delays, and arbitrary interpretations of regulations are documented risks. The destination agent's local relationships and experience are essential.

Cultural & Other Information

- **OpenFactBook (replaces CIA World Factbook):** <https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/drc/>
- **Wikipedia:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo
- **U.S. State Department -- DRC:** <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/DemocraticRepublicoftheCongoDRC.html>
- **U.S. Embassy Kinshasa:** <https://cd.usembassy.gov/>
- **U.S. Trade.gov -- DRC:** <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-customs-regulations>
- **Foreign Embassies in DRC:** <http://www.embassy.org/embassies/zr.html>
- **GUICE Platform:** <https://segucerdc.com/>
- **CDC -- High-Risk Countries for Dog Rabies:** <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/high-risk-countries.html>

Key country facts: The DRC is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest in Africa overall. The capital is Kinshasa, the largest city in Africa by population. French is the official language. The DRC is a member of COMESA and SADC. The currency is the Congolese Franc (CDF), though the U.S. dollar circulates widely. The country has vast mineral wealth but faces persistent challenges including conflict, corruption, and underdeveloped infrastructure. Large parts of eastern DRC are affected by armed conflict.

Important notes for movers: The DRC is one of the most challenging operational environments in the IAM network. The 6-month exemption window is the critical deadline: miss it and the entire shipment reverts to approximately 48% FOB duties. The BIVAC requirement for shipments over USD 2,500 adds a compliance step that, if missed, triggers a 100% penalty on top of duties. Food and alcohol are never exempt (except for diplomats). Clearance times are long (3-5 weeks for sea), and corruption adds unpredictable costs and delays. The vehicle must be shipped with the personal effects to qualify for exemption. The destination agent's expertise is indispensable.

Quick Links & Resources

- **Find Movers in DRC**
<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the%20Congo&lat=-4.4419&lng=15.2663&range=50&assocs=800&fw=c&ctry=Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the%20Congo>

- [Foreign Embassies in DRC](http://www.embassy.org/embassies/zr.html)
<http://www.embassy.org/embassies/zr.html>
- [U.S. Embassy in DRC \(Kinshasa\)](https://cd.usembassy.gov/)
<https://cd.usembassy.gov/>
- [U.S. State Department -- DRC](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/DemocraticRepublicoftheCongoDRC.html)
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/DemocraticRepublicoftheCongoDRC.html>
- [OpenFactBook \(replaces CIA World Factbook\)](https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/drc/)
<https://www.openfactbook.org/countries/drc/>
- [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo
- [U.S. Trade.gov -- DRC Import Requirements](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-import-requirements-and-documentation)
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-import-requirements-and-documentation>
- [U.S. Trade.gov -- DRC Customs Regulations](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-customs-regulations)
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-customs-regulations>
- [U.S. Trade.gov -- DRC Import Tariffs](https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-import-tariffs)
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-import-tariffs>
- [GUICE Electronic Platform](https://segucerdc.com/)
<https://segucerdc.com/>
- [PetTravel.com -- DRC](https://www.pettravel.com/information/pet-passports/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-pet-import-requirements/)
<https://www.pettravel.com/information/pet-passports/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-pet-import-requirements/>
- [VisaHQ -- DRC Customs](https://www.visahq.com/democratic-republic-of-congo/customs/)
<https://www.visahq.com/democratic-republic-of-congo/customs/>
- [CDC -- High-Risk Countries for Dog Rabies](https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/high-risk-countries.html)
<https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/high-risk-countries.html>