



A HOW-TO GUIDE by Meeting Professionals International

Shipping Best Practices

A how-to-guide for on-time,
in-budget and intact package
deliveries for your events

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WHETHER YOUR EVENT IS TAKING PLACE domestically or internationally, you will likely have some shipping needs. Making sure that your materials arrive on time and in good condition are especially important for events as even a delay of a few days can mean having to make due without them for your entire program.

Here's your guide to ensuring that your materials arrive on-time, in-budget and intact for your next event.

Service Providers, Roles and Responsibilities

For domestic meetings, trade shows and events, Jayson Haynes, managing director of hospitality and convention operations at FedEx Office Office has the following advice: "Check to see if your venue has an onsite business center provider with pack and ship services that can manage your packages—from small parcels to pallets. Look for providers that can streamline inbound, outbound and after-hours shipping that can track on property and not just to the property.

Get to know some of the different service providers, their roles and how they work together to help get shipments to locations around the world.

- **Freight Forwarder:** A freight forwarder manages the logistics of moving goods to your events. Freight forwarders often specialize in certain areas such as produce, livestock, heavy machinery or even special events. Working with a freight forwarder that specializes in meetings, conventions and special events generally means they understand the needs of your particular shipment. Freight forwarders typically don't own their own equipment and instead have strong working relationships with a variety of carriers, couriers and airlines. One advantage

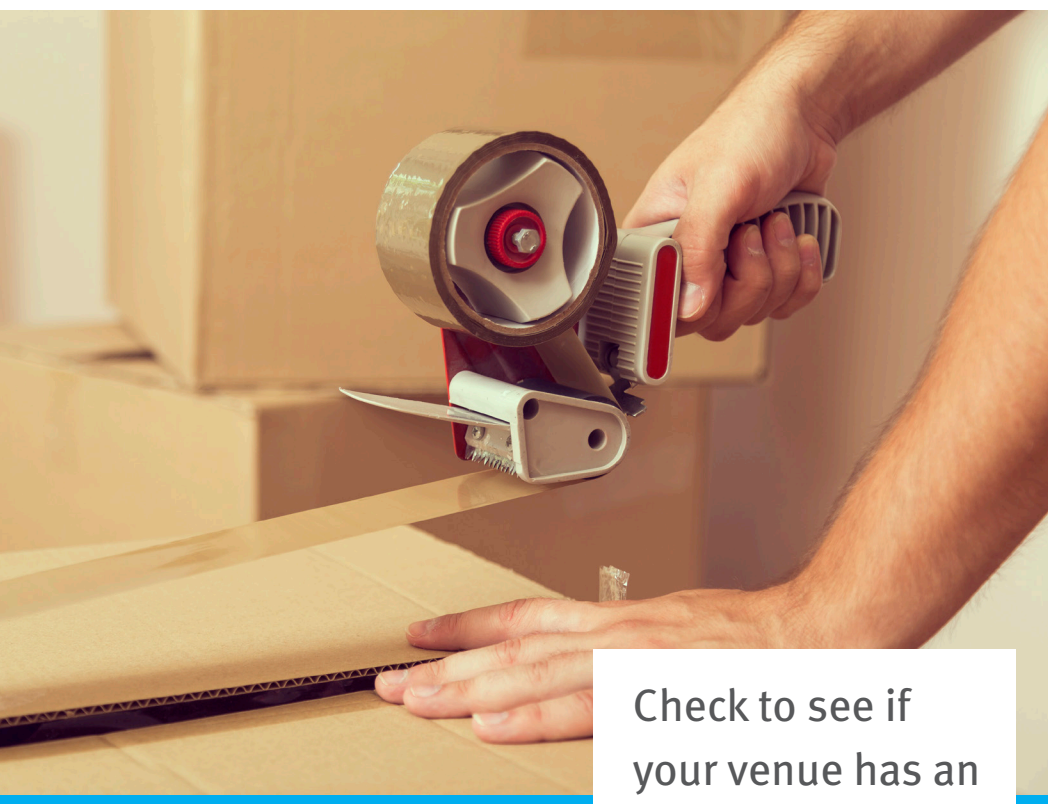
only shipping to where their equipment is scheduled to go and when it is scheduled to go there. Shipping options can also be limited on size, depending on the type of equipment the carrier has, such as vans, truck or planes.

- **Courier:** Traditionally, couriers specialize in small-parcel, overnight deliveries. They are typically asset-based, meaning that own their vehicles and equipment. In some cases, couriers may also act as freight forwarders and arrange the transport of goods on other carriers to meet their client needs.
- **Customs Broker:** A customs broker is engaged when your goods need to cross international borders. The services of a customs broker can be arranged directly, or by your freight forwarder

or carrier on your behalf. The customs broker's primary role is to manage the import and export of goods to and from a country. They will typically work on behalf of the local government to assess any duties or taxes. As with freight forwarders, customs brokers also specialize in specific areas such as meetings and conventions.

Paul Griggs, a vice president at Informa, manages conferences and events worldwide—including Cargo Logistics Canada, held annually in Vancouver. He shares the following recommendations for working with freight forwarders, couriers, carriers and customs brokers.

- *When to work with a freight forwarder:* For events with significant shipping needs, the most logical approach is to work with a freight forwarder who specializes in the type of event you are managing, and someone who has established relationships in that destination. Ideally, this is a freight forwarder with offices in the city where your event is being held as well as regionally in some key markets from where your shipments are originating. They can typically arrange for your goods to be picked up from your office (or other departure point) and deliver them to your venue using a combination of couriers, carriers and customs brokers to meet the needs of your shipment.
- *Appointing and working with an official supplier:* To ensure your exhibitors and partners have early buy in to your event, having a network of suppliers ready to help them is critical. Shipping and customs is no exception. Particularly when planning a program outside of your country, appointing an official broker or forwarder years in front of the show can help the sales process by ensuring exhibitors and sponsors are excited to ship into the region. Often these suppliers can help in your year-prior, giving information to potential exhibitors and partners on shipping to the event next year. The appointed supplier must have a critical understanding of the events industry, the program and the country in which the program is being held. In some cases, exhibitors may have preferred rates and relationships with their own suppliers and may opt to use these rather than the appointed carrier; this is welcome providing their carriers can follow the needs of your event. Some general services contractors or display contractors may also offer shipping services and can provide shipping support for your program.
- *Using an advance warehouse:* In some areas the appointed freight forwarder,



of working with a freight forwarder is flexibility. Depending on your needs, a freight forwarder can select from a variety of shipping options from its vast network of suppliers. It can also select options if you need your delivery at a particular time, including weekends and after-work hours.

- **Carrier:** A carrier is an asset-based company as it generally own its own equipment. It fills loads with a variety of customer goods, including those from freight forwarders. It can be cost effective to work directly with a carrier, and it gives you direct control over the selection of transport. Working directly does have limitations though, including

Check to see if your venue has an onsite business center provider with pack and ship services that can manage your packages—from small parcels to pallets.

general services contractor or display contractor will offer advance warehousing services. This means that goods may be shipped in advance of the event using the appointed carrier or a carrier/courier selected by the shipper to a warehouse where it is stored until the official move-in time for the event. Benefits of using an advance warehouse are that it allows you to leverage the official supplier's knowledge and flexible working hours and your own relationship and negotiated rates with your preferred carrier or courier. Using an advance warehouse also means that your exhibitors can ship well in ahead of the program, clear customs where necessary and be prepared for on-time delivery

- *Working with a customs broker:* If you're planning a meeting with significant shipping needs in a foreign destination, use a customs broker that specializes in your destination and in meetings and events. A customs broker can also provide education to your exhibitors the year before your event to help build "shipping confidence" for your show. The customs broker should be aware of any incentives for events or duty and tax exemptions for temporary imports and exports.
- *Saving money on duties and taxes:* While generally, the duty and tax tariffs are not negotiable, savings may be possible by making better decisions on what to ship internationally and by working with a customs broker who under-

stands the unique shipping requirements of events and how to enter the goods strategically to save duty and tax. Keep in mind that duties are based on the manufacturers' value (not the retail value) of goods, and the type of commodity. In some cases, the fee for contracting a customs broker may not be cost effective based on the value of the goods and estimated duties that will be applied to them. Your destination marketing organization (DMO) or convention and visitor bureau (CVB) may be able to recommend customs brokers with experience in the meeting industry.

- *Arranging material handling:* The final piece of the shipping puzzle is material handling (sometimes referred to as drayage). For exhibitions and trade shows, this involves moving materials from the venue's loading dock to the exhibitor's stand or booth. Delivery of goods to the booth may be done directly by the courier or carrier in some areas around the world. However, in North America, material handling is typically offered by the General Services Contractor or Display Contractor. Rates are typically based on weight and not on piece count.
- *Tracking your goods:* To increase the odds of goods getting to their destination, track them every day. Tracking your goods directly is recommended for each stage of delivery (to the advance warehouse, to the venue, to the stand). While ideally your service providers

should be able to provide tracking services for you, you are always in better shape when you track it yourself. In some cases, you may need to rely on the bill of lading (the contract between the freight carrier and shipper) with a piece count that can be provided by your courier/carrier to the warehouse or venue. Bringing this document with you to the show can be helpful if the goods are not immediately located.

- *When to use an ATA Carnet:* An ATA Carnet is like a passport for your goods to protect them from duties and taxes. It is an international customs export-import document for goods that will be re-exported. You should consider one when you are shipping high-value goods—such as audiovisual or production equipment that is traveling around to different parts of the world on a regular basis.
- *How to save on shipping costs:* Shipping costs are generally based on four things: distance, size, speed and weight. Anytime you can reduce any of these variables, you'll be able to save costs. It can be cost effective to ship display components from show-to-show—rather than back and forth from your office to save on shipping and wear and tear. This can take some pre-planning, but you might find the cost savings worth it. Your freight forwarder may be able to arrange inter-show storage, or this may be available through advance warehousing services for your next event.

GETTING STARTED WITH SHIPPING

Below are some general guidelines to help you prepare shipments for your next event.

Confirm delivery and pickup times	In many cases, events will have specific times when items may be delivered. Confirm in advance if your courier or carrier will be able to work within these hours. Many trade shows and exhibitions will also have options for advance shipments (where materials are received and stored locally for a pre-determined amount of time before the event) or direct shipments (where materials are delivered to the event location). Direct shipments run the risk of not being received on time, and may have a lower priority for delivery to your booth. If your venue has onsite business center providers that handle packing and shipping, consult with them early to find out about money-saving options.
Arrange for package signing	Signing for packages represents more than just acknowledging receipt—it also may signify the end of the carrier's responsibility for those packages. As such, it may be advisable to arrange for the delivery when you can be there to inspect them personally, as hotel or venue staff may not be able to identify if they have been received in good condition. Clearly numbering your packages (for example, 1 of 10) can help the person signing for the packages know if they have all been received. Some onsite providers handle the parcel inspection when the packages are received at the property. They also document any damage to shipments upon arrival.

Know if additional insurance is needed	When sending shipments, it's important to know the amount of insurance coverage that is included. Insurance offered by your carrier may be restricted in when it applies, or it may be based on the weight of the item and not the value of the contents. If this is the case, confirm if the contents are covered by your current insurance, or if additional insurance may be required. You should also be aware of any deadlines for reporting damages to your goods.
Know where your deliveries will be received	In addition to knowing the address of the venue, you should know if there is a specific loading dock area, hours when it is available and any restrictions that may apply. For example, the loading dock may not be available to attendees who hand-deliver materials in their personal vehicles.
Follow event shipping guidelines	Many events, especially those with an exhibition or trade show, will have specific guidelines and labeling instructions. These should be followed exactly to avoid unnecessary delays. Check your property website for specific labeling and shipping instructions.
Keep a detailed list of your packages, tracking numbers and a description of each	In case of delays it can be very helpful to be able to describe your packages. By keeping an itemized list of your packages, including the items in each, a description (size, color, shape) and tracking numbers, you may expedite finding them. For added convenience and ease of delivery, some onsite shipping providers keep your parcels together when multiple pallets and packages arrive onsite.
Know your fees	When it comes to shipping materials to an event, there can be many unexpected costs. Prior to shipping, know if there will be customs and duties applied to your goods, if there will be storage fees at the venue or if material handling fees will be required to deliver them to your space. You should also confirm fees for completing forms by your freight forwarder, carrier or customs broker. Tip: Find out in advance if fees apply per package or by total volume. There may be savings in shipping, handling and custom brokerage fees by pallet wrapping your boxes together. Often, when the property has an onsite shipping provider, pallets and parcels can be sent directly to the property saving you money.
Decide if handcarrying is a reasonable option	In some cases, hand-carrying items with your luggage may be an option for last minute shipments. Keep in mind that these items are still subject to customs and duties if you are crossing a border, and this may result in delays if you have not properly completed the necessary paperwork. Be aware of the availability of assistance onsite to move packages, if needed, and of any airline weight restrictions.

International Shipping Recommendations

As part of a global industry, meeting professionals often need to temporarily or permanently import items for an event. Following proper protocols is key to ensuring your event materials are not detained in customs.

"With international shipping, packing and preparing your shipments correctly is one of the most important steps you can take to protect your events from wasted costs, missed deadlines and customer complaints" according to Jayson Haynes, managing director of hospitality and convention operations for FedEx Office.

Understanding the requirements for customs and duties to your destination

and back to your home country should be made early in the event planning process. In particular, if your event is usually held domestically and includes several exhibitors who may need to ship materials to the event location, working with a customs broker to develop guidance and recommended timelines will be valuable for ensuring a successful program.

Before making the decision to ship materials for any program, it's important to first decide if it makes more sense to purchase, produce or rent those items at the destination. This could save money, reduce potential delays through customs and may also save costs from shipping and duties. As added incentive, Paul Griggs of Informa says that buying locally "reduces your carbon footprint and can stimulate the

local economy—giving back to the cities in which we hold our events."

Recommended items to purchase locally.

- Food items should always be purchased locally.
- Items that may have high duties to import to the destination or to return to the home country. Confirm these items with a customs broker in advance.
- In some cases, printing materials and signage onsite can help guarantee on-time delivery and avoid the financial and environmental costs of shipping. If your event locations have onsite business centers, they are likely to be familiar with the best placement and sizes for signage. (For more information on signage best practices, see MPI's white paper "Signs for the Times.") If you are

printing locally, you will need to make arrangements for proofing materials. Onsite business centers often provide digital proofs.

In addition to producing locally, you may want to consider if materials can be replaced with alternative formats. For example, building in program guides and sponsor or exhibitor information into an event app eliminates shipping, and can add valuable functionality such as data analytics.

Once you've determined the items that need to be shipped, here are simple steps to help you prepare your international shipments.

Step 1: Check shipping restrictions to your destination country

The first step to shipping internationally is to make sure you can legally ship your items. As mentioned above, shipping considerations should be determined early in the planning process. Depending on where

companies and entities that either require additional screening or may be prohibited from receiving foreign exports.

Tip: If you represent a foreign organization that is planning an international event in Canada, you may qualify for a "Border to Show" option that allows for expedited border crossing, as well as customs duty-free entry of some items and you may also be able to reclaim taxes paid for goods and services. Visit the Canadian Border Services Agency website for more information.

Step 2: Prepare your customs documents

Accurate documentation is essential to international shipping and customs clearance. Save yourself valuable time by ensuring you have all the information you need on hand when you're filling out customs documents. Paul Griggs from Informa says "a good customs broker that specializes in your event should be able to complete most of these documents for you—and at the very least assist you in completing them.

In my experience, errors in paperwork are the leading cause of delays with international shipping. Too often, these important documents are completed by people who may not be familiar with them. A good broker or freight forwarder needs to help you and your exhibitors with this process."

According to Haynes at FedEx Office, "many countries allow tax relief (either duties and tax exemption upon entry or a refund after exportation) for items that are temporarily imported or exported, as long as certain conditions are met and procedures are followed." For U.S.-originating pack-

ages, Haynes also recommends that you "make sure to keep the export invoices (on company letterhead) evidencing shipment from U.S., export bills of lading (copies) evidencing export from the U.S. and import invoices (on company letterhead) evidencing shipment to U.S., as your materials may qualify for duty-free status as a U.S. Made Good Returned. Make sure that the items have not been improved or changed in any

way at the trade show."

Tip: Keep copies of all of your customs documents to make it easier to resend them if needed

Step 3: Determine your broker

A customs broker is "an expert in the nuances of customs rules and can act as an agent to ensure the goods enter the country legally and with minimal delay." Some, but not all, freight forwarders offer customs broker services. Ideally, your customs broker should have experience and knowledge of shipping for meetings and events, and for the type of industry your event represents. Import and export requirements can vary by industry, and an understanding of the time-sensitive nature of events is critical. As well, brokers should have knowledge of practices in the country of export and the country of import to assist you in avoiding delays and minimizing duties or taxes. Your broker should also be able to assist you in the appropriate time zones for your event's location.

Step 4: Pick the best service for your needs

Depending on size and volume, your shipment may qualify as a package or as freight. You will also have a choice of method of transportation for your shipment. Depending on lead times and budget, one may be preferable. See below for considerations. If you working with freight forwarders, they will make recommendations on the most suitable option for you event's needs. In some cases couriers have special arrangements with governments to bring in "Low Value Goods" with little to no import duty and tax.

Ground

- Suitable when sufficient time is available
- Typically used for domestic or in-continent shipments
- Expect costs to be lower than air

Air

- Typically the fastest option
- Usually the highest-priced option, although it may be less than ocean shipments as prices are calculated differently (air is a combination of weight and size, while ocean is calculated by container size)

Ocean

- Suitable only when sufficient time is available (four-to-six weeks or longer depending on the destination)
- On-time deliveries can be difficult to guarantee
- May require ground transportation from the port to your destination
- May be more affordable and environmentally preferable than air



With international shipping, packing and preparing your shipments correctly is one of the most important steps you can take to protect your events from wasted costs, missed deadlines customer complaints

you want to ship items, there might be certain restrictions as to what kinds of materials can be accepted and how your shipment needs to be prepared. If your event will have specific regulations for imports and exports, such as with medical or dental samples or large electronics, discuss your needs with a customs broker at the same time as site selection. Remember to check with your customs broker for individuals,

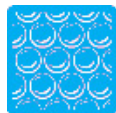
Step 5: Get started shipping

Now that you're ready to send your items, follow packaging and labeling suggestions in the Pack Like a Pro – Basic Guidelines and Labeling – Best Practices sections of this paper to help your shipment arrive safely.

Step 6: Track your shipment online

Once your shipment is on its way, track the progress and know who to call if there are any delays. This includes knowing how to reach your customs broker for international shipments and contacts at the destination. Tracking every day is the best way to avoid surprises and make contingency plans if needed.

Pack Like a Pro: Basic guidelines



Cushioning. Choose cushioning of appropriate density and thickness and use enough to fill all void spaces in your shipping container. When returning from the show, the onsite business center can pack smaller items for you.



Boxing. Select an appropriate container that is large enough to accommodate the thickness of cushioning material.



Sealing. Apply at least three strips of packing tape (no duct or masking tape) to the top and bottom sides of the container using an H taping method.



Labeling. Place the shipping label with the recipient's full address on the most visible side of the container away from any folds or seams.

Some products have specific packing requirements such as flowers, perishable items and clinical samples. For detailed information, see the guides available here: www.FedEx.com/vg/tools/packaging.html. The guides contain information on how to pack a wide range of items that you might need for your next event, from computer equipment to artwork. They also contain handy tips such as these.

- **Printers:** Remove printing cartridges before shipping, and place cartridges inside a sealed plastic bag to prevent ink or powder from leaking into the box. Tape moving parts such as doors and print heads to secure them during transit. Remove any paper trays and pack them separately.
- **Stringed Musical instruments:** Loosen the tension on the strings to remove the stress on the neck of the instrument.

LABELING BEST PRACTICES

Use International symbols for package handling	You're likely already familiar with the wine glass that is the international symbol for fragile and handle with care, but did you know that there is an ISO standard for all types of packaging handling? These include symbols for hazardous items, top, use no hooks, keep away from heat (solar radiation), keep dry and many others. Your freight forwarder should provide these symbols for you.
Use two shipping labels on each package	This will help your package arrive even if one label falls off, is damaged or is stacked in a way that it isn't easily readable. Alternatively, consider using luggage tags if the labels do not easily adhere to the surface.
Number your boxes	As mentioned previously, including a count (for example, 1 of 10) on your packages will help keep them together. Keep an itemized list of the contents of each box so that you can make alternate arrangements if they are delayed.
Include a phone number on your packages	This should be a number that will be answered 24 hours a day, or, at a minimum, during business hours, at the destination for your packages. Remember that this number will likely only be used if there is an emergency with your shipment, so including your cell phone number is a good idea.
Reuse your containers, not your labels	Reusing your durable shipping containers and boxes is great for the environment—just remember to remove old labels. Also, keep in mind that cardboard boxes offer limited protection from damage and water. Soft-sided rubber containers with secure lids may be preferable to clear containers that may crack in cold storage conditions..

Improving your environmental performance

Tom Bowman, president of Bowman Change and author of *The Green Edge: How Sustainability Can Help Exhibit and Meeting Planners Save Money and Build Stronger Brands*, outlines a number of best practices for improving the environmental footprint of your event shipping. Bowman's recommendations include the following.

- Use a show-to-show route instead of going back and forth between events to reduce costs and carbon emissions.
- Although shipping lighter items can improve the carbon footprint, there is a greater impact from reducing the size of the shipment, as it allows for packing more items into fewer trucks.
- For U.S.-based shipments, look for shipping companies that use the voluntary

Smart-Way program from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Still wondering if weight or size makes the most impact? One of the strongest examples of the benefits of reducing the size of shipping packages is from IKEA. By using space-saving flat packs, IKEA can fit six times the number of pieces in each truckload, significantly reducing shipping costs.

Other ways of improving your environmental impact include the following.

- Use durable, reusable and stackable containers for shipping your items. Store them for returning your items, and confirm that there is a dry storage area to keep them.
- Donate any leftover materials after your event rather than shipping or discarding them.

Case Study: Circular Economy and Onsite Donations

An important and growing business practice is life-cycle planning for your products. The circular economy approach looks at minimizing waste by re-incorporating materials into the economy. From an event perspective, we often have leftover materials after an event that could be recycled, re-purposed or donated. If you are able to reuse the items for future events, shipping them to your next event is ideal, but what do you do with other items? While recycling has been a focus for many events, more and more are looking to donate items.

Pranav Jampani, head of sustainability at

The Venetian, The Palazzo and Sands Expo, shares how his organization simplified onsite donations from trade shows.

When companies host events in Las Vegas, thousands of products are packaged and shipped for the event. The goal of The Venetian, The Palazzo and Sands Expo has always been to transform waste into community outreach. To reduce the amount of valuable items going to waste, partnerships have been established with several non-profit organizations to repurpose and reuse commonly discarded materials. We always encourage exhibitors and show organizers to participate in our comprehensive Materials Donation Program to donate their show items such as office supplies, promotional

materials from booths, etc., that they don't plan on shipping back so we can give them to a local charity on their behalf. In doing so, they reduce shipping costs as well as carbon emissions from transportation. We distribute items throughout a network of local charities based on the type of materials they donate. This is a great way to save money, save the environment and help the community. If the exhibitors are interested in donating their items, it's a very simple process. They visit the Sands Expo Business Center to pick up donation stickers and place the stickers on the items for donation and our outreach team will pick them up at their convenience or at end of the event. This is only one initiative of our comprehensive Sands ECO360 sustainability program.

APPENDIX A: TERMINOLOGY

The following definitions are reproduced, with permission, from the Convention Industry Council Glossary, 2016 Edition.

TERM	CIC GLOSSARY DEFINITION
ATA Carnet	An international customs document that permits duty-free and tax-free temporary import of goods for up to one year. It eliminates or reduces value-added taxes (VAT) charges, customs fees and bond fees. The acronym "ATA" represents the French/English words "Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission." ATA carnets cover commercial samples, professional equipment and goods for presentation or use at trade fairs, shows, exhibitions, etc. Items not covered are consumable or disposable goods that will not be returned home.
Bill of Lading (B/L)	A document that establishes the terms of a contract between a shipper and a transportation company under which freight is to be moved between specified points for a specified charge. It serves as a document of title, a contract of carriage and a receipt of goods.
Broker	A non-asset based transportation provider that sells transportation services for commercial shippers. Brokers commonly use freight forwarders.
Carnet	A customs document permitting the holder to carry or send merchandise temporarily into certain foreign countries (for display, demonstration or similar purposes) without paying duties or posting bonds.
Certificate of Origin	A document, required by certain countries for tariff purposes, certifying as to the country of origin of specified goods.
Common Carrier	Transportation company that handles materials; an agency or business that is available to the public for transportation of persons or goods, usually referring to freight transportation on regularly scheduled trucks or airplanes.

Consular Declaration	A formal statement describing goods to be shipped, filed with and approved by the consul of the country of destination prior to shipment.
Consular Invoice	A document, required by some countries, describing a shipment of goods and showing information such as the consignor, consignee, and value of the shipment. Certified by a consular official of the foreign country, it is used by that country's customs officials to verify the value, quantity and nature of the shipment.
Contract Carrier	Trucking company that enters into a specific contract with a shipper to transport goods for an agreed-upon price. Contained within the contract are all the terms and conditions, liability, transit times, etc.
Countervailing Duty	An import duty imposed to offset export grants, bounties or subsidies paid to foreign suppliers in certain countries by the governments of those countries as an incentive to exports.
Country of Origin	A person's country of natural birth or citizenship; an item's country of manufacture, production or agricultural growth.
Customs Broker	An individual or company that is licensed by the government to enter and clear goods through customs.
Export License	A government document that permits the "licensee" to engage in the export of designated goods to certain destinations.
Freight Forwarder	A third-party logistics provider that handles export shipments for customers using common carriers.
Freight on Board (FOB)	When something is purchased "FOB," the seller pays for transportation of the goods to the port of shipment, plus loading costs, while the buyer pays the cost of marine freight transport, insurance, unloading and transportation from the arrival port to the final destination.
Temporary Import	Exhibition material whose temporary import status exempts payment of duties and taxes on arrival.
Temporary Import Bond	The surety covering articles imported into a country on a temporary basis, generally in lieu of paying import duties and/or taxes. The fee for the bond is non-refundable in most cases.

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Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. Founded in 1972, the organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry. MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals including more than 17,000 engaged members and the Plan Your Meetings non-traditional meeting planner audience. It has more than 90 chapters and clubs in 24 countries.

For additional information, visit www.mpiweb.org.

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