

## Importing a vehicle - Overview

Importing a car, motorcycle, truck or trailer isn't difficult, though it's made easy and safe when you understand the regulations and process. The information following is an overview of the rules, regulations and procedures for shipping a car to Australia, as at March 2020. If you're considering the shipment of a vehicle we suggest checking with us for specific information on your particular vehicle than we can include in this overview.

### **Understand the steps, regulations and pitfalls:**

Successfully importing anything is series of steps from the initial want or need through to picking it up in Australia on arrival. Following are the basic steps for a vehicle so as to minimise cost, and avoid disaster:

- 1) **Homework.** Understanding ALL the steps and costs from buying the car through to shipping BEFORE you bid/pay for it. This will save money, time and effort later in the process.
- 2) **Shipping agent.** Choosing an experienced forwarder like **EDI** will ensure you're in good hands from the start.
- 3) **Import Permit.** A valid import permit is vital. Shipping without it will result in the vehicle being refused entry, shipped back or confiscated/destroyed **EDI** can help with the permit application.
- 4) **Air conditioning.** The Australian Government has strict regulations on air conditioning systems. We can assist with details of what, if anything is required for our vehicle
- 5) **Asbestos declaration.** The Australian Government do not allow the import of any vehicles or parts that contain asbestos.
- 6) **Customs Import Duty and Taxes.** Import GST, Duty and Luxury Car Tax can add significantly to the total cost. It's important to understand what taxes you will face on arrival.
- 7) **Quarantine.** All used vehicles are inspected by Quarantine on arrival so where possible ensure the car is as clean as possible.
- 8) **Insurance.** Your items are not automatically insured while in transit. We can help with Marine Insurance for all risks in the (unlikely) event of damage or loss.
- 9) **Registration in Australia.** Your vehicle will require some level of compliance certification before it can be registered. Know the rules to avoid disappointment on arrival.
- 10) **Shipping documents.** It's important you have complete and correct documentation before shipment. Documents are required for the Customs clearance processes at both ends.
- 11) **Shipping** – the process and timeframes

In the following pages we have expanded on these points to give you a better understanding of each and how it may affect you. If you're considering importing we recommend reading this and contacting us for further information as there's (far) more to importing than we can put into an overview.

## 1) Homework

A good understanding of the regulations and processes for the shipment of your vehicle before you purchase/ship it is vital. Much of what you need to know is on the web and contained in the following links:

[www.ediinternational.com.au](http://www.ediinternational.com.au)

[http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle\\_regulation/bulletin/importing\\_vehicles/index.aspx](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle_regulation/bulletin/importing_vehicles/index.aspx)

These links and the following information will give you the guidelines on how to import and what can be imported - and tips on what not to do. We have been importing vehicles for close to 25 years and can help with information or answers to any questions you may have.

## 2) Choice of shipping agent (freight forwarder)

Choosing **EDI** to handle your shipping will ensure you have a partner working with you from the beginning. Experience, passion, financial security and an easy-to-do-business with attitude should be items high on the check list for any decision on who you have on your side. **EDI** specialise in cars, bikes, parts, boats, trailers, and all manners of cargo 'normal' freight forwarders and Customs brokers can't or won't handle. **EDI's** a strong privately owned Australian international freight forwarder so you can be confident you're working with a secure and professional organisation. Our name and reputation mean the world to us, and making your experience a great one is our goal. Around the world we work with agents specialising in vehicles and have access to Roll-On-Roll-Off services for larger vehicles and motor homes and container services cars, motorcycles and parts. A large proportion of our clients are repeat customers who have enjoyed our services in the past and can give you references if you would like them. Call us and see just how easy importing can be when you chose the right partner.

## 3) Import Permit

Every vehicle, new or used, must have a valid import permit for it to enter Australia, and in some ways its similar to a valid passport and entry visa. A vehicle arriving without an import permit is a disaster we do not want anyone to encounter so please contact us for more details in relation to your vehicle.

The Government have a number of schemes under which vehicles can enter Australia. These are:

### **25 Year Rule:**

This scheme allows private and business importers to apply to import vehicles that are made 25 years ago or more. There are rules within this scheme that allow only standard unmodified vehicles to enter. We can help with advice and information on any vehicle you may be interested in bringing home.

### **Personal Import Scheme:**

This scheme allows people to import a vehicle if they have lived overseas and owned a vehicle for a minimum of 12 consecutive months. This scheme is designed for Australian returning from living overseas and want to bring their car home. The key to the scheme is you must live overseas and have access to the vehicle for the full 12 months, or more.

## **Import Permit - continued**

### ***Changes to Import schemes – 2019:***

The Federal Government have released information on changes they plan to make for 2018/19. The changes, if they come into play, will change the current Pre '89 schemes fixed date of 1-1-1989 to a rolling 25 years. There are other changes mentioned and details can be found at the following web link:

[http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/mv\\_standards\\_act/index.aspx](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/mv_standards_act/index.aspx)

Regretfully the Government have decided not to go ahead with changes allowing a person to import a new righthand drive vehicle from markets such as the UK and Japan.

### ***Trailers:***

This scheme allows for the applicant to apply to import a caravan, boat trailer, box trailer and the like. Please note that the maximum allowable width on Australian roads is 2.5m (8ft 2.5inches)

The link below will bring up the current import application forms for vehicles, Personal imports and Small Trailers schemes:

[http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle\\_regulation/bulletin/importing\\_vehicles/general/Application.aspx](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle_regulation/bulletin/importing_vehicles/general/Application.aspx) An import permit is not a guarantee it can be registered – please call us for details.

### ***RAWS – Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme:***

The RAWS scheme allows approved workshops to apply on your behalf to import vehicles made on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> 1989. There are a very limited number of vehicles that can be imported under this scheme. The following link will allow you to search for approved vehicles and the relevant RAWS:

<http://raws.infrastructure.gov.au/rawswebpublic/RAWPubSearch.asp>

***Please contact us BEFORE purchasing a vehicle to ensure the vehicle you want can be imported!***

### ***Road Vehicle Standards (RVS) – interim arrangements***

RVS replaces the Motor Vehicle Standards Act of 1989 and was to come into effect December 10<sup>th</sup> 2019 though its implementation, in full, has been delayed till July 2021. Some facets of the new regulations have been implemented, on an interim basis, that will allow for the import approval of vehicles based on variance to existing vehicles, performance, rarity, environmental, mobility, motorhomes and left hand drive vehicles not available as right hand drive from the manufacturer. The regulations and details behind each are complex so please contact us or you can check the following links:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/rvs/>

[https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/files/Guidance\\_SEVs\\_Interim\\_Measures.pdf](https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/files/Guidance_SEVs_Interim_Measures.pdf)

## **4) Air Conditioning**

Air conditioning gases and systems are controlled by the Government as a signatory to numerous conventions on ozone depleting and greenhouse gasses. Air conditioning system regulations changed on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 when the Government when banned the import of any CFC or HCFC gasses AND equipment designed to run on those gasses. Older R12 or R22 air conditioning systems, like those fitted to many older car, vans and trailers are now banned unless they are converted to R134A which we can help with. Please contact us for more information

## 5) Asbestos

In 2006 the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (Customs) added motor vehicles to the list of imported items they now profile / check for asbestos. The import of any items containing asbestos was banned from 1st January 2004 and Customs now require all Customs Brokers to answer a yes or no question when lodging the Customs Import Declaration for motor vehicles:

### **Do the goods contain asbestos?**

The challenge for vehicle importers is asbestos was used in brake pads/shoes, clutch plates and in some engine and exhaust gaskets and in many countries, but not all, asbestos in these parts was phased out more than 10 years ago. Importing asbestos, knowingly or unknowingly comes at a horrible cost to the importer so we have developed solutions to enable at risk vehicles to be checked and for those parts to be removed. Asbestos is nasty and keeping it out is incredibly important but it isn't an insurmountable problem - there are solutions available to getting your vehicle into the country.

## 6) Customs Clearance, Import Duty and Taxes

All vehicles entering Australia are subject to import taxes, regardless of the length of ownership or the age of the vehicle. The import taxes are:

### **GST:**

Vehicle/Items imported attract a 10% GST on arrival and. The GST is calculated on the cost of the vehicle plus any inland transport overseas, plus the shipping costs, plus the insurance cost. GST is based on the total cost of the car landed in Australia, not just the purchase price of the car itself.

### **Luxury Car Tax – LCT.**

LCT is applicable to passenger motor vehicles with a landed tax paid value of A\$ 67,525.00 or more. LCT is 33% of the car's value over the A\$ 67,525.00 threshold which is calculated on the total landed cost of the car plus the transport and insurance costs plus any Duty less GST. LCT is calculated on more than just the actual value of the car and the age of the car is irrelevant, unfortunately.

### **Import Duty:**

The Australian Government may charge duty on cars depending on their type and age.

- Cars over 30 years - no duty charged
- Passenger vehicles under 30 years attract 5% duty
- Boats new or used attract 5% duty
- Trailers attract 5% duty
- Auto parts usually attract 5% duty
- Motorcycles (with spark plug ignition piston engines) are duty free

Vehicles and items made in a country we have a Free Trade Agreement with (like the USA, Japan etc) may entry duty free. This is a technical area of the import process so please feel free to contact us for further information specific to your vehicle.

### **Parts and items purchased separately to the car (eBay, swap meets, etc.):**

Shipping parts or other items with or inside the car is possible, though we will need a detailed manifest of the items and an invoice detailing them. Additional Customs clearance fees for parts shipped with or inside a car may apply if we are required to prepare a separate Customs entry for them. Any parts supplied with the car as part of the purchase should be listed on the Bill of Sale. Duty and taxes may be charged on any items inside the car if not listed on the Bill of Sale/receipt.

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## 7) Australian Quarantine:

Australia has some of the toughest Quarantine regulations in the world with all cargo subject to some form of Quarantine profiling or intervention. All used vehicles or used items trigger a formal inspection by a Quarantine officer and while subjective the inspections are thorough so ANY contamination (dirt/leaves/bugs) will result in the vehicle/item being ordered for cleaning/treatment. We recommend the vehicle/s is washed and cleaned, inside out and under, before shipping to help reduce the chance of it 'failing' inspection on arrival. Spending hours cleaning the vehicle before shipment is no a guarantee it will pass inspection, but it would reduce the time of any cleaning here and ultimately the cost. The inspection and cleaning costs for vehicle vary from state to state, and based on what the officer finds. If your vehicle was to fail the initial inspection we pass on the cleaning, handling & reinspection fees, at cost.

Any wood, straw, plant material or other Quarantine risk material should be removed from the vehicle before shipping. The cost for treatment or destruction for these items can be very high so it's best to remove them before shipping. Quarantine rules for importing cargo are not unlike those you face when entering Australia, so work on the assumption that if you can't bring it in with you through an airport, you can't bring it in as cargo with/in your car. If you're importing new items it is possible to reduce Quarantine involvement if the supplier provides a 'New and Unused' declaration for the item/s. We can supply that form if and when required

Note 1: Quarantine rules are in place for the protection of Australia and can't be bent or broken. We can and will help with any issue before the car/item is shipped, but once it's been shipped Quarantine order must be followed.

Note 2: The importation of tyres is controlled by Quarantine. Any clients wanting to import used tyres not inflated rims must have a valid import permit for the tyres before they are shipped. New tyres can be shipped uninflated but will be subject to a Quarantine inspection on arrival.

For more information you can visit: [www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity)

## 8) Insurance

**EDI** will take the utmost care with your vehicle but we **STRONGLY** recommend all clients take out insurance. In transporting your vehicle the ship may be subject to the worst weather imaginable and with thousands of containers lost over the side of ships each year insurance protects your investment while in transit.

The chance of damage to your vehicle is very low, and the chance of total loss far lower again, BUT, there are always exceptions to the rule. We don't want to see a client suffer loss and ask you consider the importance of insurance. The shipping line/s and EDI do not automatically insure your vehicle/cargo while in transit and the transport laws in shipping have obscure clauses that date back to the days of sail and can see you having to pay all charges, plus repairs to the ship, and still not get your vehicle. These instances are incredibly rare but they can and do happen. Marine Insurance will protect you and your investment and cover you for damage through to total loss. We believe marine insurance is as important as insurance for your home/contents or your daily driver. We can arrange insurance through Australian based insurance companies at very competitive rates. Please contact us for more information about insurance and how it can protect you.

## 9) Registration in Australia

Before your vehicle can be registered it will, in 99% of cases, require some level of work to comply with Australian regulations. Compliance must be undertaken before your car can be registered and we recommend this be included in the homework process. Each state has different rules relating to the registration of imported vehicles and can recommend experience engineers and compliance exports who can help with any technical questions or issues You can also call us or visit the web site of your states Department of Transport to check what compliance certification or changes may need to be made to your vehicle.

## 10) Shipping documents:

Shipping a vehicle is far from paperless and it's very important that all documents are complete and correct BEFORE the car is shipped. Following is a check list of the documents required for export from its origin and entry into Australia. Please be sure you have checked off ALL these items:

- A) Import approval for a vehicle or trailer from Canberra.
- B) Authority to Act authorising EDI to act on your behalf for export and Australian import.
- C) Bill of Sale – provided by the seller/previous owner.
- D) Copy of the photo ID page of your passport or drivers licence.
- E) Insurance – confirmation if you will be arranging insurance, or if you want EDI to handle on your behalf.
- F) Air conditioning certificate/s – EDI can assist here – if required
- G) Invoices and details of any costs involved prior to the car being exported – these could be for transport you arranged or work done on the car before it arrives at our loading depot.
- H) Manifest/list of any parts/items being shipped and invoice/s listing the items.

### **\*\*\* SPECIAL NOTE FOR USA ORIGIN VEHICLES\*\*\***

The USA have a title system for motor vehicles unlike anything in Australia. The title is legal document proving ownership far beyond registration paperwork. Titles are issued by the state for all road going vehicles with an engine. We MUST submit the title to clear the car for export with US Customs, so in some ways it acts like a passport. We recommend you have the seller send you a photo or scan copy of the title so you can (a) see there is one and (b) that it's 'clean' meaning it doesn't show a lien from a bank or finance company. If you are considering a car that does not have a title please call us BEFORE paying for it. Too many have found themselves owners of a vehicle that can't be shipped, and we don't want to see you added to the list.

## Shipping process and time frames:

Shipping times vary depending on the origin of the vehicle and the way it's being shipped with the 2 main options being containerised or roll-on-roll-off (RORO) car carrying vessels. Cars, bikes, pickups and smaller boats are usually shipped in containers while larger trucks, trailers and larger boats are shipped on the RORO

### **Containerised:**

Your vehicle will be packed into a container and depending on the origin it may travel on its own or with other client's vehicles or cargo. Prior to shipment our partners overseas will require the paperwork for the car to clear it for export through Customs at the port overseas.

On arrival a containerised shipment normally takes around 7 - 10 working days to get the container off the wharf, unpacked and cleared with Customs and Quarantine. Prior to the arrival of the ship we process the Customs and Quarantine entries and at this stage we will send you an invoice for the shipping and handling charges so you have time to process that and pay it.

After the container is unpacked Quarantine will inspect it and if it fails they will order it for cleaning. Those charges, if and where applicable, will be the final costs and we will require payment before the car is released. Unpacking depots around Australia give 2-3 days' free storage of the car after QUARANTINE release it, so the timing can be tight right at the end of the job. Prompt payment and collection will ensure there are no storage costs incurred.

### **RORO:**

These ships are designed to carry vehicles that can be driven or towed onto the ship and are especially suited to trucks, motorhomes, boats and trailers that are too large to be loaded into containers.

After the RORO ship arrives in port it normally takes 2-3 working days to have the vessel unloaded and the cargo ready for Quarantine inspection which is done on the wharf. If the vehicle is cleared by Quarantine it can be collected from the wharf after payment of the charges. If the vehicle fails Quarantine inspection it must be cleaned and not all RORO wharves have the facilities for cleaning and reinspection requiring them to be moved to an off-wharf facility adding costs over and above the regular Quarantine cleaning charges. Depending on the item and Quarantine this could add an additional week or more to the process. Like the containerised option the wharf only give 3 days free time so it's important that payment is received to reduce the risk of paying any storage, which can be VERY costly.

These steps, if followed correctly will ensure that 99.9% of shipments are smooth and straightforward.



## What's the cost? Where to now?

We hope all this information helps you understand the processes involved in shipping your car from the UK to Australia. Being prepared and understanding the process will help ensure the shipment is as smooth as possible, and reduce the risk of trouble or additional cost.

Now it's time to contact us for specific pricing for your car/cargo and to run through the questions you still have after reading through these pages. Our contact details are:

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Albion QLD 4010

Phone: 1800 996 281 – Tol free within Australia  
+61 7 3862 4788 – from outside Australia

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Don't hesitate to contact us for information and advice on importing a vehicle, or any other type of cargo for that matter. We look forward to the opportunity to talk with you about your particular vehicle.

**The information contained in this overview is to be used as a guide and is based on rules, regulations and information current as at April 2020. Regulations can and do change so we ask that you confirm details with us before shipment.**

**All and any business undertaken is subject to our standard terms and conditions, a copy of which are available upon request.**