

Guidance for what can be sent via mail and additional motor vehicle information.

Mail/Postal

USA military personnel are able to set up Military Post Offices

[Agreement between the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the United States of America concerning the Status of United States Forces in Australia, and Protocol \[1963\] ATS 10](#)

Considerations for **Spouses, de facto partners and dependant relatives and SOFA members** are:

- Only reasonable quantities of utilitarian goods of a personal nature proper to the current needs
- Bona fide gifts of a **non-recurring nature** may be brought in from the United States through military post offices free of customs duties and sales tax up to a limit of \$50, above which goods will be dutiable.
- This concession **does not extend** to tobacco products, spirituous liquors and fur apparel.
- In order that this arrangement may be adequately policed, the United States authorities will inspect parcels over \$20 and will also permit Australian customs officials to be located at military post offices for inspection of non-official mail and assessment of duties.
- **Prohibited tobacco products**
  - **WILL NOT** be authorised via the international mail stream
  - Any detection of prohibited tobacco products will be seized
  - In some cases, a permit holder may not realise that their goods are being sent to Australia via a non-reportable stream
  - Goods located in the mail will be considered to be forfeited goods and seized under warrant
  - Chewing tobacco and snuff weighing more than 1.5kg; or unmanufactured tobacco leaf/refuse in any quantity, are prohibited imports in all streams

The following details will apply to Military Post Offices (article 11 of SOFA):

Reasonable quantities of utilitarian goods of a personal nature proper to the current needs of a member of the United States Forces or of the civilian component or a dependant and bona fide gifts of a non-recurring nature may be brought in from the United States through military post offices free of customs duties and sales tax up to a limit of \$50, above which goods will be dutiable.

This concession **does not extend** to tobacco products, spirituous liquors and fur apparel.

In order that this arrangement may be adequately policed, the United States authorities will inspect parcels over \$20 and will also permit Australian customs officials to be located at military post offices for inspection of non-official mail and assessment of duties. From time to time, it may become necessary for the Australian authorities to notify the United States military authorities of sensitive items, the import of which will be more closely policed and perhaps liable to duty and sales tax when of a value less than \$50.

#### Cargo (Air/Sea)

- All cargo must be reported and cleared at the border
- SOFA consignments may be identified by the use of By-Laws which may provide for exemption on certain goods imported
  - The exemption will only apply to SOFA goods
  - Recommendation to use a broker to assist with your clearance to ensure applicable By-Laws are utilised
- **Unaccompanied Personal Effects** – applied at the time of the first arrival of the member to take up service
  - Your household and personal items
  - By air, sea cargo or by international mail (post)
  - include:
    - Clothing and footwear
    - Personal hygiene and grooming items
    - Furniture
    - Appliances
    - Sporting equipment, and
    - Books.

- If eligible, goods are cleared from customs control without requiring you to pay:
  - Customs duty
  - Goods and services tax (GST), or
  - Other taxes and charges
  - Provided goods are not disposed of in Australia, by way of sale or gift or otherwise, within the period of two years immediately after their importation
  - To be eligible:
    - Be a passenger or crew member of a ship or aircraft
    - Have arrived from a place outside Australia, and
    - Depending on the nature of the goods, meet permanent residency requirements
    - hold a permanent visa or
    - hold a special category visa.
  - And the goods must be:
    - Your personal property
    - Suitable and intended for use by you in Australia
    - Personally owned and used overseas by you for the specified length of time (number of months)

NB: There must be a connection between your travel to Australia and the importation of the personal effects. For example, you cannot use the UPE concession if you arrange to import your personal effects months after you arrive in Australia.

Article 13 states:

(1) The personal effects, furniture and household goods (other than motor vehicles and cigarettes, cigars, tobacco and spirituous liquors) of a member of the United States Forces or of the civilian component or of a dependant, may, at the time of the first arrival of the member to take up service in Australia or in the case of a dependant at the time of the first arrival of the dependant to join a member, be brought into Australia free of import duty, including sales tax, provided that, except as authorized by the appropriate Australian authority, the personal effects, furniture and household goods are not disposed of in Australia, by way of sale or gift or otherwise, within the period of two years immediately after their importation.

(2) Regulation military uniforms may be imported by a member of the United States Forces for his personal use free of import duties, including sales tax.

- The following goods are not eligible for the UPE concession:
  - Motor vehicles
  - Motor vehicle parts
  - Commercial goods
  - Bequeathed goods
  - Items that you have purchased over the internet after your arrival in Australia
  - Items belonging to another person who is not eligible for the concession
  - Tobacco and tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, or other products containing tobacco)
  - Alcoholic beverages.

## Motor Vehicles

- SOFAs allow for the importation of road vehicles by visiting military personnel that are members of a 'visiting force' [Importing road vehicles under Status of Forces Agreements and certain Customs Tariff Act by-laws, supplementary information | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts](#)
  - Import without obtaining further approval from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
  - BUT still required to have appropriate customs documents
    - Lodge an [Import Declaration](#) with the ABF
      - When you have started transport of your road vehicle to Australia
      - Vehicle will not be cleared from customs control until you
      - Provide a valid import approval for that road vehicle to the ABF
      - Paid customs duty, goods and services tax (GST), luxury car tax (LCT) and other charges

- Vehicle is clean and free of contamination of biosecurity concern, internally and externally, before it arrives in Australia – DAFF can provide further information later
  - Any applicable storage costs
- A road vehicle is:
  - A road motor vehicle – a vehicle that is designed solely or principally for the transportation of people, animals or goods on public roads or a vehicle permitted to be used on public roads, this includes motorcycles.
  - A road trailer – a vehicle without motive power designed for attachment to a road motor vehicle or a piece of machinery or equipment that is equipped with wheels and designed to be towed behind a road motor vehicle
  - A partly completed road motor vehicle
- **Importer responsibilities & considerations:**
  - Asbestos in the motor vehicle part or components such as brake pads etc.
  - Owners must obtain sufficient information and take necessary action to ensure asbestos is not present in the goods before shipment.
  - Claims of original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts containing no level of asbestos content should be supported by technical evidence sourced from the relevant manufacturer.
  - A 'face value' letter from the supplier, or the supplier's mechanic, merely stating there is no asbestos content is unlikely to provide sufficient assurance.
  - Clean and free of contamination of biosecurity concern, internally and externally

NB: If your road vehicle arrives in Australia before you receive an import approval you might incur storage costs and other charges (not our charges) until the vehicle is cleared or you may be required to export or destroy the vehicle at your expense

- **Costs of importing a motor vehicle:**
  - Pre-shipment costs (e.g. removal of asbestos, steam cleaning for biosecurity)
  - Freight and insurance (for the transport of the goods to Australia)

- Customs duties, GST and LCT
- Storage and delivery charges
- Logistics service provider charges
- Customs brokers' charges
- Import processing charges
- Wharf and transport charges
- Costs to have your vehicle meet State or Territory registration and insurance requirements.