

GENERAL

1. Import and export licence

I hold a Trade Licence. Do I require a special licence to import or export?

All traders require a Trade Licence. This license is issued by the local authorities i.e. the District Councils and the Municipal Councils. In addition, for import and export of controlled goods, the Tax Account Number or the VAT Number issued by the MRA is required.

2. Other licences needed

Are there other licences required for some specific products and where do I get these from?

Generally, import permits are not required for majority of products. Licences are required for some products for security, health and environmental reasons. Some products require special permits and certificates from relevant authorities before they can be imported or exported. Examples of products that require special import permits and certificates include agricultural plants (Plant Import Permit from NPPO and Phytosanitary Certificate issued by competent authority in exporting country).

3. Clearing and forwarding agents

I have been advised to appoint a clearing and forwarding agent to help with import and export documentation.

Where can I obtain information on firms that I could hire?

The umbrella organization for clearing and forwarding agents, the Customs House Brokers Association, can provide you with names of firms which are members of the association and registered with the Customs Department. The Customs House Brokers Association may be contacted on 2422014.

4. Documents required

What is the basic documentation that is required for imports and exports clearance?

A commercial invoice is used as a supporting document for most trade procedures. Your freight forwarder or clearing agent should be able to arrange for most of the other import or export procedures that may be applicable by using the information contained in the invoice. The information should include all description of the goods, value, gross and net weight and country of origin of items. The Bill of Lading provides evidence of the contract between the exporter and carrier (ship). It evidences receipt of the goods into the custody of the carrier. If the goods are transported by air, then an airway bill is used. Another basic documentation is the packing list, which shows details such as marks and number of packages, gross and net weights, measurements and description of contents of each package. In addition, necessary certificates and permits need to accompany the documents. These include documents such as Certificates of Origin, Phytosanitary Certificates, import permits, among others.

5. Foreign currency fluctuations

How can I protect myself against foreign currency fluctuations?

A number of methods exist to protect business from adverse changes in foreign exchange rates. This is called hedging. The mechanisms of hedging, called derivatives, allow a trader to cover the risks of currency fluctuations. Examples include forward contracts, which are contracts to deliver foreign currency at a specified future date and at a specified rate, and options, which give the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a specified amount of foreign currency at a specified rate within a specified period of time. You should seek advice from your bank on currency fluctuations when negotiating trade finance.

6. Insurance cover

How can I insure my goods against loss or damage in transit?

Cargo insurance covers the risk of physical damage to your goods or their loss in transit by land, sea or air. You need to ensure that the goods exported or imported have insurance cover from the beginning of their journey until their arrival. The Association of Mauritian Insurers can provide you with the contacts of insurance companies that provide cargo insurance.

7. Labelling and packaging

Are there specific requirements on how goods should be labelled and packed?

There are regulations regarding the labelling and packaging of goods, depending on the type of goods. If you are exporting, you can ask your customer to provide you with details of the country's specific requirements. All imports to Mauritius must comply with the local requirements concerning product labelling specifications