

# Your complete Customs Checklist

An essential guide for SMEs shipping internationally.



Customs activities are generally performed by dedicated experts (like DHL Express!), but good preparation can help you avoid unnecessary delays. Here's what to remember.

## 1. Have you got your EORI number?

If your goods need to be customs declared in the EU, your business will require an EORI (Economic Operators Registration and Identification) number.

If you haven't got one, you can apply through your nation's customs authority website with your VAT number (if applicable), business name and address.

It usually takes a few days to get your number, but can be longer – so apply well in advance.

- EORI number applied for
- EORI number received

## 2. Have you completed your Commercial /Proforma Invoice?

A Commercial/Proforma Invoice contains detailed information about goods being shipped across international borders, and is used by the customs broker to prepare the customs declaration.

[This guide](#) explains the key data elements required on a Commercial/Proforma Invoice. You can tick off each one below.

### You will need to provide:

- Details of shipper/exporter & receiver/importer
- Identification number(s)
- Goods Description
- Harmonized System (HS) Code(s)
- Country of Origin
- Values & Currency
- Weight/Unit & Quantity
- Incoterms & Place
- Proof of Origin Statement
- Reason for Export
- Other Requirements
- Commercial Invoice completed

## 3. Have you completed a Waybill?

This is your shipment's "passport"; a document issued by a carrier and attached to a shipment. The Waybill contains important details like the sender's and recipient's name and address, a description of the goods, and who is responsible to pay the duties and taxes.

- Waybill completed

## 4. Have the duties and taxes been paid?

Duties and taxes are assessed by customs authorities in the destination country. In general, the importer is responsible for paying them. DHL will advance the charges on the importer's behalf and collect payment from the importer either before or on delivery.

- All incurred duties and taxes paid

## 5. Do you need any other documentation?

A Commercial/Proforma Invoice and Waybill are the two main documents you'll need, but it's worth checking whether you also require:

- A Certificate of Origin
- Export/Import Licenses
- A Dangerous Goods Note

## 6. Are your goods correctly packaged?

### To avoid damage in transit, ensure:

- Goods are in correct-sized boxes to reduce movement (and save on shipping costs!)
- Packing peanuts are used to fill in spaces and absorb shocks
- Fragile items are wrapped carefully with extra padding