

A D V I S O R Y

Shipping Balikbayan Boxes

It's this time of the year that Filipinos around the world send parcels and packages to their loved ones to and from the Philippines and other countries. Filipinos are known to have the longest Christmas season celebration and a way to express their love for their families and friends is through sending of gifts in balikbayan boxes.

The anticipation of loved ones is high when they know that they will receive gifts from their families and friends from distant places. That's why one can only imagine their frustration when the much awaited balikbayan box was delayed or not received at all.

For the past several months, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) received quite a number of complaints on the delay, non-delivery and damage of balikbayan boxes. The DTI, through its Philippine Shippers' Bureau (PSB), assisted many of the complainants who were able to acquire their balikbayan boxes but after a long wait.

Thus, the DTI-PSB provides a list of frequently asked-questions to properly guide the consumers on shipping their balikbayan boxes especially this Christmas season.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Q.** How much are the shipping rates of balikbayan boxes? How long is the transit time from origin to destination?
- A.** There are various rates for shipping of different sizes of balikbayan boxes. Below is a sample rate for a standard size balikbayan box (24"x24"x24") and transit time from origin to destination.

Door to Door Rates and Transit Time by Destination

	Metro Manila		Visayas		Mindanao	
	Door to Door Rate	Transit Time (in days)	Door to Door Rate	Transit Time (in days)	Door to Door Rate	Transit Time (in days)
Hongkong/ Taiwan	US\$ 70	15-20	US\$ 75	20-25	US\$ 85	22-27
Singapore	US\$ 70	15-20	US\$ 85	20-25	US\$ 95	22-27
USA/Canada	US\$ 85	35-45	US\$ 90	40-50	US\$ 100	42-52
Middle East	US\$ 90	25-35	US\$ 100	30-40	US\$ 110	32-42

- Q.** Where are most balikbayan boxes coming from?
- A.** OFWs and other Filipinos living abroad from these countries have the large number of packages sent through balikbayan boxes.
- 1 Middle East (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar)
 - 2 USA
 - 3 Hong Kong
 - 4 Taiwan
 - 5 Singapore
 - 6 Italy
 - 7 UK
 - 8 Korea
- Q.** What are the common complaints received by Department of Trade and Industry-Philippine Shippers' Bureau (DTI-PSB) regarding balikbayan boxes?
- A.** Most of the complaints on balikbayan boxes are:
- 1 non-delivery or failure to deliver balikbayan boxes
 - 2 pilferage of balikbayan box
 - 3 overcharging
 - 4 damaged cargo
- Q.** How does one file a complaint with DTI-PSB?
- A.** Complainants should submit a written complaint with documentary evidences such as official receipts, cargo receipts, bills of lading, shippers' declaration, way bills, etc.
- Q.** How does DTI-PSB handle these complaints?
- A.** DTI-PSB has a mediation and arbitration unit which handles/resolves the above complaints.
- Q.** What are the tips in shipping balikbayan boxes?
- A.** The following are few tips to ensure that your balikbayan boxes reach its destination.
- 1 **Organize all the things you want to send through a balikbayan box.** This would give you an idea on the size of box you would need to use. Check out how much shipping would cost per box size (door-to-door charges, other fees, if any).
 - 2 **Book your boxes only with PSB-accredited sea cargo consolidator / freight forwarder companies.** These companies normally have Philippine counterparts which must have an accreditation from the Department of Trade and Industry's Philippine Shippers' Bureau (DTI-PSB) if by sea or from Civil Aeronautics Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) if by air. Senders may verify the company name of Philippine seafreight forwarder counterpart at www.dti.gov.ph under the Consumer Welfare and Business Regulation section or thru our Philippine Consulate Office abroad.
 - 3 **Beware of exceptionally very low rates.** Most complaints for non-delivery involve cargo shipments that usually charge very low door-to-

door rates. In these cases, the foreign principals do not have enough funds to bear the cost of transporting the cargoes, compounded by their failure to remit releasing and delivery funds to their Philippine breakbulk agent, causing the shipments to be abandoned at the ports.

- 4 **Declare your shipment** by accomplishing a detailed packing list stating all the contents of your box and value of shipment, per item if possible as well as your preferred shipping date. Inquire for proper or standard (or extraordinary, if needed) packing, wrapping, strapping, sealing and labeling requirements of your box.
 - 5 **Secure transport documents** such as cargo receipt (or Official Receipt) for fees paid, and *Bill of Lading* – a document issued by a transportation carrier to the shipper as proof that they have received the cargo shipment and have placed them on board a particular vessel for delivery to a particular destination. It also states the transport terms in which the received cargo shipments are to be carried and delivered.
 - 6 **Get the name and contact details of the forwarder's agent in the Philippines.** Be sure that these information are clearly indicated in the transport document and/or receipt.
 - 7 **Monitor the movement of your cargo** from origin to destination to make sure it is being shipped and delivered. You may inquire for a tracking scheme or continuously contact the forwarding company. You may ask them to provide you details such as the name of shipping line, vessel's name, voyage number, container number, and expected time of departure and arrival of your cargo/package.
 - 8 **Inform your consignee to check your cargo** with the Philippine freight forwarding agent even before it arrives. When it does, make sure to inspect the seal and wrapping of the box before signing the delivery receipt. If you observe that the box has been tampered with, do not receive the cargo/package and ask the delivery agent to have it double-checked.
 - 9 **If you encounter pilferage or lost item, or non-delivery,** file an immediate claim or complaint with the freight forwarder's customer service. You may also lodge your complaint directly to the Philippine Shippers' Bureau at 2nd Floor, DTI Bldg., 361 Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City or call the DTI-Direct (02) 751-3330 for assistance.
- Q.** What items that should not be sent through balikbayan boxes?
- A.** The following items are not allowed to be included in the box:
- 1 currencies, checks, money orders and traveler's checks
 - 2 jewelries
 - 3 firearms, ammunitions and explosives
 - 4 prohibited drugs and other substances
 - 5 pornographic materials, gambling cards and toy guns
 - 6 pirated products i.e. dvd, cd, tapes, etc

- Q.** What sanctions/penalties may PSB impose on freight forwarders violating PSB policies on BB boxes?
- A.** PSB may impose monetary fines, suspension or cancellation of accreditation pursuant to A.O. No. 6 series of 2005.

For more information, call DTI Direct 751.3330 or visit www.dti.gov.ph.

NOTE: OFW's must beware of the following freight forwarding companies:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA): CALIFORNIA

1. Associated Consolidations Express (ACE Cargo)

Northern CA Office & Warehouse
1273 Industrial Pkwy, Unit 290
Hayward CA 94544

Southern California Office
4515 Eagle Rock Boulevard Suite 133
Los Angeles CA 90041

Local Forwarder: Associated Consolidation Express (ACE)
505 Roligon Complex
Quirino Avenue, Tambo, Parañaque City
Tel. No. 851-6850/854-8327
Contact Person: Ms. Lois Gonzales, VP-Operations

2. Alas Cargo

548 E. Sepulveda Boulevard, Suite D
Carson, CA 90745

Local Forwarder: Alas Cargo Phils.
Km. 18 Ortigas Avenue Extension
Cainta, Rizal

3. AAA Cargo Express Inc.

14536 Roscoe Boulevard
Suite 99 & 101 Panorama City
CA 91402

Local Forwarder: Mail Plus Cargo Carriers
Golden Homes Subdivision
SA #3 Sandoval Avenue
Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA): CHICAGO

- 1. Shipping Express in Chicago**
4558 N. Elston Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60630
Tel. 773.545.8880
- 2. ABS-CBN Star Kargo**
Chicago, Illinois

Local Forwarder:
ABS-CBN Star Kargo
JJM Building 2, Ninoy Aquino Avenue
Brgy. Sto. Niño, Parañaque City

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

- 1. Smooth Express**
P.O. Box-126862, Dubai, UAE
Tel. +9714 393544, 3939545
info@smooth-express.com
- 2. Express Link Cargo Services**
Shop 14-A Al Khazna Centre
Karama, Dubai
Tel. 050.934.9109/660.2909
xlink_cargo@yahoo.com
- 3. Dagupan Cargo Packaging Services**
Address 1
63896 Sharjah
United Arab Emirates
Tel. +971.6539.5302/539.5305
dagupan_101@yahoo.com

Address 2
P.O. Box 191640 Satwa, Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Local Forwarder:
Urgent Cargo Express Int'l. Forwarder and Brokerage Inc.
Fil-Way Compound, Dr. A. Santos Avenue
Sucat, Parañaque City

OTHER COUNTRIES

- 1. Ford Cargo International (FCI) in Hongkong**
Unit 19F #1 Hongkong Industrial Building

2. SCRL Cargo in Ireland

U Store It, Unit 1, North Park,
Finglas, Dublin 11
Tel. 086.806.8666
scrl_cargo@yahoo.ie.

These companies have victimized hundreds of shippers whose BB boxes remain undelivered for almost one (1) year now.

Said companies had stopped remitting funds to their Philippine agents resulting to the abandonment of cargo at BOC. PSB is coordinating with the Legal Department of BOC and the Philippine agents for the release of BB boxes for humanitarian considerations.