



# International Shipping Reference Guide

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# What do you need to do before you ship?

If you are well-prepared before you begin completing your documentation, shipping internationally can be easy.

Begin by asking yourself these two important questions:  
“**Where** do I want to ship?” and “**What** do I want to ship?”

## Where do you want to ship?

The destination for your item is crucial in determining what documentation you'll need, the duties and taxes you'll pay, and much more. But first you need to have on hand three very basic pieces of information, which will be required on all your international shipping documents:

1. The shipper's FedEx account number.
  2. The shipper's address and contact information.
  3. Your recipient's address and contact information: name, address including postal code, and phone number.
- Always ask customers in all countries for their postal codes; FedEx relies on these codes to route your shipments to countries such as India and China, which have established postal code systems. If you do not include the postal code, your shipment may be delayed.

Here is an example of the correct recipient information for an address in Canada:

Mr. Bill Sharp  
25 Raglan Street, Ste. 205  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 2Z9 Canada  
416-977-8124

## What do you want to ship?

The nature of the item you are shipping is as important as where it is going. The following information will help you describe each item in your shipment accurately and determine which documents you will need to complete:

1. Describe your shipment contents accurately.

One of the most common reasons for customs delays is inaccurate or vague shipment descriptions. A consistent and detailed description of your shipment contents across all documents will help reduce customs delays.

A detailed description should answer the following questions where applicable:

- What is the item?
- How many items?
- What is the item made from?
- What is the intended use of the item?



Description Examples	
<b>Poor Description</b> (too vague)	<b>Good Description</b> (specific and detailed)
Parts	Two steel springs for woodworking machine
Gift	Unsolicited gift: One men's knitted sweater (100 percent cotton)
Samples	200 cm x 400 cm nylon carpet samples for demonstration
Documents	30 pages of legal documents

[fedex.com](http://fedex.com)

1.800.GoFedEx

1.800.463.3339





# What documents are required?

Accurate documentation is one of the most important elements in international shipping. Properly completed paperwork will help your shipment reach its destination on time, reducing the risk of being delayed at customs.

In addition to your FedEx International Air Waybill, the Commercial Invoice, Certificate of Origin, Shipper's Export Declaration (SED) and NAFTA Certificate of Origin are the most commonly required documents for sending an international shipment. The documents required will depend on the details of your shipment.

Many countries will require additional documents. [FedEx® Global Trade Manager](#) is an online tool that quickly tells you which documents will be required for your shipment. Simply choose your destination country and complete the details of your shipment. FedEx Global Trade Manager will also provide you with the forms you need to send your shipment.

## 1. Commercial Invoice (CI)

A Commercial Invoice is required for the majority of nondocument international shipments and for all FedEx International Ground<sup>SM</sup> shipments. It is the most common customs document.

[How to complete a Commercial Invoice.](#)

## 2. Certificate of Origin

The commodity being exported and its destination determine if the Certificate of Origin is required. If you're uncertain about the Certificate of Origin, call FedEx International Customer Service at **1.800.247.4747**.

[How to complete a Certificate of Origin.](#)

## 3. Shipper's Export Declaration (SED)

You must submit an SED if you can answer "Yes" to any of the following questions about the commodity items in your shipment:

- Does the total customs value of any single Schedule B Classification in your shipment exceed US\$2,500?
- Is an export license or permit required? Most shipments don't require an export license. For information on export licenses, go to the [U.S. Department of Commerce Web site](#).
- Are you sending your shipment to any of the following countries: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Serbia (excluding Kosovo), Sudan or Syria?
- Is your shipment subject to the International Traffic and Arms Regulations (ITAR) but exempt from license requirements?
- Does your shipment contain rough diamonds beginning with HTS 7102.10, 7102.21 and 7102.31?

[How to complete a Shipper's Export Declaration.](#)

The U.S. Census Bureau updates SED regulations and requirements frequently. By going to the [SED section at fedex.com](#) regularly, you can keep track of these updates and find out quickly and easily if they will affect you.

## 4. NAFTA Certificate of Origin

A North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Certificate of Origin is required if a commercial exportation of goods within the U.S., Canada and Mexico exceeds US\$1,000 in value. The NAFTA Certificate of Origin is used only for goods that meet the NAFTA country of origin requirements.

[How to complete a NAFTA Certificate of Origin.](#)



### Helpful resources:

- [FedEx® Global Trade Manager](#)
- Call FedEx International Customer Service at **1.800.247.4747** for assistance.

# How to complete a Commercial Invoice

The Commercial Invoice is the first international shipping document you should complete, since it is the foundation document for all the other documents. On your other documents you will be duplicating most of the details you include on the Commercial Invoice. It is very important to ensure all the information across all your documents is consistent and accurate.

The Commercial Invoice is evidence of a transaction between the shipper (exporter) and the recipient (importer). It is used to classify merchandise so customs officials can efficiently clear your shipment through customs and accurately assess duties and taxes.

Please note that all FedEx International Ground<sup>SM</sup> shipments require a Commercial Invoice.

You may use business or personal stationery for your Commercial Invoice, or buy pre-printed forms, as long as you include all the required information:

**1. Provide the shipper's information.**

(Contact name, company name and full address.)

**2. Provide the recipient's information.**

(Contact name, company name and full address, including postal code.)

Here is an example of a the correct recipient information for an address in Canada:

Mr. Bill Sharp  
25 Raglan Street, Ste. 205  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 2Z9 Canada  
416-977-8124

**3. Record your FedEx tracking number.**

**4. Include the country of manufacture.**

(The country of original manufacture for each item in your shipment.)

**5. Describe your shipment contents accurately.**

Include the following where applicable:

- What is the item?
- What materials is the item made of?
- What is the [Harmonized Code for the item?](#) (Harmonized Codes are used by customs to determine duties, taxes and clearance requirements for each commodity in your shipment.)
- What is the item's intended use?
- What are the parts or serial numbers?
- What is the item's value per unit and in total? That is, what is the good's fair market value?

A detailed description will help you avoid customs clearance delays and ensure your shipment arrives on time.

Description Examples	
<b>Poor Description</b> (too vague)	<b>Good Description</b> (specific and detailed)
Parts	Two steel springs for woodworking machine
Gift	Unsolicited gift: One men's knitted sweater (100 percent cotton)
Samples	200 cm x 400 cm nylon carpet samples for demonstration
Documents	30 pages of legal documents

**6. Place your tracking number in the top right corner of the Commercial Invoice.**

**7. Sign and date your Commercial Invoice.**

Once you have ensured that all the information on your Commercial Invoice is consistent with all your other shipping documents, sign and date your invoice.

## Helpful resources:

- [FedEx® Global Trade Manager](#)
- Call FedEx International Customer Service at **1.800.247.4747** for assistance.





# How to complete a Certificate of Origin

The Certificate of Origin certifies the countries of manufacture for the items contained in your shipment. It may be required depending on the commodity to be exported and its destination. For example, many countries require a Certificate of Origin for textiles (such as fabric and clothing) over a certain value.

## 1. Provide the shipper's information.

(Contact name, company name and full address.)

## 2. Provide the recipient's information.

(Contact name, company name and full address including postal code.)

Here is an example of a the correct recipient information for an address in Canada:

Mr. Bill Sharp  
 25 Raglan Street, Ste. 205  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M5V 2Z9 Canada  
 416-977-8124

## 3. Record your FedEx tracking number.

## 4. Include the country of manufacture.

(The country of original manufacture for each item in your shipment.)

## 5. Describe your shipment contents accurately.

- What is the item?
- What materials is the item made of?
- What is the intended use?
- What are the parts or serial numbers?

A detailed description will help you avoid customs clearance delays.

Description Examples	
Poor Description (too vague)	Good Description (specific and detailed)
Parts	Two steel springs for woodworking machine
Gift	Unsolicited gift: One men's knitted sweater (100 percent cotton)
Samples	200 cm x 400 cm nylon carpet samples for demonstration
Documents	30 pages of legal documents

## 6. Place your tracking number in the top right corner of the Commercial Invoice.

## 7. Sign and date your Certificate of Origin.

Once you have ensured that all the information is consistent with all your other shipping documents, sign and date your Certificate of Origin.

## 8. Go to your local Chamber of Commerce to have your Certificate of Origin signed, sealed and notarized.

### Helpful resources:

- [FedEx® Global Trade Manager](#)
- Call FedEx International Customer Service at **1.800.247.4747** for assistance.
- Call **1.866.685.7001** toll-free to appoint FedEx to prepare the Certificate of Origin on your behalf.



# How to complete a Shipper's Export Declaration (SED)

An SED is used by the U.S. Census Bureau to compile official U.S. export statistics and maintain export control. This document reports all the pertinent export data of a transaction.

At the direction of the U.S. Census Bureau, when the Census's Data Entry Center (DEC) program ends, all SEDs for FedEx shipments will be filed electronically with the Automated Export System (AES). In preparation for SED electronic filing requirements, FedEx will stop accepting paper SEDs. You will need to either self-file your electronic SED at [www.aesdirect.gov](http://www.aesdirect.gov) or designate FedEx as your agent to file on your behalf.

- To self-file your SEDs to prepare for the anticipated SED regulations in 2005, you can register online with the U.S. Census Bureau's free Web site: [www.aesdirect.gov](http://www.aesdirect.gov).
- Or, you can authorize FedEx to act as your SED filing agent with [FedEx Export AgentFile<sup>SM</sup>](#).

To ensure compliance whether you self-file the SED or designate FedEx to file as your agent, the AES Exemption Statement or Proof of Filing Citation (the approval number returned by AES) must be present on the FedEx International Air Waybill when tendering shipments to FedEx. Also, please place the tracking number in the top right corner of the SED.

To learn more about FedEx Export AgentFile options, [view the demo](#).

If you have an immediate need to authorize FedEx to file SED as your agent, call FedEx International Customer Service at 800.247.4747 and ask for the FedEx SED Agent Filing Packet.



## Helpful resources:

- [Designate FedEx as your agent](#) to file the SED on your behalf.
- [Self-file your SED](#) with the U.S. Census Bureau.
- [View the SED tutorial](#).
- [Learn more about SED requirements](#).
- Call FedEx International Customer Service at **1.800.247.4747** for assistance.

# How to complete a NAFTA Certificate of Origin

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Certificate of Origin is required when shipping between the U.S., Canada and Mexico. In the U.S., this document is required to ensure shipments to Canada or Mexico benefit from the reduced or eliminated duty allowed under NAFTA for products manufactured within the NAFTA countries.

A NAFTA Certificate of Origin is required if an exportation of goods within the NAFTA countries exceeds US\$1,000 in value.

## 1. Provide the shipper's information.

(Contact name, company name and full address.)

## 2. Provide the recipient's information.

(Contact name, company name and full address including postal code.)

Here is an example of a the correct recipient information for an address in Canada:

Mr. Bill Sharp  
25 Raglan Street, Ste. 205  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 2Z9 Canada  
416-977-8124

## 3. Record your FedEx tracking number.

## 4. Include the country of manufacture.

(The country of original manufacture for each item in your shipment.)

## 5. Describe your shipment contents accurately (including but not limited to).

- What is the item?
- What materials is the item made of?
- What is the intended use?
- What are the parts or serial numbers?
- What is Harmonized System Tariff Classification number?

A detailed description will help you avoid customs clearance delays and ensure your shipment arrives on time.

Description Examples	
<b>Poor Description</b> (too vague)	<b>Good Description</b> (specific and detailed)
Parts	Two steel springs for woodworking machine
Gift	Unsolicited gift: One men's knitted sweater (100 percent cotton)
Samples	200 cm x 400 cm nylon carpet samples for demonstration
Documents	30 pages of legal documents

## 6. Sign and date your NAFTA Certificate of Origin.

Once you have ensured that all the information is consistent with all your other shipping documents, sign and date your NAFTA Certificate of Origin.

### Helpful resources:

- [FedEx® Global Trade Manager](#)
- [Learn more about NAFTA Certificate of Origin requirements.](#)
- Call FedEx International Customer Service at **1.800.247.4747** to determine if your products qualify for NAFTA cost savings or to appoint FedEx to prepare the NAFTA Certificate of Origin on your behalf.





## Interactive tools to help you process your shipment

Now that you have gathered preliminary information and reviewed the four main international shipping documents (Commercial Invoice, Certificate of Origin, Shipper's Export Declaration, NAFTA Certificate of Origin), you're ready to take the next step: Preparing your shipping label. You can easily do this online by going to [FedEx Ship Manager](#).

The following other interactive tools are your complete resource for preparing your shipping label (with help from [FedEx Ship Manager](#)), completing the right documentation, converting currency, assessing duties and taxes accurately, and much more.

### [Estimate Duties and Taxes](#)

Enter the details of your shipment, and FedEx Global Trade Manager will provide you with an estimate of the duties and taxes you can expect to pay. It's important to provide as much detail as possible when calculating duties and taxes; underestimated duties and taxes can result in additional landed costs for any complications due to inaccurate calculations. For more information regarding duties and taxes, go to the [Export.gov Web site](#).

### [Find International Documents](#)

Find and print copies of the documents that must accompany your international shipment at [FedEx Global Trade Manager](#). Answer some questions about your shipment, and the documents that are required by your origin and destination countries will be identified.

### [Denied-Party Screening](#)

This searchable database is designed to help you identify individuals, companies and other entities that have had their U.S. export privileges revoked or limited by the U.S. government or with whom U.S. parties are prohibited from doing business.

### [Universal Currency Converter](#)

Get daily-updated currency exchange rates using this interactive calculator.

### [Metric Converter](#)

Convert your measurements to take the guesswork out of shipping globally.

### [Worldwide Holidays](#)

Plan your shipment's arrival date around important observed holidays from country to country, using this simple tool.

# Online Resources at a Glance

For a complete listing of our international shipping services, go to [fedex.com](https://fedex.com).

Shipping Services		
Delivery Speed	Service	Service Description
<b>Fastest</b> Delivery within hours between major cities worldwide, based on flight availability.	<a href="#">FedEx® International Next Flight</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.</li> <li>• Service to more than 220 countries and territories.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance.</li> </ul>
<b>2 Business Days<sup>1</sup></b> Delivery by 8 or 8:30 a.m. (EST)	<a href="#">FedEx International First®</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday–Friday service.</li> <li>• Delivery to Basel, Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Milan and Paris.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance.</li> </ul>
<b>1–3 Business Days<sup>1</sup></b> Delivery by 10:30 a.m.	<a href="#">FedEx International Priority®</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-definite delivery.</li> <li>• Monday–Friday service.</li> <li>• Selected Saturday service.</li> <li>• Service to more than 220 countries and territories.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance.</li> </ul>
<b>1–3 Business Days<sup>1</sup></b>	<a href="#">FedEx International Priority® Freight</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday–Friday service for skidded freight over 150 lbs.</li> <li>• Service to more than 60 countries and territories.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance.</li> <li>• Advance confirmation required.</li> </ul>
<b>2–5 Business Days<sup>1</sup></b>	<a href="#">FedEx International Economy®</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday–Friday service.</li> <li>• Service to more than 210 countries and territories.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance.</li> </ul>
<b>2–5 Business Days<sup>1</sup></b>	<a href="#">FedEx International Economy® Freight</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday–Friday service for skidded freight over 150 lbs.</li> <li>• Service to more than 50 countries and territories.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance.</li> <li>• Advance confirmation required.</li> </ul>
<b>3–7 Business Days</b>	<a href="#">FedEx International Ground<sup>SM</sup></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday–Friday service.</li> <li>• Delivery to Canada and Puerto Rico.</li> <li>• Door-to-door customs clearance for shipments to Puerto Rico.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Typical delivery to major cities. [Check transit times](#) specific to your shipment destinations.

## FedEx Online Tools

Online Tool	Fedex.com	Tool Description
<a href="https://www.fedex.com">FedEx Ship Manager® at fedex.com</a>	<a href="https://www.fedex.com/us/solutions/fsm">fedex.com/us/solutions/fsm</a>	Automate your entire shipping process with FedEx Ship Manager at fedex.com—a one-stop PC-based tool for handling all your shipping requirements.
<a href="https://www.fedex.com">FedEx InSight®</a>	<a href="https://www.fedex.com/us/insight">fedex.com/us/insight</a>	For no charge, track all your shipments at once, get automatic shipping updates, pinpoint customs delays, and more with Web-based FedEx InSight.
<a href="https://www.fedex.com">FedEx® Global Trade Manager</a>	<a href="https://www.fedex.com/us/international">fedex.com/us/international</a>	Simplify international shipping from start to finish using FedEx Global Trade Manager. Complete required documents, estimate duties and taxes, convert currency, and much more.
<a href="https://www.fedex.com">FedEx International eNews</a>	<a href="https://www.fedex.com/us/customer-support/international/main.html">fedex.com/us/customer-support/international/main.html</a>	A monthly newsletter dedicated to U.S. export shippers. Every month, find the regulatory updates, news and shipping tips you need to make your international shipping more efficient.

## Additional Online Resources

Online Resource	Link	Resource Description
<a href="https://www.ita.doc.gov">International Trade Administration</a>	<a href="https://www.ita.doc.gov/td/tic/tariff/index.html">www.ita.doc.gov/td/tic/tariff/index.html</a>	Learn more about estimating duties and taxes and the important role accurate estimates play in getting your shipment to its destination.
<a href="https://www.census.gov">U.S. Census Bureau</a>	<a href="https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/schedules/b/#search">www.census.gov/foreign-trade/schedules/b/#search</a>	Find the Schedule B Codes for your Shipper's Export Declaration (SED) shipments.
	<a href="https://www.aesdirect.gov">www.aesdirect.gov</a>	Self-file an electronic SED at <i>AESDirect</i> —the U.S. Census Bureau's free online filing system.
	<a href="https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/correct.way.html">www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/correct.way.html</a>	Learn how to complete an SED using the line-by-line instructions available here.
<a href="https://www.customs.gov">U.S. Customs</a>	<a href="https://www.customs.gov/nafta/nafta_new.htm">www.customs.gov/nafta/nafta_new.htm</a>	Learn more about NAFTA Certificate of Origin requirements.
<a href="https://www.bxa.doc.gov">U.S. Department of Commerce</a>	<a href="https://www.bxa.doc.gov/">www.bxa.doc.gov/</a>	Most international shipments don't require an export license, but this tool will help you be sure before you ship.
<a href="https://www.usitc.gov">U.S. International Trade Commission</a>	<a href="https://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts">www.usitc.gov/tata/hts</a>	Used by customs to determine duties, taxes and clearance requirements for each commodity in your shipment.

# International Shipping Checklist

NOTE: When your shipment contains only paper documents (printed or typed communications with no monetary value), you will only need your FedEx International Air Waybill for FedEx Express shipments or Commercial Invoice for FedEx International Ground<sup>SM</sup> shipments.

- [Prepare your documents for shipping.](#)
- Include full contact information for shipper and recipient on all documentation. Do not forget to include your recipient's postal code. Otherwise, your package may be delayed. The four most common documents used for international shipping from the U.S. are:
  - Commercial Invoice
  - Certificate of Origin
  - Shipper's Export Declaration (SED)
  - NAFTA Certificate of Origin
- Ensure your information is accurate and consistent across all required documents to prevent delays. Underestimated Duties and Taxes calculations could result in additional landed costs.
  - What is the item (such as a four-slot electric toaster or a queen-size duvet cover)?
  - What materials is the item made of (such as glass, 100 percent cotton, steel)?
  - What is the intended use?
  - What are the parts or serial numbers?
  - What is the item's value per unit and in total?
- Applicable to some forms—include the correct [Harmonized System Number](#).
- Make certain the declared value for customs reflects an accurate value.
- Specify the country of manufacture. (The country of original manufacture for each item in your shipment.)
- Sign and date your documents.
- Record your FedEx tracking number.



fedex.com and toll-free resources:

- [FedEx® Global Trade Manager](#)
- [FedEx® International Delivery Services](#)
- Call FedEx International Customer Service: **1.800.247.4747**
- Schedule a pickup: go to fedex.com or call **1.800.GoFedEx (1.800.463.3339)**