

Use a Carnet to Save Time and Money

by Michelle Kelley - Thursday, January 28, 2010

Carnets are international Customs documents that allow goods temporary duty-free entry into a country.

Issued in booklet form, much like a passport, a carnet can save you from the many of the hassles of Customs clearance in foreign countries.

The many benefits of using a carnet

Carnets can save you time and money. Here are some of the benefits of using a carnet for your temporary imports.

- avoid paying duties and value-added taxes (VAT)
- avoid the expense and hassle of temporary admission entries (which require you to pay duty and taxes upfront, only to refunded once the goods are re-exported)
- know all fees prior to departure
- avoid the hassle of currency conversion—all associated fees will be in U.S. dollars
- simplify Customs clearance abroad by using a single document for all Customs transactions—even across multiple countries

Eligible goods

Goods traveling under a carnet must return to the starting country. Therefore, the types of goods eligible for a carnet typically include goods used for

- trade shows
- demos
- concerts/tours
- training (such as computers, presentation hardware)
- research and testing
- construction jobs
- circuses
- photography and films

Ineligible goods

- goods not returning to the starting country
- goods intended for sale or sale on approval

- goods going to non-participating countries
- goods staying abroad for more than one year
- samples that will be given away
- personal effects

Eligible countries

Carnets are accepted in over 75 countries and territories.

[// List of eligible countries](#)

Format

The carnet itself is a booklet of counterfoils and vouchers. The booklet includes

- a green cover page, which lists the name of the carnet holder, issue date, carnet number, and complete inventory
- two yellow sheets, for exportation and re-importation into the issuing country
- one or more sets of white sheets, one set for each country that your goods will be temporarily imported to
- one or more sets of blue sheets, one set for each country that your goods will be passing through

Each colored sheet has two parts:

- **A counterfoil:** Which is stamped (much like a passport) by Customs authorities and kept in the carnet booklet as a record of each trip.
- **A voucher:** Which lists the goods covered under the carnet and is removed from the carnet booklet and kept by Customs for documentation.

Customs will stamp and sign a counterfoil and voucher each time the carnet holder enters, exits, or passes through another country. The carnet holder retains the counterfoil and Customs separates and retains the voucher. When the carnet holder comes back to the U.S., the entire carnet book must be turned in to Customs to show that all inventory returned to the country. If anything is left behind and not re-imported, the carnet holder will face penalties and duty payments.

Need a carnet?

Helping clients obtain carnets is one of Mohawk's specialties. Clients must complete an application for the carnet itself and for the carnet bond, which is also required. The bond is necessary because it covers duty payments if the goods aren't re-exported from a particular country within the established time limit (usually within one year from date of entry into the country).

Carnet applicants must also submit a complete list of the inventory that will travel under the carnet, as well as a list of every country they plan on visiting.



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