

9 Transporting exhibits

This chapter underlines the importance of being prepared to dispatch exhibition material well in advance of departure.

Occasionally, there are empty stands to be seen on the trade fair opening day. Products to be exhibited have not arrived in time, or are lost or damaged. To avoid this, it is highly recommended that transport arrangements – particularly for joint participants – should be consolidated in the exporting country. This will ensure that deadlines are kept, and prevent confusion and overspending on freight charges. If possible, a specialist exhibition shipping contractor should be hired and encouraged to use the organizer's official clearing agent.

The forwarding agent will also advise on insurance. Alternatively a contractor can be employed to take responsibility of transporting everything to and from the venue. In the United States, however, shipping and forwarding are undertaken by two distinct parties: goods entering the country from abroad must first be consigned to the customs broker before being handed over to the drayage contractor.

It is essential to use a forwarding agent because mistakes can easily be made with incorrect forms, packing or unpacking exhibits before customs clearance or being unable to trace articles brought in free of duty which can cause long and expensive delays.

Shipping to the exhibition site

Shipping incurs losses and damage and there are advantages in using sealed containers. All materials and cases should be clearly marked for ease of identification.

It is usual when shipping exhibition material to use a temporary admission certificate, called an ATA Carnet; this is used to admit goods temporarily into a country without payment of duty. Information on the subject is generally available from chambers of commerce and local customs departments.

Provided that goods are not sold and do not remain in the country after a specified date, no duty is normally payable. It is necessary to liaise with the customs authorities or an agent before materials are removed from the exhibition site for shipment to the country of origin.

Shipping goods from the exhibition site

Immediately after the trade fair, the stand has to be dismantled and the local contractors assisted in packing the exhibits for shipment. Instructions from the freight forwarder and/or appointed customs broker should be followed carefully with regard to the necessary customs formalities.

In certain unusual circumstances, the exhibits may have been sold and this may involve several different customs duties: first, for exhibits sold within the country and therefore not subject to any tax other than the local import duty; secondly, those that have not been sold and are therefore re-exported to the country of origin; and thirdly, exhibits that have been bought by someone who lives outside the country where the trade fair has taken place.

There may be instances when it is impossible to stay until the last of the exhibits leaves the trade-fair grounds. If the proper documents are not left with the forwarding agent or customs broker, a return visit may be necessary to assist the goods through customs.



Checklist for shipping exhibition materials

1. Shipping the exhibits – to the venue

- Prepare shipping list
- Check for specialist exhibition shipper
- Forwarding agents

For the United States, shipping and forwarding are done by two separate agencies: (a) licensed customs broker and (b) appointed drayage contractor

- Insurers
- Check for use of temporary admission certificate (ATA Carnet)

2. Returning the exhibits – to the country of origin

- If goods not sold – no duty payable
- If goods sold – check with customs authorities: (a) exhibits sold within country; (b) exhibits returning to country of origin; and (c) exhibits purchased by party from third country
- Check packaging arrangements
- Check instructions of freight forwarder and customs agent

Note : If leaving the trade fair country before the exhibits leave, ensure that all correct documentation is left with contracted forwarding or customs agents.
