



ROGERS
WORLDWIDE

GLOBAL VIEW

Notes



Importing the Tough Stuff:

Perishable, Sensitive, Highly Regulated, and Oversized Shipments

By Michelle Bruno

The majority of items destined for U.S.-based trade shows—manufactured goods, brochures, or stand fittings—are subject to fairly standard import regulations requiring little in the way of permits or special treatment. There are, however, categories of items that are highly regulated and/or require specialized handling: firearms, alcohol, food products, electronics, animal trophies, and large equipment, for example. Knowing about some of the difficulties can help exhibitors prepare their documentation and design effective logistical plans well in advance of the show.

Firearms

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATFE) has jurisdiction over the importation of rifles, pistols, handguns, and related components. Depending on the type, some firearms require ATFE approval and cannot be shipped from the foreign point of origin until the

approval is received. In addition, handguns, rifles, and components for rifles under 18 inches in barrel length also require a DSP license from the Department of State **which can take up to 2-3 months to obtain.**

Alcohol

The ATFE also governs the importation of alcohol. Depending on the location of the exhibition, different state regulations may apply regarding the importation and display of alcoholic beverages. In general, however, an ATFE waiver is required for all importations of alcohol for exhibition purposes. In order to obtain the waiver, **commercial invoices must be provided to the customs broker at least three weeks in advance** of shipment from the foreign point of origin. Goods cannot be shipped until the waiver is obtained.

Food Products

In most countries, food products including meats, cheeses, and grains require various sanitation certificates. In the U.S., food facility registration numbers, product codes and original P2 certificates are among

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the requirements for cheese made with cow's milk, some pastas (from Italy) and rice (especially rice from India). Meats require Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) permits. In addition to permits, perishables items require special handling such as temperature-controlled environments during shipment and on site at the show.

Electronics

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is responsible for interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable. Items under their jurisdiction include personal computers, CD players, copy machines, radio receivers, fax machines, televisions, microwave ovens, video game players, mobile phones, and other digital electronics. At issue is public safety—devices must not be harmful to users or interfere with the national and international communication systems. **Certain devices must be certified and labeled to indicate they are in compliance with FCC regulations.** In addition, FDA approval may also be required for products containing a cathode ray tube or laser unless covered by an ATA Carnet or temporary import bond (indicating that the goods MUST be re-exported after the trade show).

Animal Trophies

Animal heads (hunting trophies) can only be imported into certain ports in the U.S. and are subject to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department Service regulations. At issue is compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). A CITES permit is required and depending on the type of sport-hunted trophy, an export permit from the country of origin and an import permit from the Division of Management Authority (DMA) may be required. **Importers should allow at least 90 days to obtain the required permits.**

Heavy Equipment

The construction, machine tool, and mining industries are particularly susceptible to the complex logistical requirements for shipping large pieces of equipment. **Getting the machinery to the show re-**

quires a logistics plan: vessels, rail, and overland transport vehicles, transportation permits, and lifting equipment at the port. Once the equipment arrives at the show, cranes and the expertise of heavy equipment handlers is also required. An ATA Carnet or temporary import entry is recommended (in lieu of duties) for equipment that will be re-exported. **A trade fair entry (granting a 90-day period of duty relief pending final disposition of the shipment) is recommended for goods intended to be sold during the show.**

Under any circumstances, shipping and importing the “tough stuff” can be a challenge. For international trade shows, the added element of timing and working in temporary facilities that are not designed to handle these extraordinary types of goods adds to the complexity. With specialized shipments, there is little room for error. An experienced international exhibition freight forwarder and customs broker can greatly streamline the shipping and importation process and help to ensure that the exhibitor's investment in the show is preserved.

Glossary of helpful links:

ATF Online:

<http://www.atf.gov/>

Importing Firearms:

<http://www.atf.gov/firearms/how-to/import-firearms-ammo-implements-of-war.html>

Importing Alcoholic Beverages:

http://www.ttb.gov/itd/importing_alcohol.shtml

Importing Food:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/InternationalActivities/Imports/default.htm>

Federal Communications Commission:

<http://www.fcc.gov/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>

CITES:

<http://www.fws.gov/international/permits/sporthunted.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

<http://www.fws.gov/>

U.S. Department of Transportation:

<http://www.dot.gov/>

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