

## Chapter 9

### **TRANSPORTATION OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

Planning your trip well in advance is necessary if you are going to take your equipment and supplies. If you are confident of getting all of your supplies and clothes into one or two 50-pound suitcases, then maybe you can wait until a few days before leaving on your trip to pack. I always start laying out everything I plan to take weeks in advance then make arrangements for things that won't fit.

First, think about what you will be doing each day and lay out the instruments and supplies necessary for the entire trip. The dimensional size, weight and volume are important to know long before your trip. Then you can make decisions on an alternate plan of how to get it where you are going. It may take as long as six months lead time for a large quantity of equipment to get to an overseas destination before you or your team arrives to use it.

Government approval for large shipments of medical supplies may be necessary through the U.S. State department or the embassy of the country where it is going to be used. It is not uncommon to need a consular stamp or seal with an Ambassador's personal signature on each page of your inventory of supplies before anything is shipped. The health ministry and import office sometimes have to inspect supplies that are shipped in advance, to be sure they are inventoried properly and nothing is out of date (expired). I have seen this process take two months after an approved shipment has reached the port of entry. Each country will be a little different on what is required and how to do the paperwork.

Check on all of the details about importing into a country after you have an accurate idea of the equipment, instruments, and supplies you intend to send ahead. The volume and weight of your shipment may determine the package or container necessary and how it must be sent.

Commercial carriers for your advance shipment of supplies and equipment must be licensed for that country and be insured or bonded. If the shipment is lost or destroyed during transport they will reimburse your loss. If there is a problem after it arrives in port before you receive delivery, you are covered also. Be careful about greatly understating the value of the contents. Things do happen and the insurance is for your protection.

The volume and weight of your supplies will determine whether you can put it in a cardboard box, wooden crate, or commercial metal sea container. Small amounts of supplies can be sent by sea post with a customs declaration. Normally your package must weigh less than 35 pounds, but rules vary from country to country. Several boxes sent this way can alleviate

the extra baggage you would have to carry when going by airplane. Normally, within the United States and by sea post you can use sturdy cardboard boxes to ship. If you have several hundred pounds of supplies, then normally a wooden crate must be built which can be handled by a forklift to truck it and ship by air or sea freight.

There are companies that will build a crate to fit any of your shipping needs. The shipping professionals can take care of most everything including documentation and booking on a carrier. The cost of having professional shippers take care of these details are well worth the expense compared to the time it takes to do it yourself. Although we do all of ours, you may not have the equipment to do so. If you build a large wooden crate, then you must have a way to pick it up and load it onto a truck. The truck will take your shipment and documentation to a seaport or airport for embarkation. Documents, such as statement of use, who it is going to, bill of lading, and shipment inventory are necessary. Packing slips and destination with telephone numbers must be clearly posted on the crate itself.

If a crate is going by sea, the container should be completely enclosed to protect your supplies. A wooden crate should be nailed securely and steel banded for extra strength so it stays together while being handled by loading equipment. Metal containers are more expensive but can be easily loaded and locked. Also, you can avoid the problems of wooden crates coming apart or being broken into and valuable items stolen on the decks.

Sea freight charges you according to the volume (H+W+L), not weight, like trucking and air cargo. There are dock fees, handling fees, long shore fees, documentation fees, and shipping fees. Some ships may take three months to get loaded, sail to your port, and unload. Be sure you give yourself plenty of time if sending by ship.

Air freight has certain size limitations due to the size of the airplane doors and the charges are determined by the weight. Know that this is the most expensive way to send, but the fastest. There are restrictions in regard to flammables, corrosives, or pressurized supplies. Documentation and legalities must be done in advance of your shipping by air. Customs officials will be at the airport to check what you are shipping and custom officials will be in the receiving country to inspect what you are bringing in. Be sure that your documents are in order. We can ship on Monday and the 400 pound box arrive in Kenya or Ethiopia on Saturday.

Private carriers may be available to take your supplies cheaper and closer to your work site. But, be sure they know the import/export laws of the countries involved. Make certain they are licensed, insured and bonded. Documentation is still necessary because they must check through a port of

entry for inspection by customs officials. Small carriers are watched closely because of the black market, drugs, contraband, and illegal aliens. Airplanes and boats are sometimes seized and kept by the government when found breaking the law. Know who you are dealing with if it is a private carrier. Have references and guarantees that they are knowledgeable about entering the country with your supplies. Be especially sure if you are traveling in this private carrier with the supplies yourself.

Sometimes there are shortcuts through the government red tape if supplies are going to an exempt hospital or university. Many times churches, missions, or the Red Cross will be able to receive things without customs duty or import taxes. If a branch of the foreign government will be accepting the supplies, just be sure of who you are dealing with, so there are no problems. I know of several situations where whole shipments have been lost to foreign governments on such deals and not returned. Dealing with governments, presidents, or dictators of foreign governments is risky business unless you have a good trusting relationship with them.

Potential problems, which could arise with a shipment into another country, are many. A shipment can be confiscated or impounded for any number of reasons. If the shipment is put into storage for any length of time, it could be "lost." Someone else could sign for your container and would leave the warehouse never to be seen again. The shipping crate could be broken into and much of the contents stolen while in storage. The military could "nationalize" it for their own use. The health ministry could seize and keep the entire shipment because they found one item out of date (expired). If your representative is not there to pay the import duty, it could be sold at auction. Sometimes the black market pays for the illegal removal and sale of the contents. If the shipment is held in storage very long, a large "storage" fee could be imposed, making it uneconomical to reclaim. Any number of methods can be used to tie up a sizable shipment of medical supplies if someone is not there to handle it when the shipment arrives.

The notification party should be available by phone at the port of entry. They can go to the shipping office where the supplies are located to claim and sign for them. Sometimes there will be dock fees, storage, or import duty assessed and documents to take care of. Each country will have its own way of processing the paperwork and handling the shipment. Usually the contents inventory is looked over closely and those authorities may go through everything to check the shipment. X-rays are being employed more to see into crates, boxes, and suitcases. One of the reasons for import custom inspections is to be sure unauthorized military hardware is not smuggled into the country. And then there is the need to assess taxes for imported goods. Be cooperative. You are in their country and must abide by their laws.

Normally, I take all of my portable equipment and supplies with me by commercial airliner into a country as personal baggage. This way, it is always with me and less likely to be lost. Be sure your bags are well marked with your name and address. Also, I put colored tape or an emblem on the bags so I can identify them from a distance. Have an inventory of your bags' contents with you in case a bag is lost or stolen. Use bags that will lock securely and have wheels on them. Sometimes, I will take out extra insurance on a valuable case that has my dental equipment. This can be done at the check-in counter of the airline. I also take a Polaroid picture of each of my bags and keep them with me.

You are normally permitted three bags on international flights. Two bags can be checked in and one can be carried onto the aircraft. The two check-in bags must not exceed 62" total (height, width, length) and not weigh more than 50 pounds. The carry on must not exceed 45" total (height, width, length) and cannot weigh more than 40 pounds. Most air carriers have installed a basket that your carry on bag must fit into, to check its size before they permit you on the plane. They are getting much stricter about carry on luggage.

Sometimes it is possible to get permission for transportation of oversize cartons and even extra luggage over your limit. But, you must go to the airline check-in in advance and talk to the lead checker or airline supervisor for a special waiver. They will want to see and weigh the items before the flight leaves. I know of more than one individual who has had to leave a piece of equipment sitting in airport storage, because they did not get advance approval.

The airline's limit of liability for loss of luggage is a maximum of about \$1,250 per passenger (ticket) or \$9.00 per pound (20.00 per kilo). They assume no liability for fragile or perishable items. Do not pack firearms, flammables, fireworks, or pressurized containers such as CO<sub>2</sub>, scuba tanks, self-inflating rafts, propane, butane, or mace. Have nametags outside and inside your suitcases, in case the outside tags are lost during shipment. It is recommended to check in 2 hours in advance for international flights, especially if a team is checking in together with luggage. Be sure everybody has their Photo ID's, Passports, and Visas as required for security.

Even though all airlines accept the above standards for leaving the U.S. and entering other countries, it may be different when returning back from that country. The altitude and weight considerations sometimes require mountainous countries to limit each passenger's outgoing luggage weight. Check on this before going to Quito, Ecuador; LaPaz, Bolivia; Southeast Asia, or other mountainous cities.

## **SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS**

This is a review of special precautions to keep in mind while traveling with your equipment and supplies to another country.

1. A photo ID or passport is now required for check in at the airline ticket counter before departure.
2. Keep your original passport, legal documents, tickets, and the equipment inventory with you at all times.
3. Keep copies of your passport, legal documents, tickets and equipment inventory in a safe, separate place in case the originals are lost or stolen.
4. Pack a change of clothes and basic toiletries in your carry-on bag, in case your checked bags are lost. Be able to function for a few days from the carry on. Also, carry any valuable or fragile items in your carry-on. Do not trust valuables in your checked luggage.
5. If you feel it necessary, buy extra insurance for valuable equipment at the airline check-in counter before starting your trip.
6. Have plenty of one-dollar bills handy for tips. I keep several in my front pocket ready to dispense for services when necessary. (U.S. tip, normally \$1.00 per bag) Overseas the tips may be much less.
7. Put your surgical and hand instruments in a shaving kit or bag out of custom officials' eyesight at the airport. Also, you should not take "sharps" onto the airplane in a carry on. They should be in your checked baggage.
8. State on your VISA papers that you are a "tourist".
9. When possible, pack in hard side suitcases that lock rather than cardboard boxes. Custom authorities will want to investigate your boxes and see what you are importing.
10. You can usually get special oversize bag permission from the airline, if you have the oversized bag inspected and approved in advance of your trip.
11. Pack your luggage as light and efficiently as possible. Do not exceed the weight or size limits. Try not to pack liquid supplies (alcohol, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, Cidex, etc) unless well protected from leakage.
12. Some countries will allow you to put equipment on your passport, if you guarantee to return to the United States with that equipment.

## Personal Packing Lists

### Basic Personal Items

Alarm clock & glasses  
Passport and extra copies  
Laminated dental license & diploma  
Frequent flier card, business cards  
Tickets and copies, Map of country  
Agenda and Telephone #'s  
Schedule for family and contacts  
Language book and calculator  
Money, Visa card, \$1 bills, money belt  
Extra suitcase key in billfold  
Bible, Notebook, pens, marker  
Camera, batteries, flash, lead film bag  
Penlight, razor, shaving kit, deodorant  
Cloth towel, wash rag, Kleenex  
Electric shaver, mirror, adaptor  
Soap (for clothes, body, hand)  
Hairspray & shampoo, lotion sunscreen  
Toothbrush, floss, mouthwash, interprox  
Travel iron, string, clothesline, clothespin  
Toilet paper, Sewing kit, Safety pins  
Leatherman tool, Swiss knife  
Name tag, sunglasses, reading glasses  
Ear plugs, Eye covers/blinders  
Earphones for plane, Radio,  
Tape recorder, extra batteries  
Pictures of office, family, etc.  
Pictures of suitcases for ID if lost  
ID and trip schedule in each suitcase  
Name tags on all bags with color tape

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### Personal Supplies

Peanuts for snacks, power bars  
Vitamins, Coffee, Gum, Snacks  
Animal balloons for kids

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### Personal Clothing

Comfortable shoes, tennis shoes  
Socks, shirts, underwear  
Scrubs for each day  
Dress clothes, tie, shoes  
Rain jacket, poncho, rubber boots  
Hat, thongs, beach shoes  
Handkerchiefs, towlettes  
Swimsuit, light jacket  
Clothes to leave on the way  
Backpack for carryon with locks  
Extra locks, keys, identification  
Change of clothes in carryon bag  
Pants that zip off to shorts  
Thermals when necessary, coat

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### Other Options

Insect repellent, DEET (mosquitoes)  
Skin-So-Soft towlettes, alcohol wipes  
Mosquito net, insect spray (ants)  
Plastic bags that seal (Ziploc)  
Several shaving kits for instruments  
Duct tape, electric tape, Teflon tape  
Super glue, wire ties, repair kit  
Extra soft side bag in suitcase  
Candles, matches, lighter in suitcase  
Canteen or water bottle for carry on  
Can opener with bottle opener  
Heating element for water, cup  
Surface disinfectant wipes, colored tape

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A number of companies are available to help you arrange for a twenty or forty foot metal container if you have large quantities of supplies to send. We use the one listed below for large shipments. These semi-truck sized containers can carry a huge payload overseas at one time. Be sure that you have checked about import duties and customs red tape.

## *TRANSPORTATION*

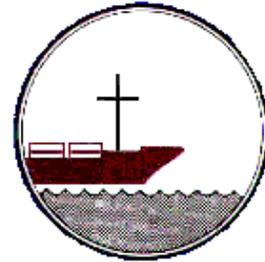
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## **CONTACT INFO**

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## BUILDING A CRATE FOR SHIPPING

Standard Size: 87"x44"x87"

- Build base with 3/4" plywood (NOT pressed board)  
L = 87" W = 44"  
Make 3 legs of 15" x 4" x 4" to attach to the base  
*You can use a standard wooden pallet, covering its top with 1/2" plywood*
- Build 4 walls and top with 1/2" plywood with 2x4 studs leave 3/4" space on side walls for attachment to the base, frame the top with 2x4 studs
- Attach 3 walls to the base and secure sides to each other, attach the top, leaving a side open in order to load the crate;
- Measure and record the final dimensions in inches
- Address the box by stenciling on at least 2 sides
- Pack heavy items on the bottom
- Distribute entire cargo evenly over the entire floor
- Stack tightly to avoid sliding, rattling, shifting and rocking
- You must be able to load the box onto the truck with a forklift