

Commercial Cargo Export Checklist – Sterdts

About this checklist

This checklist helps you prepare commercial exports from South Africa, reduce delays at pickup/terminal/border, and ensure customs and carrier requirements are met. It applies to general cargo, palletised cargo, containerised cargo (FCL/LCL), air freight, and cross-border road freight. Requirements vary by commodity and destination, so use this as a baseline and confirm any special rules for your shipment type.

1. What we need to quote (export)

Provide as many of the following as possible:

Parties & routing

- Shipper/exporter legal name + registration details (if applicable)
- Collection address + contact person + contact number/email
- Delivery address (final destination) + contact person
- Destination port/airport/border (or city + country)
- **Incoterm** (e.g., EXW / FCA / FOB / CFR / CIF / DAP / DDP) and named place

Cargo details

- Commodity description (plain language)
- HS code (if known) / product category (if not)
- Number of packages + packaging type (cartons/crates/pallets/drums)
- Dimensions per package (L × W × H)
- Weight per package + total gross weight
- Total volume (CBM) if known
- Stackable? (Yes/No) + any handling notes (fragile, tilt, keep upright)
- Cargo value and currency (for insurance / risk handling)
- Is it **dangerous goods**? (Yes/No). If yes: UN number + class + SDS

Timing & readiness

- Cargo ready date (and whether pickup can be flexible)
- Required shipping date / delivery deadline (if any)
- Any planned factory/warehouse closure dates

Documents available

- Commercial invoice (draft acceptable for quoting)
- Packing list (draft acceptable)
- Export permits / product approvals (if applicable)
- Any destination requirements you already know (certificates, labelling, inspection)

2. Export preparation checklist (before booking)

Commercial terms & responsibilities

- Confirm Incoterm and who pays/controls each leg (pickup, export clearance, main carriage, insurance, destination charges)

- Confirm who will be the “exporter of record” and who supplies invoice/packing list

Packaging & labelling

- Packaging suitable for mode (sea/air/road) and handling (forklift/stacking)
- Pallets/crates are sound and stable; no protruding nails/loose boards
- All packages labelled with shipper, consignee, destination, package count (e.g., 1 of 10)
- If wood packaging is used: confirm required treatment/markings (destination-specific)

Cargo measurements

- Confirm final weights and dimensions (avoid last-minute re-rating and disputes)
- Confirm stackability and any oversize/overweight constraints

Regulated cargo (if applicable)

- Check whether export permits/approvals are required for your commodity
- If DG: prepare SDS, DG declaration, packaging compliance, and marks/labels

3. Customs export clearance checklist

- Final commercial invoice issued correctly (seller/buyer details, currency, value, terms)
- Final packing list matches the physical cargo (counts/weights/dimensions)
- Any permits/certificates ready (if required for the commodity/destination)
- Provide exporter details and instructions for clearance
- Confirm whether a certificate of origin is needed and what format (destination-specific)
- Confirm whether inspections (customs/other authorities) are likely for the commodity

4. Transport & terminal/airline cut-offs

Collection / delivery to terminal

- Pickup booking confirmed (date/time window, vehicle access restrictions, loading requirements)
- Loading method confirmed (forklift available? dock level? tail-lift required?)
- If containerised: confirm container type (20'/40', standard/high-cube, reefer/flat rack)
- If LCL/air: confirm cargo can be delivered to the consolidation point with correct labels

Cut-offs & handover

- Confirm documentation cut-off and cargo cut-off times
- Confirm any required pre-alert information to destination/consignee

5. Shipment execution (after booking)

- Booking confirmation received and checked (dates, routing, cargo details)
- Export clearance completed (where applicable)
- Cargo handed over to carrier/terminal with proof of receipt
- Shipping/transport documents issued (as applicable to the mode)
- Tracking shared with consignee + delivery planning aligned at destination

6. Common delay points (and how to reduce risk)

- Invoices/packing lists not matching cargo (counts/weights/value)
- Last-minute changes to dimensions/weights after booking
- Missing permits/certificates for regulated commodities
- DG cargo not declared early or documents incomplete
- Missed cut-offs due to late handover or incorrect booking details

7. What happens next (Sterdts process)

1. You send the quote inputs (Section 1).
2. Sterdts confirms the best mode/routing and issues a quote with assumptions clearly stated.
3. Once approved, Sterdts books pickup/space and confirms cut-offs and documentation deadlines.
4. Sterdts prepares and submits export clearance (if applicable) and coordinates any inspections.
5. Cargo is handed over to the carrier/terminal and departure is tracked.
6. Sterdts provides updates and documents needed for delivery planning at destination.

This checklist is for guidance and planning only. It does **not** replace our formal [Standard Trading Conditions \(STCs\)](#), carrier conditions, SARS rules or customs regulations. Where there is any uncertainty or something unusual in your circumstances, please contact Sterdts so we can advise you specifically.

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