



Do's and Don'ts Exporting cars from the U.S.A.

Practical information for people living outside the
United States.



The smart way to
do the shipping
and handling of
your vehicle
from the U.S!



Stephen Perret-Gentil

Do's & Don'ts

EXPORTING CARS FROM THE U.S.

**Practical Advice
for buyers living
outside of the United
States**

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BON TRADE INTL. CORP.
CARGO HANDLING AND LOGISTICS

The Do's and Don'ts of exporting a car from the United States.

As a Caribbean native, I had the opportunity to buy a vehicle in the U.S that was shipped to my hometown. In those days it was a simple process. There were no vehicle export controls and exporting a car was straightforward.

Living in the U.S. for almost 40 years, and working as an International Logistics professional, I have had the opportunity to help ship thousands of vehicles from the U.S. to the Caribbean and other parts of the world. Based on my experience, I put together this short guide that should help you understand the process and how to navigate it.

Imagine that you have been shopping for a car and you found the perfect one in the United States. But you are worried about how to get it home.

There are a few right ways to accomplish this and several things to avoid.

The first part you need to be aware of are the rules that govern vehicle exports. They are Federal Regulations and apply to all 50 states:

All cars exported from the United States have to be reviewed by the CBP (Customs and Border protection) to make sure they can legally leave the country.

Click on this link if you would like more details:

[Exporting a Motor Vehicle | U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(cbp.gov\)](#)

When you add these regulations to the challenge of getting a vehicle to the port of export the exporting process can become quite involved.

Having the basic information of how it works will help you manage your purchase in a way that is more expeditious, with predictable results.

To help separate the different parts of the process, and make them easier to follow, I have listed 5 areas of concern that need to be considered when doing the search for your new car. On the next page I break them down and add some notes that should help you make better choices.



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5 Areas of concern that you should be aware of:

- A. In order to ship a vehicle from the U.S. it must have a title (cars, trucks, motorcycles, etc.), or a notarized bill of sale signed by buyer and seller (lift trucks and other offroad equipment, etc.) if not titled by the state. ¹
- B. When considering where you will be shipping the car (your hometown), what areas of the U.S. should you consider and what areas should you avoid?
Distance from the port of export will affect cost considerably and some areas do not have good service for vehicle pickups. ²
- C. Having a vehicle handler at the port of export will make sure your vehicle is handled correctly, expeditiously and ensure a smooth transition from pickup to delivery to the carrier you will be using to ship the car to your country. ³
- D. Choosing the right freight service from port of export to port of destination can make a big difference in cost, delivery time and the way the vehicle must be handled. ⁴
- E. Having chosen a Customs Broker at destination is important to avoid delays (i.e. the vehicle from sitting at the port longer than advisable), plus clearing and handling your vehicle correctly. This may also include additional services that make your life easier and handle the bureaucracy for you. ⁵

Notes:

- 1. The documentation can get very involved, especially when buying a salvage vehicle. So make sure your supplier provides the correct documents to avoid issues at the port of export.
- 2. Vehicle pickup service from a dealer, auction site or individual seller is not always available, and delays of 2 to 4 weeks are not uncommon. So make sure you know your potential ports of export and pick from possible suppliers that make inland freight more affordable and readily available.
- 3. Check the carriers that service your country and which ports they ship from. Also verify what type of shipping service is offered. If only container service is offered you will need a U.S. handler that can load your vehicle. And make sure you get a quote before you commit to using them.
- 4. If only container shipping is offered to your country, you may want to shop for a vehicle consolidator that can offer an alternative to the main carriers, and at a lower cost.
- 5. Having a broker ready to handle your car upon arrival is smart. Shop around for one before your car ships.



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This list, and the corresponding notes, are by no means exhaustive.

With an increase in the purchase of salvage vehicles comes new complications that will face the buyer at the time of exportation. Buying a vehicle with improper documentation, to satisfy Customs and Border Protection rules, can turn into a situation that does not allow you to export the vehicle you purchased. So, it is important to know who you are buying from and that they advise you properly.

With people selling vehicles on eBay, Craigslist, Offer Up, etc, it happens all too frequently that the documentation must be corrected for export processing (U.S. Customs (CBP)). Sometimes corrections can cause undue delays and even increase expenses.

Many carriers will not give referrals. However, if the carrier you choose is willing to recommend a company, or 2, get that information. They are usually handlers that specialize in vehicles with more knowledge about this process than the regular Freight Forwarder.

I hope this information helps you save time and money.

Good Luck.

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