



Caring for
your world.

Your
relocation
guide to
Panama



Tel: 0800 169 3061

Email: info@aimrelo.co.uk

www.aimrelo.co.uk



Memb No: A091



TELEPHONE:	Country Code (507)
STANDARD TIME:	GMT -5 hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	110v or 220v – 60Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Hepatitis A, Typhoid and Yellow Fever
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, 9 Feb 27, 28, Mar 1, Apr 14, May 1, Nov 3, 4, 5, 10, 27 28 Dec 08, 25
OFFICE HOURS:	08.00-12.00 14.00-17.00 or 18.00 Monday – Friday 09.00-12.00 Saturday
BANK HOURS:	08.00-13.30
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	Police 104 Fire 103 Hospital Santo Tomas 225 1536 Hospital San Fernando 229 2001
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	The Panamanian Institute of Tourism (IPAT) Samuel Lewis Ave and Gerardo Ortega Street, Central Building Panama City Tel: (507) 526-7000 Web: http://www.visitpanama.com Email: mercadeo@visitpanama.com
CONSULATE OF PANAMA	Panama House 40 Hertford Street London Tel: 0207 409 2255 Fax: 0207 493 4499 Web: www.panamaconsul.co.uk
BRITISH EMBASSY	MMG Tower Calle 53 (Apartado/PO Box number 0816-07946) Panama City Tel: (507) 297-6550 Fax: (507) 263 5138 Web: http://ukinpanama.fco.gov.uk/en

Customs

To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household and personal effects into Panama. However, it is advisable to check with the authorities that documentation is in order, prior to despatch.

Customs authorities in Panama are requesting that all Ocean Bills of Lading (OBL) and Air way bills (AWB) show costs. If the OBL / AWB has already been issued without the cost shown, you must request origin sea shipment line / air carrier to authorise their representative in Panama a freight rate certification.

As per Panamanian Laws, shipments must arrive into Panama a maximum of six months ahead of the last entry date stamped on the passport.

Regarding the importation of alcohol, the Panamanian Authority for Food Safety (AUPSA), in conjunction with the National Customs Authority, provides for the authorisation of alcoholic beverages based on a standard of personal consumption of 10 - 15 bottles per shipment.

It is subject to an administrative payment for the issuance of liquor import license, according to the degree of alcohol and commercial value.

The conditions that must exist are:

- The product must have a sanitary registration
- You must notify the Panamanian Authority of Food Safety (AUPSA) about the introduction of the wines to the national territory (minimum 48 hours) before arrival, through the Food Entry Notification Form, for this the client must have an account, otherwise you must register as a client in AUPSA
- Must have a letter from the shipper stating the information of the product, for what purpose it will be imported, guide number / BL, quantity, value etc

Household Goods

There are multiple visas in Panama, each one has their own required documents:

Returning Citizens:

Documents required:

- Original or Notarised passport in Panama *all pages
- Copy of Panamanian Cedula
- Copy of carnets and IDs from abroad
- Copy of utility bills dated 2 years ago since arrival date
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory

Panamanian citizens returning to the country after a time of no less than two years can import tax-free all used items. Businessmen who earn U.S \$1000 or more per month can apply for a special provisional visa allowing some special benefits. Effects should arrive no later than six months after their arrival.

All shipments must be inspected at port of entry, but this is usually done at shippers residence at time of the delivery. This service is payable by the shipper directly to the government.

Friendly Nations Visa

Documents required:

- Original or Notarised passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp
- Copy of Visa Carnet or Original Letter from attorney stating Visa is in process **
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory

If the visa is not ready, then an original letter from attorney must be submitted to customs.

If the visa ID carnet is ready, the letter from an attorney is no longer required.

Working Visa

Documents required:

- Original or Notarised passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp
- Copy of Visa Carnet or work permit **
- Original Letter of employment addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas
- Original Letter from attorney stating Visa is in process addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas **
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory

If the visa is not ready, then an original letter from attorney must be submitted to customs.

If the visa ID carnet is ready, the letter from an attorney is no longer required.

Self Solvency Visa

Documents required:

- Original or notarised passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory
- Copy of Visa Carnet or Original Letter from the attorney addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas **
- Original Letter from the bank in Panama addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas **

** If the Visa is not ready, then an original letter from an attorney must be submitted to customs.

** If the visa ID carnet is ready the letter from the attorney is no longer required.

** Original Letter from the bank in Panama stating the information of shipper's account.

The minimum is six figures.

Pensionado Visa

Documents required:

- Original or notarised passport in Panama including ID page and last entry stamp
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory
- Pensionado Carnet or Original Letter from the attorney addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas

If the visa is not ready, then an original letter from attorney must be submitted to customs.

If the visa ID carnet is ready, the letter from an attorney is no longer required.

Diplomats Removals

Documents required:

- Copy of Passport
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory
- Original letter from the Embassy in Panama requesting Previous Permit addressed to Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas

All diplomats and public officials entering with a diplomatic or official passport or those who come with a contract from the government have franchise privilege and will not be subject to the usual inspection or examination of household goods.

New Furniture and Household Goods

Documents required:

- Original Commercial or purchase invoice
- Copy of passport
- Original OBL / Express Release and Spanish Inventory

Vehicles

Documents required:

- Original owner's certificate
- Commercial or purchase invoice
- Copy of passport
- Original OBL / Express Release

Subject to import duties and taxes, based upon appraisal by Panama Customs.

Cats and Dogs (and other animals)

Documents required:

- Health Certificate legalised at the Panamanian Consulate (should include vaccinations)
- Vaccine Certificate or Carnet updated. (Please verify with the Consulate if it is required to be legalised as well)
- Passport of the owner
- Quarantine application form (provided by the agent)

ALL SHIPMENTS

Panamanian Authorities are enforcing a new fumigation procedure. All steam ship containers, land shipment and air freights coming into Panama will be fumigated in the port of entry or terminal bond. This procedure will incur additional charges and may delay the delivery of your shipments by one or two days.

For more information please contact FIDI affiliates in Panama.

Importation of Tobacco, Alcohol, Perfume & Gifts

500 cigarettes or 500 grams of tobacco.

Alcohol = 3 bottles.

Perfume for personal use only.

Gifts valued at maximum of PAB50.

Shipments Containing Wooden Materials / Packing

All household goods shipments containing wooden furniture or other wooden articles are subject to a Quarantine Import permit that must be requested prior to the shipment's arrival in Panama. In order to comply with this regulation, a copy of the Bill of Lading and the Packing List must be submitted a week before the shipments date of arrival.

The Panamanian Government will adopt ISPM-15 (International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures Publication 15) to standardise the treatment of wood packing materials used for the transport of goods.

Shipments into or out of Panama in wooden packaging will have to have a Seal which certifies that the shipment has received the required treatment (HT = Heat Treatment a minimum wood core temperature of 56°C for a minimum of 30 minutes, or MB = Methyl Bromide Treatment the minimum temperature should not be less than 10°C and the minimum exposure time should not fall below 16 hours).

The wood packing material must be marked in a visible location on each article, on at least two opposite sides of the article with a legible and permanent mark in black ink. Labels and adhesives are not allowed. The mark should show the country code, the producer number, the treatment type and the inspection agency logo.

This does NOT apply to wood packing material manufactured of:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or a combination thereof
- Plywood sheets and agglomerated sawdust sheet
- Oriented wooden fibre sheets
- Sawdust and wooden fibre

Food

We strongly recommend that shippers be advised not to ship any commercially prepared and purchased food product with your unaccompanied personal goods.

This includes: wines, spirits, beer, cider, spices, herbs, canned packed or wrapped foods, pet food, pastas, rice, food supplements, vitamins, fruit juices, carbonated / non carbonated drinks, milk, perishable foods, dry foods and any other item intended for human or animal consumption.

If the shipper insists on shipping food items, the specified information below must be gathered and provided for each food item imported. If the information is not provided, the food items may face refusal of entry, requiring segregation / manipulation of the shipment under customs supervision at a bonded facility, at substantial additional cost. Costs could be in the thousands of dollars and can not be anticipated. These costs will be the responsibility of the client.

- Product brand name
- Product classification
- Country of production
- Country of packaging
- Type of product (canned, bottled, packaged)
- Quantity

Ask for **Atlantic form QF565** for completing.

Prohibited Items

- Firearms, ammunition and weapons
- Pharmaceuticals and medicine
- Canned Food
- Psychotropic drugs
- Toxic Waste
- Fertiliser

General Information on the Republic of Panama

Background

Explored and settled by the Spanish in the 16th century, Panama broke with Spain in 1821 and joined a union of Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela - named the Republic of Gran Colombia. When the latter dissolved in 1830, Panama remained part of Colombia. With US backing, Panama seceded from Colombia in 1903 and promptly signed a treaty with the US allowing for the construction of a canal and US sovereignty over a strip of land on either side of the structure (the Panama Canal Zone). The Panama Canal was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers between 1904 and 1914. In 1977, an agreement was signed for the complete transfer of the Canal from the US to Panama by the end of the century. Certain portions of the Zone and increasing responsibility over the Canal were turned over in the subsequent decades. With US help, dictator Manuel NORIEGA was deposed

in 1989. The entire Panama Canal, the area supporting the Canal, and remaining US military bases were transferred to Panama by the end of 1999. An ambitious expansion project to more than double the Canal's capacity – by allowing for more Canal transits and larger ships – was carried out between 2007 and 2016.

Geography

Panama's two coastlines are referred to as the Caribbean (or Atlantic) and Pacific, rather than the north and south coasts. To the east is Colombia and to the west is Costa Rica. Colombia and Costa Rica have been clearly demarcated and in the late 1980's there were no outstanding disputes. The country claims the seabed of the continental shelf which has been defined by Panama to extend to the 500 meter submarine contour.

In addition a 1958 law asserts jurisdiction over 12 nautical miles from the coastlines, and in 1968 the government announced a claim to a 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone.

The major port on the pacific coastline is Balboa. The principal islands are those of the Archipielago de las Perlas in the middle of the Gulf of Panama, the penal colony on the Isla de Coiba in the Golfo de Chiriqui and the decorative island of Taboga, a tourist attraction that can be seen from Panama City. In all, there are some 1000 islands off the Pacific coast.

Climate

Panama has a year round wonderfully pleasant tropical climate and an average temperature of 27 degrees centigrade. Nights, however are generally fresh, especially in mountainous areas. The country has two seasons, rainy and dry. The former lasts from May to December, and despite all the rainfall regionally from 1.3 to 3 meters it is a rare day that the sun fails to show. During the dry season called "summer", the nice Trade Winds constantly blow. Although in the rainy season thunderstorms are common the country is outside the hurricane track.

Population

It is estimated at 3,191,000.

Language

Spanish is the official language but most Panamanians speak English fluently.

Environmental Issues

Water pollution from agricultural runoff threatens fishery resources. Deforestation of tropical rain forests. Land degradation and soil erosion threatens siltation of Panama Canal. Air pollution in urban areas. Mining threatens natural resources.

Currency

The currency of Panama is the Balboa (PAB) = 100 centesimos. The official paper currency is the US Dollar which is accepted everywhere at the rate of B1 = US\$1.

Denominations: B1 and B10.

Centesimos 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 The centesimos coins are of identical size, denominations and metal as US coins, and the coins of both nations are used here interchangeably.

Economy

Panama's dollar-based economy rests primarily on a well-developed services sector that accounts for more than three-quarters of GDP. Services include operating the Panama Canal, logistics, banking, the Colon Free Trade Zone, insurance, container ports, flagship registry, and tourism. Panama's transportation and logistics services sectors, along with infrastructure development projects, have boosted economic growth; however, public debt surpassed \$32 billion in 2015 because of excessive government spending and public works projects. The US-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement was approved by Congress and signed into law in October 2011, and entered into force in October 2012.

Growth will be bolstered by the Panama Canal expansion project that began in 2007 and is estimated to be completed by 2016 at a cost of \$5.3 billion – about 10-15% of current GDP. The expansion project more than doubles the Canal's capacity, enabling it to accommodate ships that are too large to traverse the existing canal. The US and China are the top users of the Canal. In 2014, Panama completed a metro system in Panama City, valued at \$1.2 billion.

Strong economic performance has not translated into broadly shared prosperity, as Panama has the second worst income distribution in Latin America. About one-fourth of the population lives in poverty; however, from 2006 to 2012 poverty was reduced by 10 percentage points.

Religion

Although the majority of Panamanians are Roman Catholic at 85% there is complete freedom of worship for all religions.

Health

Good medical care is widely available in Panama City. Medical facilities outside Panama City are extremely limited.

Make sure you have adequate supplies of all medications in their original containers, clearly labeled. Carry a signed, dated letter from the primary physician describing all medical conditions and listing all medications, including generic names. Pack all medications in hand luggage.

Avoid contact with stray dogs and other animals. If an animal bites or scratches you, clean the wound with large amounts of soap and water and contact the local authorities immediately.

Do not drink tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected. Do not drink unbottled beverages or drinks with ice. Do not eat fruits or vegetables unless they have been peeled or cooked. Cooked foods must be piping hot and not left at room temperature, this is hazardous.

Avoid unpasturised milk, ice cream. Do not eat raw or undercooked meat or fish. Barracuda should never be eaten, fish may contain poisonous biotoxins even when cooked.

It is recommended that you should obtain antibiotics and antidiarrheal drugs to be safe.

Panama is extremely hot, so take precautions against sunstroke and heatstroke, drink lots of liquids and use sunblock when outdoors.

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date we cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.