

Importers Checklist - Print, Please!

Use the following checklist when scanning or faxing documents to us. Please note we will need all items below before we can process your entry or help you. If you are missing anything, immediately contact the shipper or the forwarders local agent, which should appear on the Arrival Notice. Failure to do so may result in costly delays.

- A properly executed Customs Power of Attorney
- Arrival Notice
- Commercial or other Invoice covering the entire shipment to be imported (**see Import Basics**)
- Packing List
- Ocean Bill of lading or Airwaybill (**See Import Basics**)
- All other documents related to the shipment or required by Customs or Other Government Agency (we will advise you if additional documents are required upon receipt of all of the above)

Handling the Ocean Bill of Lading and Destination Charges

There are two types of Ocean Bills of Lading; Negotiable and Express, and it is important to understand the difference. Bills of Lading are issued when the vessel sails and all copies, regardless of type, are given to the shipper at origin.

NEGOTIABLE: One Original, endorsed Negotiable Bill of Lading must be surrendered to the issuer or his agent before you can take physical custody of the cargo. Because these documents are so valuable, multiple Originals are always issued. Be sure you obtain them from the shipper as soon as possible. If, for any reason, you are not able to obtain an Original Bill of Lading, you will have to contact the shipper and have them request a "telex release" from the steamship line or forwarder at origin. This can be very time consuming and result in unwelcome storage charges.

EXPRESS: Sometimes also referred to as a SEA WAYBILL, this is a non-negotiable Bill of Lading that is not required to be surrendered. Use of Express or Sea waybills continues to grow as they make the burden of the cargo custody process easier for all parties involved.

How to tell if your B/L is Negotiable or Express:

1. The word "ORIGINAL" on any copy of your bill of lading indicates a Negotiable Bill of Lading. You may also have copies that say "Non-Negotiable" or "Copy". These are for recordkeeping only and cannot be used to obtain custody of the cargo.

2. The word "EXPRESS" or "SEAWAYBILL" indicates your shipment is moving on a Bill of Lading that does not have to be surrendered for you to take custody of the cargo.

Surrendering the Bill of Lading and Destination charges:

1. Freight cashiering normally processes the Bill of Lading release and destination charges at the same time. It is referred to as "OB/L and charges". If you have a Negotiable Bill of Lading, be sure to carefully follow item number three below to avoid potential delays in the release of your cargo.
2. Your Arrival Notice will show any destination charges due and to whom they are payable. If your shipment is on a Negotiable B/L, the Arrival Notice may also say "Original B/L Required" or something similar.
3. When surrendering OB/L and charges, endorse one of the Originals on the reverse, attach a copy of the Arrival Notice and your check to it. Use an overnight signature service carrier to deliver it to the party named on the Arrival Notice. If your B/L is "Express" or the Arrival Notice says "Original Surrendered At Origin", then a copy of the Arrival Notice and your check payable to the named party is all that needs to be sent. You should always use an overnight signature service carrier when sending valuable documents.