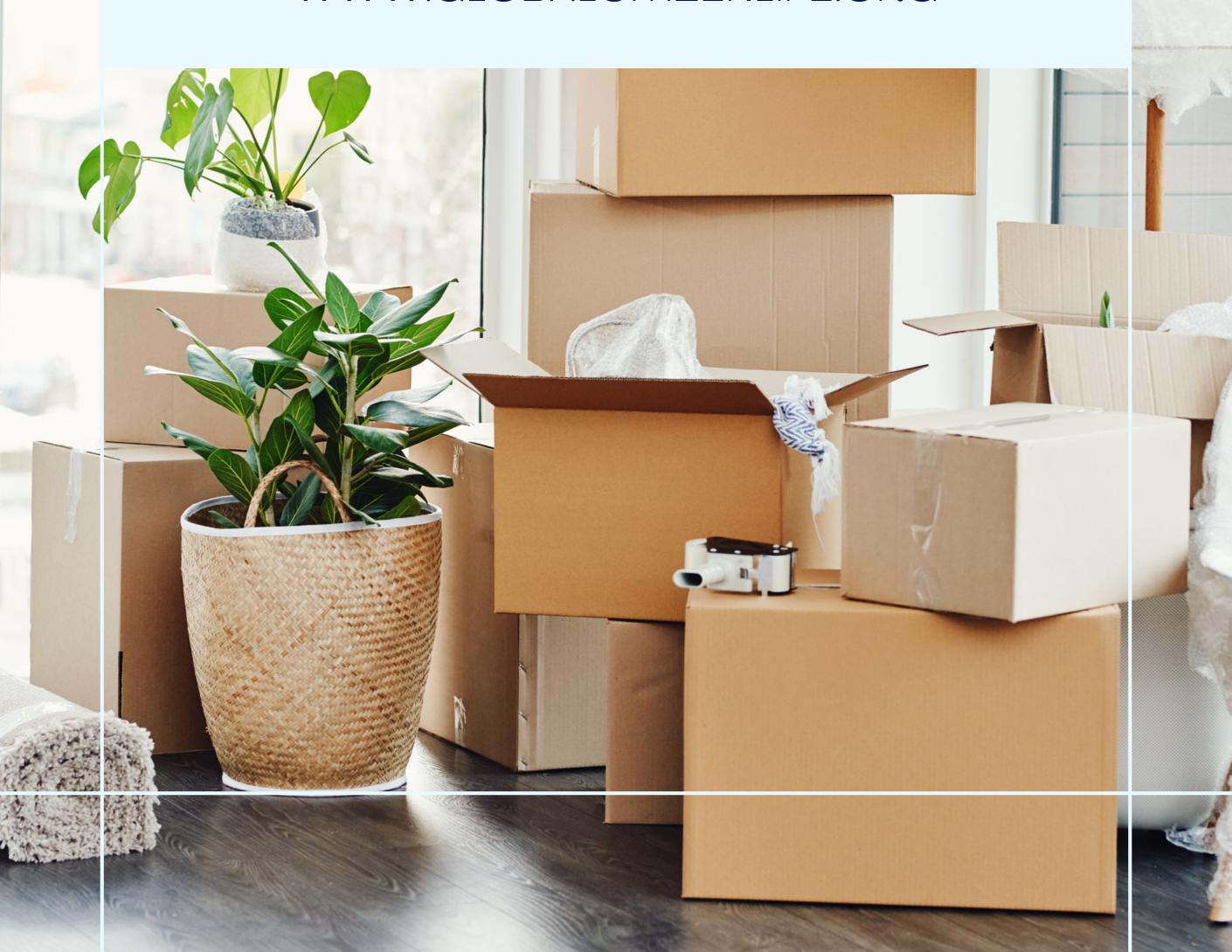


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Creating a Smooth Transition to Your New Life in France

Now that you've decided to move to France and have prepared yourself legally, financially, and emotionally, it's time to put your plans into action. This module is all about the logistical side of relocation—the practical steps involved in physically moving yourself, your household, and even your pets to a new country.

International relocation can feel overwhelming. Between paperwork, packing, customs procedures, shipping logistics, and timelines, there's a lot to manage. However, with the proper preparation and support, you can turn this complex task into a well-organized process.

This module covers:

- How to choose the right moving company (and avoid the wrong ones)
- How to pack efficiently, protect valuables, and save money
- The specifics of pet relocation, including required vaccines and travel options
- What you need to know about French customs and what you can (and can't) bring into the country duty-free

Whether you're moving from North America, the UK, Australia, or elsewhere, we'll walk you through every critical detail to ensure your move to France is stress-minimized, legally compliant, and as cost-effective as possible.



CHOOSING A MOVING COMPANY AND PACKING TIPS

How to Select the Right International Mover and Prepare Your Belongings for a Smooth Transition

Moving internationally requires much more than hiring a truck or stuffing suitcases. Unlike domestic moves, international relocations involve customs clearance, international shipping logistics, insurance, timelines of several weeks to months, and regulatory compliance in both the origin and destination countries. Choosing the right moving company and packing strategically can make a massive difference in cost, time, and stress.

How to Choose a Reputable International Moving Company

Not all movers are created equal. For a successful relocation to France, you should prioritize a licensed international mover with experience in handling relocations to the EU. Here are several key factors to look for:

1. Experience with France:

Choose a company that frequently ships to France and understands French customs regulations. Ask how many shipments they handle annually to France and whether they have a physical presence or local partner in-country.

2. International Accreditation:

Look for movers who are part of recognized organizations such as:

- FIDI (International Federation of International Movers)
- IAM (International Association of Movers)
- BAR (British Association of Removers) or their equivalents
- These accreditations ensure adherence to global standards for handling and delivery.

3. Full-Service vs. Self-Pack Options:

Decide whether you want a full-service option (packing, crating, customs documentation, and door-to-door delivery) or a self-pack container shipment to save on costs. If you go the budget route, ensure you're still getting expert customs advice—especially if you're claiming a tax exemption or importing high-value items.

4. Get Multiple Quotes:

Obtain at least three quotes. Be cautious of quotes that seem much lower than others, as hidden fees for customs clearance, insurance, delivery charges, or container handling are common with budget providers. Always ask for a detailed, itemized quote.

5. Insurance Coverage:

Ensure the company offers international transit insurance that covers loss, theft, and damage, based on actual declared value, not weight. Standard coverage is often inadequate. You may need to purchase additional coverage or a standalone policy through a third party.

6. Reputation and Reviews:

Ask for referrals, and check independent reviews on platforms like Trustpilot, Google, and expat Facebook groups. Expats often share stories, good and bad, that can help you make an informed decision.

When to Book Your Move

International moves require longer lead times than domestic ones. Ideally:

- Book your moving company at least 8–12 weeks before your intended move date.
- Allow time for customs paperwork, vaccination documentation for pets, and inventory preparation
- Schedule pick-up at least 3–4 weeks before your planned arrival in France; shipments can take 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the route and customs clearance.

Packing Tips for International Moves

1. Inventory Everything

French customs requires a detailed inventory of all items being imported. This includes:

- Item description
- Quantity
- Estimated value (in EUR)
- Country of origin

Create a spreadsheet and keep a digital and printed copy. This document will be needed for customs declarations and insurance claims if anything is lost or damaged.

2. Downsize Before You Pack

International shipping is charged by volume and weight, so it's wise to get rid of anything you no longer need or use. Consider:

- Selling or donating furniture that won't fit French apartments or homes
- Digitizing paperwork and books
- Leaving behind appliances that won't work with European voltage (France uses 230V, 50Hz)

3. Pack with Customs in Mind

Avoid packing:

- Prohibited items (explosives, flammable liquids, weapons)
- Items that may raise red flags (excess alcohol, new high-value electronics in unopened boxes)

Label all boxes clearly with contents, your name, and your destination address. This helps not only during customs checks but also ensures easier unpacking.

4. Protect Fragile and Valuable Items

Use professional-grade materials for:

- Electronics
- Art
- Musical instruments
- Sentimental items (family heirlooms, photo albums)

Consider carrying valuables, documents, jewelry, and irreplaceable items with you in your luggage.

5. Keep Essentials Separate

Create a "first-week-in-France" box with:

- Bedding
- Basic kitchen items
- Clothing
- Towels
- Toiletries

Ship this separately by air if needed, so you have what you need while waiting for the main shipment to arrive.

Moving to France is a significant step, and making sure your belongings arrive safely, legally, and on time is one of the most tangible aspects of your relocation. By choosing the right mover, preparing thoroughly, and documenting everything, you can protect your belongings and reduce your stress significantly.



MANAGING PETS DURING RELOCATION

How to Safely and Legally Bring Your Pets to France

For many people, pets are part of the family. Bringing them along when you relocate to France is not only possible but also fairly common. However, it requires careful planning, documentation, and sometimes professional assistance to ensure that the process is smooth, safe, and fully compliant with French and EU regulations.

Whether you're bringing a dog, cat, or another pet, you must meet the requirements set by both your country of origin and the French government. This includes vaccinations, microchipping, and official veterinary certification. Failure to comply can result in delays, fines, or even denial of entry for your pet.

Pre-Move Veterinary Preparation

The process should begin at least 2–3 months before your departure. Different rules apply depending on where you're moving from, but for most countries, including Canada, the U.S., and the UK, the following are required:

1. Microchipping

- Your pet must be microchipped with an ISO 11784/11785 compliant chip (15-digit).
- This must be done before the rabies vaccination, or your documents may be invalid.

2. Rabies Vaccination

- The rabies vaccine must be administered at least 21 days before entry into France, but not more than 12 months prior (unless your vaccine is valid for longer and accepted by the EU).
- Keep all original vaccination certificates, signed and stamped by a licensed veterinarian.

3. Health Certificate / EU Health Form

- If you are coming from a non-EU country, you'll need an EU Veterinary Health Certificate (Annex IV form) issued by a certified vet and endorsed by your country's official animal health authority (e.g., USDA in the U.S., CFIA in Canada).
- This form must be completed within 10 days of entering France.
- The certificate remains valid for entry and internal movement for 4 months or until the rabies vaccine expires.

4. Tapeworm Treatment (for dogs only)

 Required only if traveling to certain EU countries like Ireland, Finland, or Malta, not for France. But it's good practice to confirm current requirements before travel.

Travel Logistics and Pet Carriers

When booking your flight:

- Use airlines that have dedicated pet-friendly programs, such as Air France, Lufthansa, KLM, or TAP.
- Pets under a certain weight (typically under 8 kg including the carrier) may fly in-cabin with you.
- Larger pets must travel in the cargo hold in an IATA-compliant hard-sided carrier. Ensure the carrier is well-ventilated, leak-proof, and large enough for your pet to stand, turn, and lie down comfortably.

Tip: Book your pet's space as early as possible; airlines often limit the number of pets per flight, and some have seasonal bans.

Prepare your pet for the journey by:

- Allowing them to explore the carrier in advance
- Including familiar-smelling bedding or a comfort item
- Avoiding sedatives unless explicitly approved by your veterinarian

Label the carrier clearly with your name, your pet's name, contact details, and destination address in France.

Arrival in France and Customs

Upon arrival in France, customs officials may inspect your pet's documents and scan the microchip. This process is usually straightforward if all paperwork is in order.

Note:

- You must enter through a designated EU point of entry where pets are permitted and inspections can occur (most major airports qualify).
- You are allowed to bring up to five pets per person for non-commercial reasons. If you are relocating with more than five pets, different rules apply.

Pets arriving without proper documentation may be denied entry, quarantined, or returned to the country of origin at your expense.

Pet Services and Settling In

Once in France, you'll need to:

- Register your pet with a local veterinarian
- Update the microchip registration to a French address
- Purchase pet health insurance if desired (optional, but affordable)
- Learn about pet-friendly housing and green spaces in your area
- Understand French leash laws, noise regulations, and dog breeds with restrictions

France is a pet-friendly country, particularly for dogs. Many cafes, restaurants, and even some stores welcome pets. There are also plenty of dog parks and walking trails throughout the country.

Relocating with pets adds an emotional dimension to your move, but with proper planning and documentation, your furry friends can transition with you safely and comfortably. They'll likely enjoy the outdoor lifestyle, slower pace, and pet-friendly culture of France just as much as you do.





CUSTOMS REGULATIONS FOR IMPORTING BELONGINGS

How to Legally and Smoothly Bring Your Household Goods Into France

When relocating to France, bringing your personal belongings—furniture, electronics, household items, and more—is often a necessary part of the move. Fortunately, France allows many expats to import their personal effects duty-free, as long as certain conditions are met and proper documentation is provided.

This section outlines everything you need to know about customs regulations, exemptions, documentation, restricted items, and how to avoid delays or unexpected fees at the border.

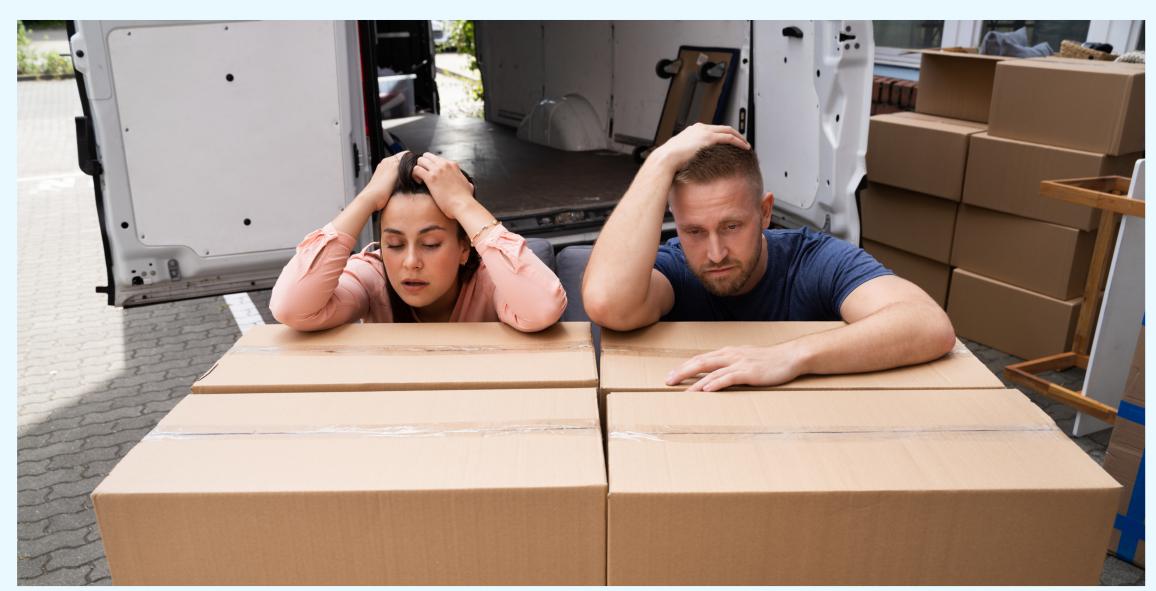
Duty-Free Importation of Household Goods

If you are permanently relocating to France, you may qualify for a tax and duty exemption under French customs law. To benefit from this exemption, you must meet the following criteria:

- You are moving your primary residence to France (not just temporarily relocating)
- You have lived outside the EU for at least 12 consecutive months before moving
- The goods are used personal items that you have owned and used for at least 6 months before your move
- You commit not to sell or lend the imported goods for at least 12 months after arrival

These conditions apply to most common household items, including:

- Furniture and furnishings
- Kitchenware and appliances
- Clothing, books, and artwork
- Computers and electronics (with proof of use)



Required Documentation for Customs Clearance

To clear customs and claim duty-free status, you must provide:

- 1. A detailed inventory list, in French, with:
 - Description of each item
 - Quantity
 - Estimated value (in euros)
 - Indication of "used personal belongings"
- 2. Proof of residence abroad (utility bills, lease, or visa history)
- 3. Proof of new French residence (rental contract, utility connection, or lease agreement)
- 4. A completed Cerfa form No. 10070 (official French customs declaration)
- 5. Passport and visa/residency permit copies
- 6. Bill of lading or airway bill from the moving company

If you use a professional international moving company, they typically assist in preparing and submitting this documentation on your behalf.

Customs Declaration and Timing

Your shipment must arrive within 12 months of your change in residency. Ideally, the move and the customs declaration are coordinated so that everything is processed within a few weeks of your arrival.

If items arrive too early (before your visa becomes active), or too late (after the 12-month window), they may be subject to full customs duties and VAT (Value Added Tax at 20%).

Shipments entering via ports like Le Havre or Marseille or airports like Charles de Gaulle will be held at customs facilities until all paperwork is approved. Missing or incomplete documents can result in delays and storage fees.

Restricted and Prohibited Items

Certain items are prohibited or tightly restricted under French and EU law. These include:

- Firearms and ammunition (require special permits)
- Live plants and seeds (subject to phytosanitary regulations)
- Animal products (subject to health inspections)
- Counterfeit goods or pirated media
- Large quantities of alcohol or tobacco
- Cash or assets over €10,000 (must be declared)

Additionally, be cautious with:

- New items: Customs may suspect you're importing for resale if goods appear brand new
- Valuables (jewelry, antiques): Consider hand-carrying them and insuring separately

Vehicles and Cars

Importing a car is technically allowed, but subject to its own complex set of rules. If you plan to bring your vehicle, you must:

- Prove ownership and use for at least 6 months
- Provide a certificate of conformity from the manufacturer
- Undergo technical inspection (Contrôle Technique) and immatriculation (registration)
- Pay registration tax (depending on emissions and horsepower)

We generally recommend selling your vehicle in your home country and purchasing one in France, unless your car is a specialty vehicle that meets EU standards.

Customs Tips to Remember

- Don't underreport value; if your shipment is randomly inspected, penalties can apply.
- Label boxes clearly and match them to your inventory.
- Always keep copies of every document, digitally and in print.
- Consider using a relocation consultant or customs broker if you're unsure about anything.

Successfully importing your belongings is about preparation, transparency, and timing. With the proper documentation and understanding of French customs rules, you'll avoid unnecessary delays and start your new life in France with everything you need at your fingertips.



Please continue to Module 14: Emergency Preparedness

