

## Standard Documentation

Outside of highly specialised forms of documentation utilised for different modalities of transport, there are several widely accepted documents used in virtually all methods of transport. The purpose of utilising widely accepted documents is enact some form of traceability and accountability for cargos in transit between all parties who may handle or store the cargo. Widely accepted cargo tracking documentation methods should not be confused with the wide variety of specific documentation required for customs clearance. Customs clearance documents are generally required to certify conformity with national laws, help facilitate tariff revenue, and may be different from country to country. At the very least, agencies should consider using some form of the below documents for all shipments, even domestic shipments between their own managed facilities:

**Waybill** – A waybill is the ultimate informal “contract” between the sender, the carrier and the receiver of goods. A waybill should contain all relevant information for the shipment itself, including:

- The contents of the shipment.
- The point of origin and destination.
- Names of the shipper/sender, the carrier/driver, and the intended recipient.
- Dates of the transaction.
- Important information pertaining to the goods; special handling requirements, delivery instructions, etc.

When issuing waybills, one copy should stay with the sender, and at least two copies should travel with the carrier. When cargo is delivered on the receiving end, one of the copies travelling with the carrier should stay with the receiving party providing a transparent paper trail of what should have been on the vessel/vehicle and when it arrived to whom. Ideally, the sender will fill out and generate the waybill, the transporter will cross check contents and confirm the items are correct, and the receiver will cross check and confirm again, noting any discrepancies. Some aid agencies prefer to receive a copy of the waybill signed by the receiver before closing the books on that individual shipment. If a third-party transporter is used, agencies may withhold payment until the countersigned waybill is received in good order. Waybills may also sometimes be referred to as “cargo manifests.”

Title

Download - Template Waybill

**Packing List** – The packing list is a more detailed document that contains key information on the consignment itself. Packing lists might contain:

- Detailed piece counts per line item.
- Unit dimensions.
- Batch/Lot numbers or dates of production/expiry.
- Kit contents and components.
- Part numbers.

Depending on the nature of the consignment, packing lists could be multiple pages long and have high volumes of information. A detailed packing list will help senders, carriers and receivers accurately identify the quality and status of the consignment. A waybill may only contain an overview of the goods, while placing more emphasis on data surrounding who and when the consignment changed hands. A packing list should contain as much or as little information required to successfully convey the full state of the goods in the consignment.

Title

Download - Packing List

**Invoice / Proforma Invoice** – Invoices and Proformas are typically only applied when goods are coming from a vendor, or when goods are physically transported across a national border. For domestic movements, the invoice largely contains financial information relevant to the consignment, and should designate if goods have been paid for or not. Proformas are largely only used when attempting to obtain duty free status during import, and as such aid agencies will only likely be producing proformas during the customs phase.

Title

Download - Proforma Template

Templates of the standard documentation can be found in the [reference section of this guide](#).