

ONE WAY AMERICA

Your Guide to United Kingdom

TELEPHONE: Country code (+44). Area codes vary by location.

STANDARD TIME: GMT in winter. GMT +1 hour during British Summer Time (BST), normally from the last Sunday in March until the last Sunday in October.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Metric is used for most purposes. Road distances and speed limits are generally given in miles and miles per hour. Some goods are also commonly measured in imperial units.

ELECTRICITY: 230v AC, 50Hz. UK electrical sockets normally take three-pin Type G plugs. US electrical appliances designed only for 110–120v will require a suitable transformer or voltage converter; a simple plug adapter does not convert voltage. UK domestic electricity operates at 50Hz. GOV.UK

INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: No special vaccinations are generally required for travellers arriving from the United States. Routine vaccinations should be up to date. Specific health requirements can vary depending on travel history and circumstances.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: Public and bank holidays vary slightly between England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England and Wales, the principal bank holidays include New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the Early May Bank Holiday, Spring Bank Holiday, Summer Bank Holiday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Additional holidays apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland. If a bank holiday falls at a weekend, a substitute weekday is normally observed. GOV.UK+1

OFFICE HOURS: Traditionally 09.00–17.00, Monday to Friday, although working hours vary considerably between employers and industries. Flexible and hybrid working are now common.

BANK HOURS: Generally Monday to Friday, approximately 09.00–17.00, although individual branches may have different opening hours. Some branches also open on Saturdays.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 999 or 112 – Police, Ambulance and Fire.

US EMBASSY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM:

U.S. Embassy London
33 Nine Elms Lane
London SW11 7US
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 20 7499 9000

Emergency after-hours: +44 20 7499 9000

The U.S. Embassy in London provides consular services and assistance to U.S. citizens living in or travelling to the United Kingdom. U.S. citizens should check the official U.S. Embassy website for current information and appointments. U.S. Travel Information

BRITISH EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES:

British Embassy Washington
3100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
USA

Public access is by appointment. Emergency consular assistance for British nationals is available 24 hours. The British Embassy provides consular assistance to British nationals in the United States and supports UK–US diplomatic, commercial and governmental relations. GOV.UK+1

Part 1 – Background

Information on the United Kingdom

Background

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK has a long history as a major trading, financial, industrial and cultural centre and remains one of the world's leading economies.

The modern United Kingdom developed over several centuries through political and constitutional changes involving the countries that now make up the Union. The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with the King as Head of State and an elected Parliament.

London is the capital and largest city and is one of the world's major centres for finance, business, culture, education and international diplomacy.

The UK has close historical, cultural, economic and political links with the United States. English is the principal language throughout the country, although Welsh has official status in Wales and Gaelic languages have recognised status in parts of Scotland.

Geography

The United Kingdom is situated off the north-western coast of continental Europe. It consists of the island of Great Britain — England, Scotland and Wales — together with Northern Ireland and numerous smaller islands.

England occupies the southern and central parts of Great Britain. Scotland is situated to the north and Wales to the west. Northern Ireland occupies the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland.

The landscape varies considerably, from the mountainous areas of Scotland and Wales to the rolling countryside of England and the fertile agricultural areas of Northern Ireland.

Major cities include London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

The UK has an extensive road and rail network, with international air connections and ferry services linking the country with Europe, Ireland and destinations throughout the world.

Climate

The United Kingdom has a temperate maritime climate. Weather is generally changeable throughout the year, with relatively mild winters and moderate summers compared with many areas of the United States.

Rainfall occurs throughout the year, although levels vary considerably between regions. Western areas generally receive more rainfall, while eastern and south-eastern England tend to be drier.

Snow can occur during winter, particularly in Scotland and higher areas, although prolonged heavy snowfall is comparatively uncommon in most lowland areas.

Economy

The United Kingdom has a highly developed, diversified economy based heavily on services, manufacturing, technology, finance, professional services, life sciences, creative industries, retail, tourism and international trade.

London is one of the world's leading financial centres and is home to major banks, insurance companies, investment firms and professional services organisations.

Other important economic centres include Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bristol, Cambridge and Oxford.

The UK has a highly developed infrastructure and is home to many multinational companies. The country also has extensive trade relationships with the United States, Europe and markets throughout the world.

Population

The United Kingdom has a population of approximately 69 million people. Population figures vary by year and by the statistical authority used, so current official statistics should be consulted when precise figures are required.

London is the country's largest urban area and has a highly international population, with residents from communities throughout the world.

Language

English is the principal language of the United Kingdom.

Welsh is an official language in Wales and is widely used alongside English in public life. Scottish Gaelic and Scots are also recognised and supported in Scotland.

Irish is recognised in Northern Ireland alongside English.

Religion

The United Kingdom has a diverse population with a wide range of religious beliefs and non-religious communities.

Christianity has historically been the predominant religion, while Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism and other faiths are represented throughout the country.

Freedom of religion and belief is protected by law.

Education

Education in the UK is administered separately in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and there are differences between the education systems.

Children generally attend primary school followed by secondary education. Schooling is compulsory, although the precise school-leaving requirements differ between the constituent countries.

The UK has a large number of universities and higher education institutions, including internationally recognised universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There are also numerous independent and international schools, including schools offering American and International Baccalaureate curricula.

Currency

The unit of currency is the pound sterling (£), internationally designated GBP.

One pound is divided into 100 pence.

Banknotes are issued by the Bank of England in England and Wales, while Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own authorised banknote issuers. Notes may therefore differ in appearance depending on where they are issued.

Coins include 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2 denominations.

Major credit and debit cards are widely accepted throughout the UK, although cash may still be useful for some smaller businesses and services.

Health and Medical Care

The United Kingdom operates publicly funded healthcare systems through the NHS. Healthcare arrangements differ between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

People moving to the UK should check their immigration status and eligibility for NHS services before arrival. Depending on immigration status, an Immigration Health Surcharge may form part of the visa process.

Private medical insurance is also available and is commonly used by expatriates who want access to private hospitals or additional healthcare options.

Utilities

UK domestic electricity is normally supplied at approximately 230 volts AC and 50Hz.

US appliances designed only for 110–120 volts cannot simply be plugged into a UK socket using a travel adapter. A suitable voltage transformer/converter may be required.

Many modern electronic devices, such as laptops, tablets and phone chargers, are designed for worldwide voltage ranges. Check the rating label before connecting any US appliance.

UK sockets use Type G three-pin plugs, so US appliances will normally require a suitable plug adapter even where the appliance supports 230 volts.

Television and Electronics

Television broadcasting and electrical standards differ between the United States and the United Kingdom.

A US television may not work correctly with UK television services even if the voltage can be converted. Check the manufacturer's specifications for voltage, frequency, broadcast standards and tuner compatibility before shipping televisions or other electronic equipment.

Computers, laptops, phones and other modern electronics are generally easier to relocate, provided their power supplies support the UK voltage.

Driving

The UK drives on the left-hand side of the road.

Vehicles imported from the United States may require modifications or approval before they can be registered for use in the UK. Imported vehicles may also be subject to VAT and customs duty unless a relief applies.

If permanently importing a vehicle, the importer must notify HM Revenue & Customs and complete the relevant registration and approval procedures. HMRC states that vehicles imported into Great Britain must normally be reported within 14 days of arrival. [GOV.UK+1](#)

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in this Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date, One Way America cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy. Immigration, customs, tax, vehicle and pet regulations can change, so the relevant UK government authority should always be consulted before shipment.

Part 2 – United Kingdom

Import Customs Regulations

To the best of our knowledge, the following information applies to the importation of household goods and personal effects into the United Kingdom. Regulations are subject to change, and individual circumstances can affect whether customs duty or VAT is payable.

For current official guidance, please refer to the UK Government's guidance on moving personal belongings to the UK. [GOV.UK+1](#)

Transfer of Residence

People moving their normal place of residence to the UK may be able to claim Transfer of Residence (ToR) relief on eligible personal belongings.

To qualify, the general conditions include:

- You have normally lived outside the UK for at least 12 consecutive months before moving.
- You are transferring your normal residence to the UK.
- You intend to use the goods in the UK for the same purpose as before.
- You have normally owned and used the goods for at least six months before moving.
- The goods are imported within the permitted period, generally within 12 months of the move.

The relief can cover household effects, personal effects, furniture, household linen and equipment intended for personal or household use. It can also cover certain private vehicles and other eligible personal property. [GOV.UK](#)

Alcohol and tobacco products are excluded from normal Transfer of Residence relief.

Restricted goods may still require licences or permits even where customs duty relief is available.

Applying for Transfer of Residence Relief

Approval should normally be obtained before the shipment is imported.

The applicant completes the ToR1 application and, if approved, receives a unique reference number.

This reference number should be provided to the removal company or customs agent so that it can be included in the customs declaration.

If an eligible shipment arrives without the necessary relief reference, import duties and VAT may become payable until the situation is resolved. [GOV.UK](#)

Documentation

The following documents may be required depending on the circumstances:

- Passport or other identity document.
- Immigration or residence documentation, where applicable.
- ToR approval/reference number, where Transfer of Residence relief is being claimed.
- Detailed packing list/inventory.
- Detailed description of household goods and personal effects.
- Customs declaration information.
- Shipping documentation.
- Evidence of ownership and use where required.
- Vehicle documentation for imported vehicles.
- Relevant licences or permits for restricted goods.

A detailed inventory should be prepared before packing and should clearly describe the contents of each package.

Household Goods and Personal Effects

Used household goods and personal effects may qualify for Transfer of Residence relief where all relevant conditions are met.

The goods should be for personal or household use and should not be intended for resale.

The goods can generally arrive in multiple consignments, provided the relevant conditions and time limits are met. [GOV.UK](#)

Items that do not qualify for relief may be subject to UK import VAT and/or customs duty.

New Goods

Newly purchased furniture, appliances, clothing and other goods may not qualify for Transfer of Residence relief if they do not meet the ownership and use requirements.

Receipts and invoices should therefore be retained for recently purchased goods.

Where goods do not qualify for a customs relief, the applicable VAT and customs duty will depend on the goods and their origin.

Students

Special relief provisions are available for students coming to the UK for full-time study.

Eligible student belongings can include clothing, household effects and objects or instruments normally used for study, such as personal computers and calculators.

Students should retain evidence of their course and period of study. GOV.UK

Wedding Trousseaux and Marriage

Specific relief may be available for people moving to the UK in connection with a marriage or civil partnership.

This can include clothing, household effects and qualifying wedding gifts, subject to specific conditions and limits.

Applicants should check the current HMRC requirements before shipping goods under this relief. GOV.UK

Inheritance

Inherited household and personal effects may be eligible for customs relief in certain circumstances.

Supporting documentation may include:

- Passport or identification.
- Detailed inventory.
- Evidence of inheritance.
- Copy of the death certificate.
- Copy of the will or appropriate documentation from the executor.
- Evidence establishing ownership of the goods.

The exact customs treatment depends on the circumstances, so advice should be obtained before shipment.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not normally covered by Transfer of Residence relief.

Alcohol imported into the UK may be subject to excise duty, VAT and customs requirements.

Special rules apply depending on the type and quantity of alcohol and whether it is travelling with the owner or being shipped separately.

We recommend contacting the removal company or customs agent before including alcohol in a household goods shipment.

Tobacco

Tobacco and tobacco products are excluded from normal Transfer of Residence relief.

They may be subject to UK excise duty and customs controls.

Large quantities should not be included with household goods without first confirming the applicable requirements.

Food

Food products can be subject to restrictions depending on their origin, type and quantity.

Particular restrictions may apply to meat, dairy products, plants, seeds and products of animal or plant origin.

For this reason, food should not normally be included in a household goods shipment unless the current UK import requirements have been checked.

Plants and Seeds

Plants, plant material, seeds and soil may be subject to phytosanitary requirements, certificates and restrictions.

These requirements vary depending on the type of plant and country of origin.

Please obtain professional advice before shipping plants, seeds or gardening materials.

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms, ammunition and certain weapons are controlled items in the UK.

A firearm or other weapon should not be packed with household goods without obtaining the appropriate UK licences and confirming the import requirements in advance.

Some weapons that may be legal or commonly owned in the United States can be subject to different or more restrictive UK legislation.

Drugs and Medicines

Prescription medicines and controlled drugs are subject to UK regulations.

Medicines should be transported in their original packaging and accompanied by appropriate documentation where necessary.

Controlled medicines can require additional documentation or permission.

Clients should check the current UK rules before shipping medication as part of a household goods consignment.

Restricted and Prohibited Items

The following categories may be prohibited or restricted and should not be included without prior confirmation:

- Firearms and ammunition.
- Certain knives and weapons.
- Explosives and fireworks.
- Controlled drugs and illegal narcotics.
- Certain animal products.
- Endangered species and products made from protected species.
- Certain plants, seeds and soil.
- Counterfeit goods.
- Offensive or prohibited materials.
- Commercial quantities of goods.
- Certain radio and communications equipment.

Restrictions can depend on the specific item, country of origin and intended use.

Works of Art and Antiques

Works of art, antiques and valuable collectibles can be imported into the UK, but special customs, tax and cultural-property requirements may apply.

Items made from endangered species or protected materials, including ivory, certain animal skins and other wildlife products, can be subject to CITES controls.

A CITES permit or certificate may be required.

Old pianos should be checked carefully because some older instruments may contain ivory components.

Endangered Species

The international Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) controls the movement of many protected animals, plants and products made from them.

Examples can include:

- Ivory.
- Certain furs and skins.
- Certain reptile products.
- Protected timber.
- Animal trophies.
- Certain antiques containing protected materials.

Please obtain professional advice before shipping any item that may contain material originating from a protected species.

Motor Vehicles

Vehicles can be imported into the UK, but the process is more complex than importing ordinary household goods.

A vehicle imported as part of a relocation may qualify for Transfer of Residence relief if the applicable conditions are met. Otherwise, VAT and customs duty may be payable. [GOV.UK](#)

For vehicles imported permanently into Great Britain, the importer must notify HMRC within 14 days of arrival. The vehicle may then need to undergo vehicle approval before being registered with the DVLA. [GOV.UK+1](#)

US-specification vehicles may require modifications to meet UK safety, lighting and other requirements.

Documents may include:

- Passport or identity document.
- Original vehicle title/registration documentation.
- Purchase invoice.
- Shipping documentation.
- Insurance documentation.
- Evidence of Transfer of Residence relief, where applicable.
- Vehicle approval documentation.
- HMRC import/NOVA information.
- DVLA registration documentation.

We strongly recommend obtaining an estimate of all import, modification, approval, registration and tax costs before shipping a vehicle.

Pets

The UK has specific requirements for bringing pets into Great Britain.

For dogs, cats and ferrets travelling from the United States, requirements can include:

- Microchip.
- Valid rabies vaccination.
- Appropriate pet health certificate.
- Compliance with the relevant waiting periods.
- Tapeworm treatment for dogs where required.
- Travel using an approved route where applicable.

The United States is currently listed among the countries for which a Great Britain pet health certificate can be used. [GOV.UK+1](#)

Pets arriving in Great Britain are subject to document and microchip checks. Failure to meet the requirements can result in quarantine or return of the animal at the owner's expense. [GOV.UK](#)

There are separate rules for Northern Ireland, so anyone relocating specifically to Northern Ireland should check the applicable requirements before travel.

Pets – Other Animals

Different requirements apply to birds, rabbits, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, fish and other animals.

Some animals may require an import licence or additional veterinary documentation. [GOV.UK](#)

Clients should obtain current guidance before making travel arrangements.

Fumigation and Wooden Packing Materials

Wooden packing materials used for international shipments may be subject to ISPM 15 requirements.

This can include:

- Wooden crates.
- Wooden pallets.
- Cases.
- Dunnage.
- Other solid wood packaging.

Where required, wood packaging should be appropriately treated and carry the recognised ISPM 15 mark.

Cash and Financial Instruments

If travelling into or out of the UK with cash or certain cash-equivalent instruments of £10,000 or more, a declaration may be required.

This requirement is separate from the importation of household goods and should be checked before travel. GOV.UK

Customs Declaration

Goods that are shipped separately from the owner as part of a relocation are normally handled through a customs declaration.

Where Transfer of Residence relief has been approved, the unique reference number should be supplied to the customs agent or removal company.

The removal company or customs agent will normally handle the customs declaration for the shipment.

Disclaimer

UK customs, immigration, tax, vehicle, pet, food and other import regulations can change. The information in this guide is intended as general relocation information and should not be regarded as legal, tax or customs advice.

For the most current information, consult the relevant UK Government authority before shipping.

Official UK Government guidance – Moving personal belongings to the UK: [GOV.UK – Moving personal belongings to the UK](#) GOV.UK

Official UK Government guidance – Transfer of Residence: [GOV.UK – Transfer of residence to the UK](#) GOV.UK

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More info on our website: <https://onewayamerica.com>.