

Shipping or Storing Your Vehicle When You Move Overseas

Overseas orders can be exciting for military families, but there's extra preparation involved if you're planning to ship – or store – your personal vehicle. Shipping one privately-owned vehicle, or POV, is an option at many overseas locations. However, at others, you may need to store your POV while you're stationed overseas.

In general, service members on permanent change of station orders to a foreign duty station can store a POV at government expense if the vehicle cannot be shipped to their new duty station or if extensive modifications to the vehicle would be required. Visit your transportation office to get details on the POV options at your overseas duty station. The following information will help you understand the processes involved in shipping or storing your POV.

Getting started

Visit [Move.mil](https://www.move.mil) for detailed information and limits for both shipment and storage. As you're making plans for your vehicle, here are some things to take into consideration:

- **Types of vehicles** — The sky is not the limit when shipping or storing a POV. The government will pay to ship or store a typical family car but not a recreational or oversized vehicle. Your SUV will probably pass the test, but you may have to find an alternative for something larger.
- **Personal items** – Jacks, tire irons, jumper cables and spare tires are usually OK, but you probably don't want to fill up your vehicle with all the stuff you forgot to pack. Household items, camping equipment and other personal items should not be packed in your vehicle.

Preparing your POV for shipment or storage

Whether you're shipping or storing your vehicle at government expense, you will deliver it to a vehicle processing center. Here's what you'll need to do:

- Come prepared with three sets of orders, your driver's license and proof of ownership (title or registration).
- Be prepared to list emergency contact information, including at least one point of contact in the United States.
- Ensure the vehicle has a quarter tank of gas or less.
- Be sure all fluids are fresh and at proper levels, with no leaks.
- Ensure a fresh battery is installed.
- Ensure the vehicle is clean.
- Have a complete set of keys, including gas cap and wheel lock keys, if applicable. You'll want to be sure you keep a spare set for yourself.
- Turn off or disconnect alarm or other anti-theft devices.
- Ensure you've met all requirements for insurance, licensing and registration.

With an inspector, you will complete DD Form 788, "Private Vehicle Shipping Document," or the "Storage Accessory Condition and Declaration" and the "Vehicle Storage Checklist." The inspector will provide you with

copies of all forms as receipts. You'll need these copies when you pick up your POV or if you need to file a claim for loss or damage.

Shipping

Depending on the regulations at new duty station and in your new host country, you may be allowed to ship one POV, either owned or leased by you or your family member, at government expense. There are specific rules for shipping your POV that vary by service branch and location. Here are a few things to consider as you make plans to ship your vehicle:

- **Modified vehicles** — Modifications, even those completed using local standards and laws, may not be legal in other countries. In addition, non-factory modifications must meet special requirements before shipping. The regulations vary, so be sure to check with your transportation office for specifics.
- **Time limits** — Departure and return shipping times vary by service branch so be sure to discuss the terms with your transportation office and plan accordingly.
- **Weight** — Weight limitations for vehicles are very strict. While your car may tip the scales 500 pounds below the weight limit, don't assume you can pack it with 499 pounds of additional items during your move. There are guidelines detailing what is allowed inside your car.
- **Licensing** — Once you reach your destination, you will need to follow local licensing and registration laws. These laws vary significantly from country to country, and deadlines for registering your vehicle tend to be tight. Review these guidelines with your relocation office so you can plan accordingly.
- **Buying a car at your destination** — In some cases, buying a car overseas is a necessity. Keep in mind that the regulations listed above also apply when moving back. Different countries have different standards and some vehicles in foreign countries — even American cars — may not be legal to drive in the United States. If you purchase a car overseas, do your research so you don't get stuck when you return home.

Visit your relocation or transportation office for detailed information and procedures specific to your orders. You may also read the Defense Transportation Regulation, "[Shipping Your POV](#)," for more information.

Storage

A visit to your transportation office will help you determine your allowance for storing a POV based on your permanent change of station orders and your service's guidance. The transportation office will issue a letter of authorization allowing you to begin taking steps to store your vehicle. Here's what you can expect from the storage facility:

- The facility will ensure your vehicle is safe, operable and leak-free prior to acceptance.
- Your POV will be stored indoors in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- Your vehicle will be cleaned prior to being placed in storage.
- Fuel stabilizer will be added to your vehicle as necessary.
- Your vehicle will be moved every 30 days.
- Your vehicle's air conditioner and heater will be cycled every 30 days.
- Your vehicle will be kept locked.

You may choose to self-procure your POV storage and receive reimbursement up to the government's cost. To begin this process, you must get a letter of authorization for self-procurement from your installation transportation office.

Picking up your vehicle

Whether it has been shipped or stored, you'll want to be sure your vehicle is in good working order when you pick it up. Here are some things to keep in mind when picking up your vehicle:

- You must provide the contractor with pick-up or forwarding instructions no less than 30 days before the delivery date at the designated vehicle processing center.
- You must pick up your vehicle no more than 90 days after the end of your tour and, if the vehicle has not been picked up, it will then be considered abandoned and no longer a stored vehicle.
- If you request early release of your POV without new permanent change of station orders, you will not be able to return the vehicle to storage.
- When you pick up your vehicle, carefully inspect both the interior and exterior to determine if there is any new damage.
- Make sure any items left in the POV are still in the vehicle.
- Carefully list any damages to your POV on your vehicle shipping document, DD Form 788. Failure to do this may result in denial of any claims for this damage.

Visit the Defense Personal Property website, [Move.mil](https://www.move.mil), for more information on how to ship or store your POV when you move overseas.