

Importing a Vehicle into Zimbabwe

2026 guide: duty, documents, border process and registration

This guide explains how the cost of importing a vehicle is built up, what you need, and what happens from the border to the road. Always confirm current rates with your clearing agent, because they are set by the government and can change.

1. How the cost is built up

Everything starts from the **value for duty purposes (VDP)**, which is based on the CIF value: the price of the vehicle plus insurance and freight to the first point of entry into Zimbabwe. Port, storage and handling charges incurred on the way can also be included.

Component	How it is worked out
Customs duty	Duty rate x VDP. The rate depends on the vehicle type and classification.
Surtax	An additional charge on older passenger vehicles. Vehicles aged five years or less are exempt from surtax; older vehicles attract it.
VAT	VAT rate x (VDP + customs duty). Surtax is not part of the VAT base.
Total payable	Customs duty + surtax + VAT

Worked example (illustrative rates only)

The rates below are round numbers chosen only to show the method. They are **not** the current rates. Ask your agent for the rates that apply to your vehicle.

Step	Illustration
CIF / VDP	USD 10,000
Customs duty at 20%	USD 2,000
Surtax at 10% of VDP (vehicle older than 5 years)	USD 1,000
VAT at 15% of (VDP + duty) = 15% of USD 12,000	USD 1,800
Total taxes payable	USD 4,800

2. Age rules

- Used vehicles must generally be under 10 years old when clearance is completed. Delays can push a vehicle over the limit, so allow time.
- Exceptions exist, for example for returning residents, diplomats and qualifying classic vehicles, each with its own conditions.
- Vehicles five years old or less do not pay surtax.

3. Documents you need

- Purchase invoice or bill of sale and proof of payment
- Transport document (Bill of Lading or road consignment note)
- Export / de-registration papers from the country of origin
- CBCA Certificate of Conformity for used vehicles
- Your ID or passport and ZIMRA BP number
- Agent's letter of authority

4. The border process (for example Beitbridge)

Stage	What happens
Pre-clearance	Your agent prepares the declaration from your documents before the vehicle arrives.
Arrival	Vehicle and documents presented at the border post.
Assessment	Customs verifies the vehicle, the documents and the value, and assesses duty and taxes.
Payment	Duty and taxes are paid to ZIMRA.
Release	Vehicle is released and a clearance document is issued.

5. After clearance: registration

- Vehicle inspection by the police, including VIN / chassis and engine number check.
- Registration of the vehicle in your name.
- ZINARA vehicle licence and number plates.
- Keep copies of all clearance and registration documents.

Before you buy: Send us the vehicle details and invoice. We can tell you the age position and an estimate of the duty and taxes before you commit.

General guidance only, not legal or tax advice. Requirements, permits and rates are set by ZIMRA and other regulators and change from time to time. Confirm the requirements for your specific shipment with your George Steward clearing agent before you ship. Last reviewed: October 2026.