

How CBCA Works

Zimbabwe's Consignment Based Conformity Assessment, explained simply

What is CBCA?

CBCA stands for **Consignment Based Conformity Assessment**. It is a programme run by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, together with ZIMRA, to check that certain goods exported to Zimbabwe meet the required standards. Its purpose is to protect consumers and importers from substandard, counterfeit and dangerous goods.

In practice, if your goods are on the regulated list, they must arrive with a **Certificate of Conformity (CoC)**. Without it, customs can refuse to clear them.

What goods are covered?

Coverage has expanded over time and is set by the government, so always check the current list. Broadly, the programme has covered:

- Used motor vehicles and used spare parts
- Food and agricultural products
- A range of general goods, with new product categories added from time to time
- Consolidated shipments containing goods that are on the list

Some shipments are exempt, such as certain donations and humanitarian goods. Ask your agent whether your goods qualify.

How to get a Certificate of Conformity

Step	What you do
1. Check	Ask your agent whether your goods are on the CBCA list.
2. Request	The exporter or supplier lodges a Request for Certificate with the appointed conformity assessment company, with the invoice, packing list and quality documents.
3. Review	The assessor reviews the documents. Depending on the goods and the supplier's record, they may also inspect, sample or test the goods.
4. Certificate	If the goods conform, a Certificate of Conformity is issued. If not, a Non-Conformity Report is issued explaining why.
5. Ship	Ship only once you have the certificate, and send a copy to your clearing agent.

Assessment can follow different routes, depending on the goods and the exporter's profile, such as documentary review, inspection, or testing. Your agent can advise which applies.

What happens if you do not comply?

- Goods arriving without a required certificate can be refused clearance.
- Cargo can be held at the border, with storage and demurrage charges adding up daily.

- In some cases goods can be assessed in Zimbabwe at extra cost and with delay, rather than before shipping.
- Shipping before certification is the most expensive mistake an importer can make.

Rule of thumb: Ask whether CBCA applies before you place the order, not after the goods have shipped.

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.