

IMPORTING YOUR CAR TO MEXICO:

A Quick Reference

By Hiram Cervera

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There are several ways to import cars at the moment of their border crossing or vessel arrival to port. First, cars of any year model and country of origin may be imported temporarily, keeping their foreign plates. However, this only applies to foreign visitors and temporary residents. Second, some cars meeting certain conditions may be imported permanently by paying duties to get Mexican plates. Permanent imports can be understood in three different subcases according to their requirements and duties payable: 1. Used Cars imported under the Car Import Decree, 2. Other Used Cars Import, and 3. New cars import. Each of these 4 cases (one temporary, three permanent) are summarized in the next chart, and will be discussed below in further detail. Finally, we will discuss some limited cases in which cars imported temporarily can be changed to a permanent Regime without taking the car to the border for import.

**CASE 1 -TEMPORARY IMPORT PERMITS - BANJERCITO**

- Issued at Banjercito Bank. Cost is about 60 USD plus Warranty Deposit 400 USD.
- Any year models and any country of manufacture. No heavy trucks.
- Only for TEMPORARY RESIDENTS or VISITORS. Any regular car (no trucks)
- Car keeps foreign plates. Must return abroad and cannot be sold.
- Only Foreigners and direct family members can drive the car. No Broker is needed

**CASE 2 -PERMANENT IMPORT - UNDER USED CARS IMPORT DECREE**

- Car MUST BE assembled in CANADA, MEXICO or USA
- Year Models: ONLY 8 or 9 years older than current model.
- PAY DUTIES: Aprox 30% of Value according to Mexico Estimated Price List.
- Requires Clean Title and recent Certificate of Emissions issued in USA/CAN

**CASE 3 -PERMANENT IMPORT - USED OUTSIDE USED CAR DECREE.**

- Car MUST BE assembled in CANADA, MEXICO or USA
- ONLY current and future year model and previous year model are excluded, until 2019.
- PAY DUTIES:: Aprox 75% of Value according to Mexico's Estimated Price List
- Requiere Clean Title and recent Certificate of Emissions.

**CASE 4-PERMANENT IMPORT - NEW CARS**

- Car MUST BE NEW (Less than 1,000 km in odometer,
- Invoiced Directly by Dealer or Plant).
- Year model: ONLY CURRENT or NEXT YEAR.
- PAY DUTIES: 30-75% of invoice value. Any Country of Origin (except North Korea)

Case 1 – CARS TEMPORARY IMPORT

Tourists and Temporary Residents are allowed to bring ONE car per person into Mexico, for their use as long as they keep that immigration status, including renewals. Hence, a tourist can bring a car into Mexico for 90 or 180 days (according to its immigration form). He or she can make multiple entries for the same car, or to bring another car once the other returns abroad. The car is only temporarily in Mexico and is required to keep its foreign plates.



Banjercito



All Temporary Import Permits are issued at BANJERCITO BANK Car Modules. The permit is issued as a half page paper, and has a matching sticker that must be placed on the car windshield. To get the permit, car owner needs to go in person and sign a form and promise to return the car abroad before his immigration status expires. No Customs Broker is needed.

Bring the following documents in originals, and a set of copies for the bank to keep:

- Car Title or legal proof of property
- Car Registration,
- Passport,
- Residency Card or Immigration FMM
- An International Credit Card. With your card you will pay a warranty deposit for 200-400 USD, depending on car model, and a Bank fee of 60 USD.



Keep in mind that cars **MUST RETURN ABROAD** and they cannot be sold in Mexico. Also, that only other foreigners or your direct family members are entitled to drive them. Mexicans cannot drive these cars if no foreigner is in the car. If your immigration status is extended, then the import extends also, without the need to do nothing else. Finally, remember to go back to BANJERCITO when you return the car abroad, so that they release your warranties. They will issue a “definite return”, allowing you to bring another car in the future if you keep your immigration status. In some cases, cars can be changed regime without having to take them to the border, as commented later in this section.

BANJERCITO BANK CAR MODULES

Progreso

Calle 76 No. 141 x 29,
Centro, Progreso, Yuc.
Tel. (969) 935 2746
Mo.-Fr.9:00 am - 2:30 pm

Puerto Juárez (Cancún)

Edif. Capitanía de Puerto,
Carr. Punta Sam Km 0+300,
Puerto Juárez, Q. Roo
Tel. (998) 892 8725
Mo.-Fr.9am - 2:30 pm

Chetumal Intl. Bridge

Av. México s/n, Edif.
Aduana Fronteriza,
Subte. López, Chetumal, Q.
Roo, C.P.77900
Tel. (983) 834 5328
Mo.-Fr.9am – 7:00 pm

Case 2 – USED CARS PERMANENT IMPORT DECREE

The Used Car Import Decree is ONLY applicable to cars that meet the following conditions:

- a. Year model 8 or 9 years older than the current year model. Please consider that Year models change on the 1st of November of each year. Hence, for instance, the Decree would allow 2009 and 2010 models until October 31st, 2018. From next day, only 2010 and 2011 will be allowed, if rules don't change. Year of assembly is determined by VIN Number. Please note the chart on the right, for quick reference of Case Applicable
- b. Country of assembly is the USA, Canada or Mexico, according to VIN number codes.

You can decode for free your VIN number in autocheck.com or www.carfax.com.

- c. Title of car must be clean, without any circulation limitation. No salvage cars are allowed. In addition, Title must be in favor of importer, or at least it must be endorsed on its favor, signed by previous owner.
- d. Provide proof of emissions certificate, passed officially in any US State. Such certificate must be verifiable online, as in US States DMV websites. This restriction is applicable even if your state of registration or title does not require such controls.

Duties payable are significant, adding to 30% of car value, but are much better than other options. Please notice car value will be assessed using Mexican Government estimated prices lists, and not on real purchase values. If your car qualifies, after import, you may obtain Mexican plates. Please ask your Customs Broker about this before bringing your car. Car import conditions are based on a decree and rules that could change any day, without any notice.

Case 3 – USED CARS GENERAL PERMANENT IMPORT

Outside the Used Car Import Decree, other used cars may be imported. They must comply all requirements mentioned on the Decree (Case 2), except for the year model, which can be as new as 2 years older than current year. **However, duties payable will be as high as 75% of value.** Currently used cars 2018 or 2017 cannot be imported in this case, but in January 1st, 2019 all used cars of any year model, as

Car Year Model and applicable Case

Year Model. by VIN	Years Older than Current	Case	Aprox Duty Rate %
2019	Next Year	4(*) (**)	40-50
2018	Current	4(*) (**)	40-50
2017	1	(**)	n.a.
2016	2	3	75
2015	3	3	75
2014	4	3	75
2013	5	3	75
2012	6	3	75
2011	7	3	75
2010	8	2	29
2009	9	2	29
2008 & older	10	3	75

(*) Can enter as Case 4 only if meets definition of NEW CAR

(**) From Jan 1st, 2019 all used cars will be able to be imported on Case 3

Duty includes IGI, IVA, ISAN, DTA
All year models can be imported for Temporary Imports.

Allowed only US, CA, MX except for New Cars.

Value used is that listed in Estimated Prices Decree

Many exceptions apply, please contact your customs broker

long as assembled in NAFTA will be importable using this rate, for those who can afford them and meet the other conditions.

Case 4 – NEW CARS PERMANENT IMPORT

New cars can be imported (up to 1 car per person per year without registering as importer). You must use the services of a Customs Broker. This can be done in any border or port where your car arrives to Mexico.

New Cars pay 20% general duty rate, plus 16% VAT, 0.8% DTA, and ISAN which is a special tax for new cars which ranges from 2% to 16%.

NEW CARS are defined as those meeting the following conditions:

- 1. Invoiced directly to importer by the manufacturer or its dealers*
 - 2. Year Model must be current model or next year's model, according to VIN code.*
 - 3. Odometer must BE less than 1,000 km or 621 miles. If not, they will be considered as USED.*
-

Please notice only one car can be imported per person per year, without needing to register as a car importer.

NAFTA can only be applied if plant or dealer issue a NAFTA CERTIFICATE. It will not be accepted from any other person. Plant invoice must be issued in favor of owner.

CARS – CHANGE FROM TEMPORARY TO PERMANENT REGIME.

If you don't want to drive back to the Northern border, consider that in some cases, it may be possible to do the Change of Regime in Progreso. The duties are the same. Cars meet the above permanent import criteria on year model, country of assembly and emissions controls, as Case 2 or Case 3, depending on year model. However, there are two main problems that make this change quite hard to do outside the border:

1. Since cars must still present a Certificate of Emissions issued in the last 6 months previous to the change of regime, and being that this car permit must be obtained in the USA (still there are no Mexican facilities authorized), it is more convenient to drive to the Texas border and do the entry there.
2. Temporary residency must still be valid (this must be done before obtaining permanent residency) so that the car is not yet illegal in Mexico. Importer must provide proof of legal residency in Mexico, from the entry of the car to the date of change of regime.

Please notice that your Banjercito warranty deposit will be lost. Most likely, changing regime means driving to the Texas border, and making a definite import there. This cannot be done at the Chetumal Belize border.

MOTORCYCLES



PERMANENT IMPORT - USED AND NEW MOTORCYCLES

- Any year model, any country of manufacture.
- PAY DUTIES: 20-42% of invoice value according to specific case.
- Get Mexican Plates with entry documents.
- Motorcycles with 3-4 wheels and car direction or reverse are considered CARs.



TEMPORARY IMPORT PERMITS

- Issued by Banjercito, just like car permits (Se Car Import - Case 1 Temporary Import. Cost is about 60 USD plus Warranty Deposit 400 USD).
- Only for TEMPORARY RESIDENTS or VISITORS. Any motorcycle.
- Motorcycle keeps foreign plates. Must return abroad and cannot be sold.
- Only Foreigners and direct family members can drive the motorcycle

Temporary import is only permitted to visitors or temporary residents in Mexico. Please check all the import details with Banjercito. However, be advised that unless you plan to ship the motorcycle before your entry as tourist or the expiry of your Temporary Residency, you should import the car and get Mexican Plates. After your 90 or 180 days as tourist (according to the FMM Immigration form) or your Temporary residency, the motorcycle becomes illegal. It cannot be sold or driven by Mexicans or permanent residents, and there is a risk of confiscation and fines.

SAMPLE COSTS & DUTIES

Motorcycle Invoice Value....	800 USD
Freight to Mexican Port.....	200 USD
Total Customs Value.....	1000 USD
Import Duty 15%	150 USD
VAT 16%.....	187 USD
Other Duties.....	30 USD
Total Duties.....	372.
Plus Import expenses ...	200-400

Motorcycles, including Mopeds and cycles with auxiliary motors, can be imported into Mexico permanently and get Mexican plates by paying duties, and this has really no used/new/restriction. They cannot be considered part of household goods, and must get their own import papers so that owners can prove property and value, pay duty and get Mexican plates for them:

So real duties paid is about 38% of customs value, which includes freight to Mexican border or port. On top of this, there are costs on the fees charged by Customs Brokers, Port Maneuvers and other fees payable, which can be more or less some 200-400 USD additional.

Please get a quotation from your customs broker to get exact amounts. In addition, you need to pay your local (state) plates fees and registration process.

About the Author

Hiram Cervera is a Mexican Customs Broker, Director of Agencia Aduanal Cervera, a Customs Brokerage House operating since 1946, with offices in Merida, Cancun and Progreso, Mexico. He has a degree in International Business issued by ITESM in Monterrey, Mexico, and a Master of Science in Economic Development and International Business issued by the University of Reading, England. He has been a customs broker since 1997, holding patent number 3894. For more information, please visit his company website www.cervera.com.mx.



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Please contact a licensed customs broker at the port of entry of your goods into Mexico before shipping your goods or incurring in any expenses.

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