TRANSXPRESS



PRACTICAL GUIDE · PORT OF CONAKRY

Vessel arriving at the port of Conakry: the importer's checklist to lose no days

When the vessel berths in Conakry, it is often too late to recover a missing document or unplanned funding. Every day in port beyond the free time costs money. Here, step by step, is what an importer should have settled before arrival, at the arrival notice, at discharge and after release.

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01 Why everything is decided before arrival

To lose no days in Conakry, the document file, the tariff classification, the funding of duties and the transport must be ready before the vessel's estimated time of arrival (ETA). On the day the goods are discharged, the customs declaration must be able to go in immediately, and trucks must be booked for the day of gate-out.

The free time granted by the shipping line and the terminal usually starts at discharge. Any document, funding or logistics delay then turns into demurrage, storage and later detention. The checklist below follows the real order of operations.

It applies as much to an importer receiving a single container as to one following several shipments in parallel. In the second case, a tracking sheet per container (B/L, arrival date, end of free time, customs status, truck booked) keeps a file from being forgotten while the others are handled. Also appoint a single person in charge of the file on the importer's side, reachable to answer quickly any questions from customs or the broker.

02 Before ETA: the document file

1. Get a copy of the bill of lading (B/L) from the supplier as soon as the vessel sails, and check the consignee's name, the description, the number of packages, the weights and the container numbers.
2. Settle the question of the original: original B/L sent by courier, telex release, or a sea waybill that requires no original.
3. Gather the final commercial invoice, the packing list, the certificate of origin and the insurance certificate if the Incoterm requires it.

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4. Check the certificates specific to the goods (phytosanitary, conformity, prior authorisation) depending on the product.
5. Check whether a cargo tracking note or equivalent document is required for the shipment, and that it was issued in time.
6. Check consistency across all these documents: a different weight or description between B/L and invoice blocks the declaration.

03 Before ETA: customs, funding and transport

- Have the goods classified in the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (HS code) and estimate duties and taxes on the CIF value.
- Arrange funding for duties and taxes, and for shipping line and terminal charges, so they can be paid as soon as the assessment is issued.
- Identify any special regime (exemption, temporary admission) and gather its supporting documents in advance: they often take longer than the declaration itself.
- Know the shipping line's and terminal's free time for each container and note the end date.
- Book the trucks and, for an out-of-gauge load, start the convoy authorisations.
- Alert the delivery site: unloading equipment, access, staff present for unstuffing.

04 At the arrival notice

A few days before berthing, the shipping line's agent in Conakry sends an arrival notice to the consignee or its notify party. This is the signal to start the formalities.

1. Check that the arrival notice matches the B/L and the file (containers, weights, consignee).
2. Hand the complete file to the licensed customs broker to prepare the declaration in the customs computer system (SYDONIA).
3. Obtain and pay the shipping line's invoice (local charges, container deposit if requested) to get the delivery order (DO).
4. Confirm the planned discharge date and adjust the truck schedule.

05 At discharge: declaration, assessment, payment

1. Lodge the declaration as soon as the manifest is available and the goods are discharged.
2. Follow the assigned channel: simple document check or physical inspection, which the broker attends.
3. Check the assessment (the official calculation of duties and taxes) before paying: HS code, value, rates applied.
4. Pay the duties and taxes and collect the receipt.

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5. Obtain the customs release order (BAE), then pay the terminal (handling, any storage) to organise gate-out.

> In case of physical inspection, the broker's prompt attendance and a complete file prevent a container from waiting several times at the same stage.

06 After release: gate-out, delivery, empty return

- Take the containers out with the BAE and the delivery order, and check the seals at the gate.
- Deliver to site on schedule, with a joint inspection and written reserves in case of damage.
- Unstuff quickly and return the empty container to the depot named by the shipping line, to stop detention.
- Recover the container deposit, if one was paid, once the empty is returned undamaged.
- File every document (declaration, assessment, receipts, invoices, orders) in the operation's file.

07 What we do for you

TransXpress prepares the file before the vessel arrives, checks the documents, estimates duties and taxes, tracks the free time of every container and books transport to your site. Port and shipping line charges and duties are re-invoiced to you at actual cost, with their receipts. Send us a copy of the B/L, the commercial invoice and the packing list as soon as the vessel sails.

? Frequently asked questions

When should you send the documents to your customs broker?

As soon as the vessel sails, and at the latest on receipt of the arrival notice. The earlier the file is ready, the faster the declaration can go in after discharge.

What is the difference between the delivery order and the release order?

The delivery order (DO) is issued by the shipping line once its charges are paid; the release order (BAE) is issued by customs after duties are paid. Both are needed to take the goods out.

What if the original B/L has not arrived?

Ask the supplier to arrange a telex release with the shipping line, or plan a sea waybill at the order stage for future shipments.

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General information guide written by TransXpress. Customs rules and procedures change: every file is checked against the documents and the regulations in force. This guide is neither a quotation nor a commitment.

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