



# Post-Brexit Guide: Hassle-free Shipping

18 tips for cross-border shipping after Brexit



**Preparing for customs borders with the UK**  
Deal or no deal? Shipping without a hassle

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# Shipping in a post-Brexit world

For months the news has been dominated by the question of what a post-Brexit world will look like. Fortunately, a deal was closed at the last minute. However, there is no crystal ball to predict how Brexit will impact the e-commerce industry exactly.

No matter what the future will look like, it's important to prepare a strong international shipping strategy. A futureproof strategy requires a thorough understanding of international trade rules and their impact on day-to-day operations.

Whether you are already selling into the UK or are just exploring your opportunities, don't let Brexit stop you from shipping abroad. Although there are many uncertainties, now is the time to take action. Taking proactive steps to prepare for a post-Brexit e-commerce industry can help minimise disruption, manage the impact and even gain a competitive advantage over those caught flat-footed.

This sheet gives you 18 actionable tips you can use to handle cross-border e-commerce once Brexit has come into place. At the end you'll find a roadmap for international shipping, to support you with a smooth shipping process along the way.

*Due to the fast changing (legal) landscape surrounding the Brexit, the information in this guide may be subject to change. Even though we aim to inform you to the best of our abilities, no rights can be derived from the information provided in this guide.*

8 January 2021

# Checklist

With daily news updates around Brexit, it can be difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. This simple checklist details the steps you can take to help your business get ready for Brexit. Remember: a good start is half the battle!

**Decide if the UK is worth it**

Doing business in the UK post-Brexit will be harder than previously before Brexit. You have to take customs processes into account, and in many cases you will also have to file tax returns in the UK. Ask yourself: do the burdens outweigh the benefits? A SWOT-analysis might help to decide whether the UK is worth the effort.

**Appoint a Brexit-coordinator**

If your company trades with the UK, a lot is going to change on 1 January 2021. These changes will impact relationships with suppliers and customers, but also different processes. With new updates coming in every day, it can be hard to keep track of all the information. A designated Brexit-coordinator can help channel all these processes.

**Register for an EORI-number**

From 2021 you'll need an EORI number to move goods between the UK and other countries. If you don't have one, you can get one for free at [gov.uk/eori](http://gov.uk/eori). Mention this number clearly on commercial invoices to ensure smooth customs processing and clearance and avoid extra costs.

**Don't forget your commercial invoice**

This is essential paperwork in order for your goods to clear customs in the UK. The [commercial invoice](#) is an export document that contains information about the shipper, shipping arrangements and the contents of shipments. It is best to attach two copies to the outside of the package and to enclose a third copy on the inside for the recipient.

**Get the right customs declaration**

When shipping outside the EU, you can't escape customs. This means you will need a customs declaration form from the moment the UK leaves the EU. If you ship goods up to 2kg with a value of up to €425 you should fill out a CN22. A CN23 is needed over 2kg or with a value over €425. [Create yours here](#). Note that this is only mandatory when shipping with a postal carrier, like Royal Mail.

**Claim preferential rates of duty**

The UK and the EU have agreed on a tariff-free trade deal. This means you can claim preferential rates of duty, if your products originate in the EU or UK. If the value of the consignment is 6,000 euros or less you can make out [a statement on origin](#) yourself. Otherwise you will need a Registered Exporter (REX) number to do so.



**Check the HS-code for each product**

To fill in your custom declaration forms correctly, you need to know the [HS-code](#) of your products. This is a multi-digit code that customs use worldwide to classify products to ensure the right duties and taxes are applied. Always enter at least the 6-digit code and define the subcategory of your product if possible.

**Check export conditions per country**

Certain goods may be subject to restrictions when shipping between the UK and the EU from 2021. [Restrictions](#) may apply to medical equipment, electronics or food. However, the conditions may differ per country so don't forget to check the restrictions with local authorities.

**Consider Paperless Trade**

When you ship via DHL Express or UPS, it is possible to use "Paperless Trade". This means the customs forms are forwarded electronically to the carrier. As soon as you process your

international order, the customs forms are immediately forwarded to the carrier. It not only saves you time, printing and costs, but it also reduces the risk of documents being lost.

**Think about insuring your parcels**

When your package has to travel a long way, the chance of damage or loss is higher. Help your customer immediately with a new shipment or compensation of the parcel in case this happens. In the meantime, you can claim your own compensation with your insurance. Via Sendcloud you can take out [insurance](#) for any preferred value.

**Take new surcharges into account**

Some carriers, such as DHL Express, have announced a special surcharge on dutiable shipments between the UK and the EU once Brexit has come into place. Make sure to check these surcharges in advance, so you can include it in the shipping costs!

## Tips depending on order value

### Orders under £135

**Account for VAT to HMRC**

At the end of the transition period, the UK will introduce a new [VAT-model](#). For orders not exceeding £135 in value, the point at which VAT is collected will be moved from the point of importation to the point of sale. This means the seller will be required to register and account for the VAT to HMRC in the UK. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is the tax authority of the UK government, responsible for collecting taxes.

**Use 'Delivery Duty Paid' for small orders**

Since retailers will be responsible for VAT-payment from 2021 onwards, this means they need to use the Incoterm 'DDP' to fill in customs forms for orders below £135. Delivery Duty Paid basically means you take care of all responsibilities for transporting goods, including duties, taxes and customs.

### Orders over £135

**Decide who is responsible for tax**

Orders over £135 are excluded from the new VAT-model. Although tax must be paid, it is up to the seller and buyer to decide who is responsible for this. They agree on this by using specific [Incoterms](#). Incoterms are a set of standardized international arrangements that describe all tasks, risks and costs associated with the transaction of goods. 'DAP', Delivered At Place, is a good choice if you don't want to take responsibility for taxes.



☑ **Communicate delays proactively**

Brexit is making far-reaching changes in the area of customs processes. Therefore, keep in mind that the delivery process, especially the first months, can take a bit longer. What to do from your side? At least inform your customer proactively about the status of their parcel, also in case of delays. Negative surprises are never fun.

☑ **Personalized track & trace**

Did you know that track & trace mails have an open rate of 90 to 100 percent? Even if the delivery goes according to plan, it is good to use this touchpoint. Take this moment as a cheap marketing effort to attract clients back to your brand with branded track & trace emails. Way more sexy than the ones from the carrier, right?

☑ **Ensure a clear return process**

Returns are a pain in the ass for most retailers, however a smooth [return process](#) is super important to consumers. 38% of Brits don't shop at international stores, being afraid of difficult returns. Make sure that consumers can count on a smooth return process. Provide them with custom documents so they don't have to worry about this. DHL Express for example, offers 'Smart return options' for this purpose.

☑ **Returns? Get your money back!**

You might not like them, but returns are unavoidable. Luckily you can get a repayment or remission of import duties when a customer from the UK returns a product. This way you are not wasting money. If Royal Mail or Parcelforce delivered the goods, you should fill in a [BOR 286](#). Otherwise you should go for a [C285 form](#).



# Roadmap for international shipping in a post-Brexit world

After years of negotiations, the moment has come: the UK is leaving the EU. Brexit has big consequences when you want to do business in the UK. However, with our checklist you are well on your way to prepare yourself properly! To save time and avoid mistakes, it might help to automate the international shipping process as much as possible.

In 5 steps we will show you how to automate your shipping process in preparation for Brexit.

## Step 1 – Prepare your business for UK

First things first! If you want to do business in the UK you will need an EORI number and VAT account from 2021 onwards. These numbers are essential to fill in a commercial invoice, which is mandatory for customs authorities to determine which taxes and import duties apply to a shipment. Instead of entering these documents manually, Sendcloud can help you to do so. If you add both your VAT and EORI in your sender address in the Sendcloud environment, we will include them on any customs forms or documents we generate for you automatically where applicable.

## Step 2 – Use smart shipping rules

Now your EORI and VAT numbers are set, you are almost ready to ship to the UK. Next up is to decide which carrier you will be using and how you want to ship your order. With [Sendcloud's smart shipping rules](#) you choose how a product should be processed, to ensure orders are shipped flawlessly. If an order meets the condition(s) of a shipping rule, the action(s) set will be executed. You can use variables for carriers, insurance, brands and more. For example, you might consider DPD for all orders to the UK, or decide to insure above a certain value.

## Step 3 – Pick & pack

When shipping a package internationally, bear in mind that the package will travel many thousands of miles across various shipping and postal networks and needs to withstand the kind of wear and tear inevitable when shipping via road, sea or air. Make

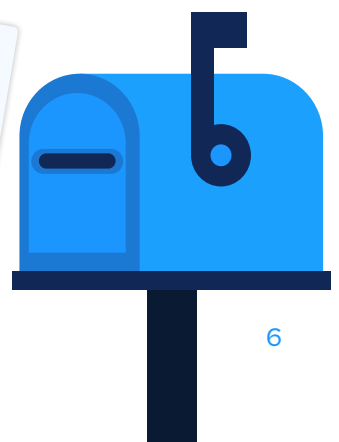
sure to use appropriate packaging material and address your label on the longest side of the parcel.

## Step 4 – Create your shipping label

One important step to make sure your international parcel arrives correctly is to provide the right documents. When shipping with Sendcloud, you will be prompted to enter product information necessary for the creation of customs documents and commercial invoices before creating a [shipping label](#). This way you can avoid mistakes and ensure your package is accompanied by the right info. Once you have correctly entered all the product data required for the shipment, you will be able to create a shipping label to get your parcel ready for shipment.

## Step 5 – Ship it like it's hot!

Now you've added all the relevant documents it's time to ship it like it's hot! Make sure to keep your customer in the loop using [tracking notifications](#), so they know when to expect the delivery. Is something still going wrong along the way? No worries, you can easily access your customs documents through your Sendcloud panel to anticipate new events.





“Sendcloud turned out to be an essential partner when it comes to the logistics of processing our orders.”

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