

# Shipping a car from Panama to Cartagena, What to do in PANAMA

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This document is mainly helpful to people who ship with Seabord Marine. Certain things apply to Seabord only, other things apply to all shipments.

**IMPORTANT: Thursday is officially the LAST day to drop off the car in Colon. The Seabord Marine ships leave the port on Sunday. We did all the paperwork on Wednesday including the booking with SM via Thea Kalmbach. On Thursday from 8am to 12pm is drop off time in Colon. It is VERY ADVISEABLE to start the whole process on Monday or for the latest on Tuesday- in case anything does not go the right way, you still have time to fix the problem.**

## Preparation

### 1. Verification

Verify that all papers are in proper order. In our customs document there was no motor number, but only a chassis number. We have read that other travelers have had problems because of that and had to renew their papers. We did not have any issues regarding that though. Just say that your motor does not have a number. If all data of the car is correct, proceed to 3., if not, read on under 2.

### 2. Correct customs vehicle permit

Drive to customs GPS N8.97319°, W79.547297° and have the original document corrected or extended. Bring original documents and several copies. In case you want to extend your stay for another 30 days, write a letter saying: „Hola Panama, yo quisiera extender mi permiso de vehiculo por otro mes. Yo soy un turista. Gracias“. Come with plenty of time, things seem to be very slow there! And inquire whether you also need to extend your car insurance or not.

### 3. Copies

Make plenty of copies of the following documents:

- Customs vehicle permit Panama
- Car insurance Panama
- Drivers license
- Passport (personal info AND entry stamp)
- Car Title

#### 4. Get different quotes

Get different quotes via email or phone.

**BARWIL** is only an agency which will do a lot of the paperwork for you which you will pay for! They then also ship with Seabord or Wilhelmsen etc.

**SC Line** is a young RORO company with a good reputation, their prices are very attractive!

**Wilhelmsen** is a shipping company which we only got in touch with via BARWIL.

We went to SMarine personally (N 9.00633° W 79.53780° , 2nd floor of the building, not so easy to find) only to find out that we cannot book a shipping ourselves, it has to be done by an agent . No need to go there in person in that case!

#### 5. Make booking

We wanted to get most of it done alone, so we contacted Thea (teakalmbach@hotmail.com, 0054 (0)2255 477 495 till noon and then 0054 (0) 2255 477 995). Thea lives in Argentina!!! She was able to get the booking done within 5 minutes and could send us the Bill of Landing draft within a few hours. This is a VERY important document!

**IMPORTANT: Double check EVERYTHING and report potential mistakes to Thea right away!** This very evening we were visited by Amy (Thea's daughter who lives in Panama City) to bring the BoL. Again double check all the data! There must not be any mistake on this paper! We paid Amy for their services 150\$.

We received 3 times a signed (by agent) original and 2 times a so-called hazard document. Hold on to all of these.

#### 6. Payment

We had the options to pay Amy the whole amount of money (who will then pay the agency) or to pay in Cartagena. The disadvantage of paying in Colombia only is clearly the loss of money via exchange rate. Advantage is you still have your money in case anything goes wrong :o)

We paid Amy Cash, 1430\$ for 2 cars. She only pays SM when the ship has left Colon. We were in contact with Tea all the time, except for a 5 day delay of the ship, everything went very well!

### The day in Panama City

#### 7. Show car at the Police

##### Copies needed:

- Customs vehicle permit Panama
- Car insurance Panama
- Drivers license
- Passport (personal info AND entry stamp)
- Title

(GPS N8.966304,W79.544736). For a map look at 8.

**Important:** You have to be at the Police latest 10am- if you arrive late, you will have to return the next day. The area is ugly, be careful! You park your car backwards and open the hood. Go knock on the door to let them know you are here to export your vehicle. Have the copies ready.

Once the officer comes out (we heard rumours that if it is raining he won't come out at all), he will have a look at the chassis number. He takes a note on his papers and keeps all the copies. That's it!

## 8. Visit at the 'Dirección de Investigación Judicial'

At 2pm of the same day, you go get the export permit on the other side of the road.

### Needed copies:

- Customs vehicle permit Panama
- Car insurance Panama
- Drivers license
- Passport (personal info AND entry stamp)
- Title

### Needed originals:

- Passport
- additional ID (to hand in to security)

The parking is big but PACKED! Rather take a taxi, 3\$ are the common rate in town.

Only the driver has to visit the Secretaria General's Office. It is the building at the very end/beginning of the road.

(GPS average N8.965592,W79.545329 )



Just ask where the 'Secretaría de la Dirección ' is to get the export permit. Knock and go in. Tell them what you are here for you will then be asked to hand in copies and fill in some forms and sign some papers. It is all straight forward. After that, you wait until the document is ready. The export permit is valid for 8 days! Make copies of it and enjoy the rest of your day :o)

## The day in Colon

### Needed:

- 58US\$ cash + a few bucks for the bus journey back...
- Food + Drink, there's nothing much close by!

**IMPORTANT: Remove ALL valuables from the drivers cabin! Everything that's still in there and can be taken within a few moments will be gone!!**

### Needed copies:

- Customs vehicle permit Panama
- Car insurance Panama
- Drivers license
- Passport (personal info AND entry stamp)
- Title
- Export Permit

**Bring several copies of these documents! Ideally you make 3 sets beforehand, together with the BoL.**

### Needed originals:

- 3x Bill of Landing (received from agent)
- Passport and another piece of identification.

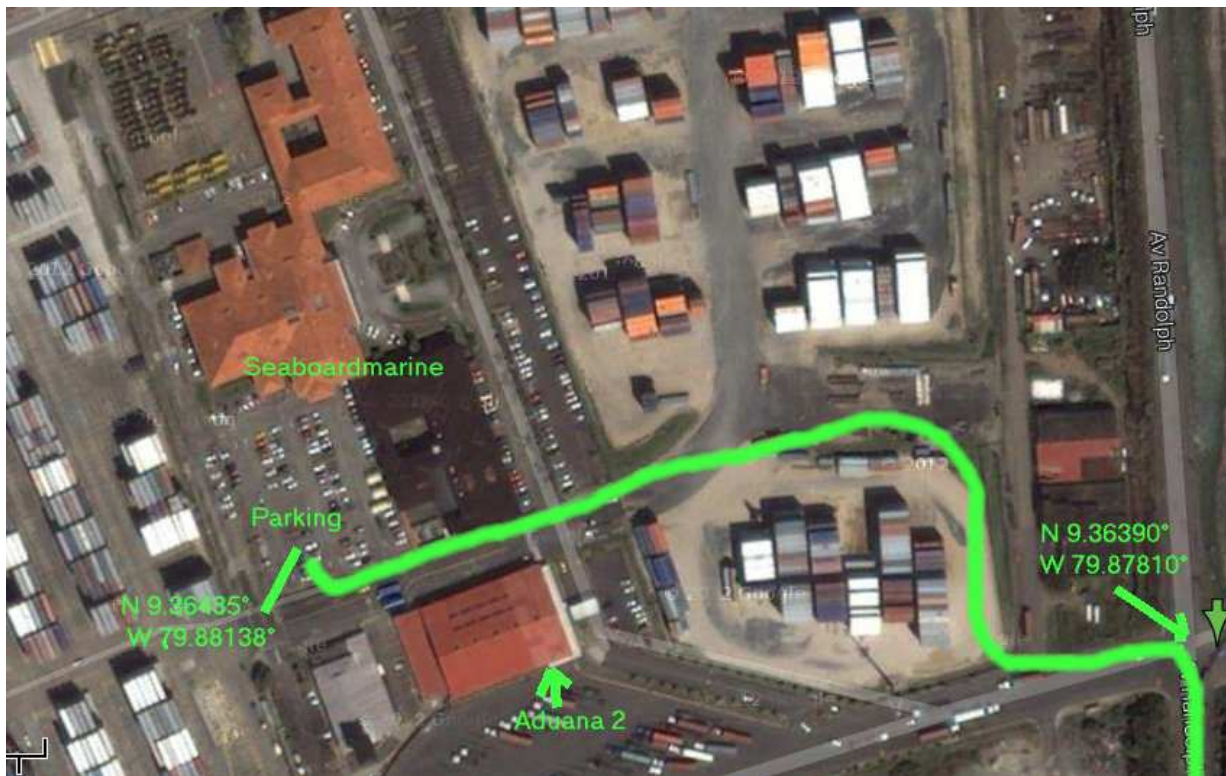
**IMPORTANT: There are NO possibilities to have copies made around the port in Colon! It is important to do this BEFORE!!!**

## 1. Driving to Colon

Leave early if you are staying in Panama City! We illegally drove the Carretera Norte which you actually need to buy a badge for and it still took us an hour at full speed. Rather leave at least 1.5 hours before, so you get there shortly before 8am. The port in Colon is really chaotic and there is NO signage. Keep the coordinates close and take the chance to ask people, even though you might get some wrong answers...

## 2. Seaboard Marine

Drive to SM, turn off from the main street at N 9.36390° W 79.87810° right into the port. Take a sharp right and follow the track especially for cars until you reach the parking at N 9.36435° W 79.88138°. Park your car.



Find the big food court among the mass of buildings. Just behind it, you will find SM. There is hardly a sign on their door, we had to ask several people for the entrance. So, first ask for food court, second for SM.  
In their office, you hand in the 3 sets of copies, each including a BoL. All BoL have to be stamped. You get all of it back. That was it.

### 3. Customs the first (Aduana 1)

Get back into your car and drive back down the main road to the Aduana. We parked right in front of the big, black gate. This gate is an exit, you don't have to drive in. N 9.34607° W 79.87827° .



There is plenty of parking. Lock your car properly!



Walk through the gate all to the right past a small container. Walk 90° to the right around this container. You reach a small plaza with a lot of doors around without any signs. Take the door to your very right, it is the last one. This is the Aduana you need to pay a visit, see the green arrow on the map above.

They cancel the import permit in the passport and in the computer- double check!!! Again, the 3 sets of copies including the BoL is stamped. They keep one, the other 2 are for you to take with.

#### 4. Customs the second (Aduana 2)

Go back to the parking lot of point 2.)

Here, you will find the second Aduana, see on the picture below.



From the parking lot you walk back slightly and turn right (not like before when visiting SM). Walk along this building to its end, turn right around the corner. There you will see a lot of people and a lot of counters with Aduana written above ALL of them :o) Don't panic, people are very helpful here. Look for the one saying 'exportacion de vehiculos' written behind a dark window. Just ask if you can't seem to spot it.

Hand in the 2 last sets of copies, they stamp both, 1 is being kept, 1 is given back to you.

A few counters up, you go to 'Almacenaje' where you pay your 58\$ fees. As I mentioned, it is a little chaotic here, but nothing different from other borders. After 5 minutes it was my turn, you hand in the last set of copies and pay.

You get a receipt plus the set back. You are also supposed to get a copy of said receipt and of the BoL which you will need for the next and last step before inspection.

## 5. Inspeccion

The last step. Drive to inspection at N 9.36679° W 79.87886°



Park your car outside on the left or right DON'T drive in!! Walk to the fence at Step 1 and try to call a worker inside (just ignore other people who are standing around, most are waiting for their cars for import). As soon as I mentioned I was there for inspection (export), he let us pass all the others. Show an ID in order to get a visitor badge.

Straight ahead there is a fence with a few counters behind it. Take the one saying TRAMITE. You hand in the last set, she had a close look at everything. Here you are supposed to hand in the copies of the receipt and BoL. She will stamp the receipt.

A few minutes later, I could leave the area and get the car. The workers then let you enter a parking and show you where exactly to park it. STEP 2.

**IMPORTANT: Since shortly SM DOES NOT let you drive the car into the container yourself anymore! That means, you have to leave the car open, keys in it. We removed all valuables because 2 people enter the car until it is in the container!**

There will be a man from SM there filing a report on the state of the car. You will have to sign this report. I additionally took pictures of the vehicle to be sure.

Shortly after, the inspector came, had a look at the car in- and outside and walked through with the drug dog. That was it!

Now you leave your car there and hope for the best!

You return the visitor badge and receive your ID in return, walk out of the port area and catch a taxi to the Colon bus terminal which we paid 5\$ for.