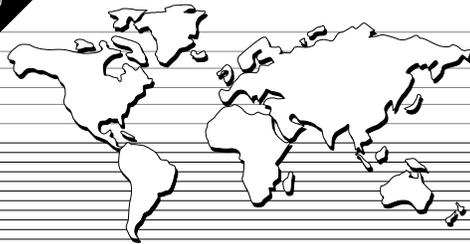




U.S. Department of the Treasury
Office of Foreign Assets Control



CUBA

What You Need To Know About The U.S. Embargo

An overview of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations Title 31 Part 515 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations

■ **INTRODUCTION** - The Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 15 CFR Part 515 (the "Regulations") were issued by the U.S. Government on 8 July 1963 under the Trading With the Enemy Act in response to certain hostile actions by the Cuban government. They are still in force today and affect all U.S. citizens and permanent residents wherever they are located, all people and organizations physically in the United States, and all branches and subsidiaries of U.S. organizations throughout the world. The Regulations are administered by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. The basic goal of the sanctions is to isolate the Cuban government economically and deprive it of U.S. dollars. Criminal penalties for violating the sanctions range up to 10 years in prison, \$1,000,000 in corporate fines, and \$250,000 in individual fines. Civil penalties up to \$55,000 per violation may also be imposed. Please note that the Regulations require those dealing with Cuba to maintain records and, upon request from the U.S. Treasury Department, to furnish information regarding such dealings.

■ **EXPORTING TO CUBA** - Except for publications, other informational materials (such as CDs and works of art), certain donated food, and certain goods licensed for export or re-export by the U.S. Department of Commerce (such as medicine and medical supplies, food, and agricultural commodities), no products, technology, or services may be exported from the United States to Cuba, either directly or through third countries, such as Canada or Mexico. This prohibition includes dealing in or assisting the sale of goods or commodities to or from Cuba, even if done entirely offshore. Such brokering is considered to be dealing in property in which Cuba has an interest. Provision of consulting services is also prohibited. Thus, no U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien, wherever located, and no foreign subsidiary or branch of a U.S. organization may export products, technology, or services to Cuba or to any Cuban national, wherever they may be located, or broker the sale of goods or commodities to or from Cuba or any Cuban national.

Pursuant to provisions of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (the "CDA") and the Trade Sanctions and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (the "TSRA"), the Commerce Department authorizes the sale and export or re-export of medicine and medical supplies, food and agricultural commodities to Cuba. Those interested in engaging in such exports or re-exports must first obtain authorization from the Commerce Department's Bureau of Export Administration. All licensed sales may be financed by cash in advance or by third-country banks that are not Specially Designated Nationals. Foreign subsidiaries of U.S. banks are authorized to directly finance licensed sales of agricultural products. All U.S. banks may advise or confirm any of the above.

Section 1705(b) of the CDA provides for donations of food to independent non-governmental organizations or individuals in Cuba. Shipments of food can be donated to non-governmental organizations from the U.S. or from third countries without the need for a license from the U.S.

government. The CDA specifically provides that payments to Cuba involving telecommunications may be made pursuant to specific license. In the mid-1970s, Section 515.559 was added to the Regulations to allow OFAC to license foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms to conduct trade in commodities with Cuba so long as several specific criteria were met. Section 1706(a) of the CDA, however, prohibits the issuance of a license that would have been issued pursuant to § 515.559, except where a contract was entered into prior to enactment of the CDA or where the exports at issue are medicines or medical supplies.

Unless otherwise authorized, no vessel carrying goods or passengers to or from Cuba or carrying goods in which Cuba or a Cuban national has any interest may enter a U.S. port. The prohibition also applies to vessels which enter only to take on fuel and supplies (bunker), whether from U.S. fuel providers within the port limits or at offshore points, as well as vessels discharging or loading merchandise offshore, by lighter or otherwise. In addition, vessels which enter a port or place in Cuba to engage in the trade of goods or services are prohibited from loading or unloading any freight at any place in the U.S. for 180 days. Prohibited entry does not apply to vessels engaging solely in trade with Cuba authorized by license or exempt from the Regulations (e.g., vessels carrying authorized exports of agricultural products or donations of food to nongovernmental organizations or individuals).

■ **IMPORTING CUBAN-ORIGIN GOODS OR SERVICES** - Goods or services of Cuban origin may not be imported into the United States either directly or through third countries, such as Canada or Mexico. The only exceptions are: \$100 worth of Cuban merchandise which may be brought into the United States as accompanied baggage by authorized travelers arriving from Cuba; publications, artwork, or other informational materials; merchandise other than tobacco or alcohol and not in commercial quantities carried as accompanied baggage by foreign persons legally entering the United States; and merchandise for which a specific license has been received.

■ **TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING PROPERTY IN WHICH CUBA OR A CUBAN NATIONAL HAS AN INTEREST** - In addition to the prohibitions on exports to and imports from Cuba, the Regulations prohibit any person subject to U.S. jurisdiction from dealing in any property in which Cuba or a Cuban national has an interest. Under the Regulations, "property" includes but is not limited to contracts and services. For example, unless otherwise authorized, persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction (including U.S. overseas subsidiaries) may not purchase Cuban cigars in Mexico; may not sign a contract with a U.K. firm if the contract terms include Cuba-related provisions (even if those provisions are contingent upon the lifting of the embargo); and may not provide accounting, marketing, sales, or insurance services to a Cuban company or to a foreign company with respect to the foreign company's Cuba-related business.

of Foreign Assets Control:

- ✓ Undergraduate or graduate students participating in a structured educational program as part of a course offered at a licensed college or university. Students planning to engage in such transactions must carry a letter from the licensed institution stating 1) the institution's license number, 2) that the student is enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at the institution, and 3) that the travel is part of an educational program of the institution.
- ✓ Persons doing noncommercial Cuba-related academic research in Cuba for the purpose of qualifying academically as a professional (e.g., research toward a graduate degree). Students planning to engage in such transactions must carry a letter from the licensed institution stating 1) the institution's license number, 2) that the student is enrolled in a graduate degree program at the institution, and 3) that the Cuba research will be accepted for credit toward that graduate degree.
- ✓ Undergraduate or graduate students participating in a formal course of study at a Cuban academic institution, provided the Cuban study will be accepted for credit toward a degree at the licensed U.S. institution. A student planning to engage in such transactions must carry a letter from the licensed U.S. institution stating 1) the institution's license number, 2) that the student is currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at the institution, and 3) that the Cuban study will be accepted for credit toward that degree.
- ✓ Persons regularly employed in a teaching capacity at a licensed college or university who plan to teach part or all of an academic program at a Cuban academic institution. An individual planning to engage in such transactions must carry a letter from the licensed institution stating 1) the institution's license number, and 2) that the individual is regularly employed by the licensed institution in a teaching capacity.
- ✓ Cuban scholars teaching or engaging in other scholarly activities at a licensed college or university in the United States. Licensed institutions may sponsor such Cuban scholars, including payment of a stipend or salary.
- ✓ Secondary school students participating in educational exchanges sponsored by Cuban or U.S. secondary schools and involving the students' participation in a formal course of study or in a structured educational program offered by a secondary school or other academic institution and led by a teacher or other secondary school official. A reasonable number of adult chaperones may accompany the students to Cuba. A secondary school group planning to engage in such transactions in Cuba must carry a letter from the licensed secondary school sponsoring the trip stating 1) the school's license number, and 2) the list of names of all persons traveling with the group.
- ✓ Full-time employees of a licensed institution organizing or preparing for the educational activities described above. An individual engaging in such transactions must carry a letter from the licensed institution stating 1) the institution's license number, and 2) that the individual is regularly employed there.

Specific licenses for religious organizations: Specific licenses authorizing travel transactions related to religious activities by any individuals or groups affiliated with a religious organization may be issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control. Such licenses are only available to religious organizations located in the United States, and such licenses must be renewed after a period of two years. Once a religious organization has applied for and received such a specific license, travelers affiliated with that religious organization are authorized to engage in travel-related transactions incident to a full-time program of religious activities in Cuba under the auspices of the licensed religious organization without seeking further authorization from the Office of Foreign Assets Control. Individuals planning to engage in such transactions must carry a letter from the licensed religious organization stating 1) the organization's license number, 2) that they are affiliated with the licensed organization, and 3) that they are traveling to Cuba to engage in religious activities under the auspices of the licensed organization.

Other specific licenses: Specific licenses may be issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control on a case-by-case basis authorizing travel transactions by the following categories of persons in connection with the following activities:

- ✓ Humanitarian Travel - (1) persons, and persons traveling with them who

share a common dwelling with them, traveling to Cuba more than once in a twelve-month period to visit close relatives in cases involving humanitarian need; (2) persons traveling to Cuba to accompany licensed humanitarian donations (other than gift parcels) or exempt donations of food; (3) persons traveling in connection with activities of recognized human rights organizations investigating specific human rights violations; and (4) persons whose travel transactions are directly related to certain humanitarian projects in or related to Cuba that are designed to directly benefit the Cuban people. Licenses authorizing transactions for multiple trips over an extended period of time are available for travel under (3) and (4) above.

- ✓ Free-Lance Journalism - Persons with a suitable record of publication who are traveling to Cuba to do research for a free-lance article. Licenses authorizing transactions for multiple trips over an extended period of time are available for applicants demonstrating a significant record of free-lance journalism.
- ✓ Professional Research and Professional Meetings - Persons traveling to Cuba to do professional research or to attend a professional meeting that does not meet the requirements of the relevant general license (described above). Licenses authorizing transactions for multiple trips over an extended period of time are available.
- ✓ Educational Activities - Persons traveling to engage in educational activities that are not authorized pursuant to an academic institution's specific license, including educational exchanges not involving academic study pursuant to a degree program when those exchanges take place under the auspices of an organization that sponsors and organizes such programs to promote people-to-people contact.
- ✓ Religious Activities - Persons traveling to Cuba to engage in religious activities that are not authorized pursuant to a religious organization's specific license. Licenses authorizing transactions for multiple trips over an extended period of time are available.
- ✓ Public Performances, Clinics, Workshops, Athletic and Other Competitions, and Exhibitions - Persons traveling to participate in a public performance, clinic, workshop, athletic or other competition (that does not meet the requirements of the general license described above), or exhibition. The event must be open for attendance, and in relevant situations participation, by the Cuban public, and all profits from the event after costs must be donated to an independent nongovernmental organization in Cuba or a U.S.-based charity, with the objective, to the extent possible, of promoting people-to-people contacts or otherwise benefitting the Cuban people.
- ✓ Activities of Private Foundations or Research or Educational Institutions - Persons traveling to Cuba on behalf of private foundations or research or educational institutes that have an established interest in international relations to collect information related to Cuba for noncommercial purposes. Licenses authorizing transactions for multiple trips over an extended period of time are available.
- ✓ Exportation, Importation, or Transmission of Information or Informational Materials - Persons traveling to engage in activities directly related to the exportation, importation, or transmission of information or informational materials.
- ✓ Licensed Exportation - Persons traveling to Cuba to engage in activities directly related to marketing, sales negotiation, accompanied delivery, or servicing of exports of health care products or other exports that may be considered for authorization under existing Department of Commerce regulations and guidelines with respect to Cuba or engaged in by U.S.-owned or -controlled foreign firms.

Applying for a specific license: Persons wishing to travel to Cuba under a specific license should send a letter specifying the details of the proposed travel, including any accompanying documentation, to Steven Pinter, Chief of Licensing, Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20220. Academic institutions wishing to obtain one of the two-year specific licenses described above should send a letter to the same address requesting such a license and establishing that the institution is accredited by an appropriate national or regional accrediting association. Religious organizations wishing to obtain one of the two-year specific licenses described above should send a letter to the same address requesting such a license and setting forth examples or religious activities to be undertaken in Cuba.

Provision of travel services: U.S. travel service providers, such as

travel agents and tour operators, who handle travel arrangements to, from, or within Cuba must hold special authorizations from the Office of Foreign Assets Control to engage in such activities. These authorizations are issued based on written applications from the service providers, subject to appropriate checks by the Treasury Department. A traveler should not use any travel service provider that does not hold valid Treasury authorization. If in doubt about the status of a service provider's authorization, travelers should call the Office of Foreign Assets Control at 305/810-5140. Only carrier service providers that have been authorized by OFAC may operate direct humanitarian passenger charter flights between Miami and Havana.

Unauthorized travel-related transactions: Unless otherwise exempted or authorized, any person subject to U.S. jurisdiction who engages in any travel-related transaction in Cuba violates the Regulations. Persons not licensed to engage in travel-related transactions may travel to Cuba without violating the Regulations only if all Cuba-related expenses are covered by a person not subject to U.S. jurisdiction and provided that the traveler does not provide any service to Cuba or a Cuban national. Such travel is called "fully-hosted" travel. Travel to Cuba may be considered fully hosted even if the traveler pays for a plane ticket provided that the travel is not aboard a Cuban carrier. Travel to Cuba is not fully hosted if a person subject to U.S. jurisdiction pays--before, during, or after the travel--any expenses relating to the travel, including travel to Cuba on a Cuban carrier, even if the payment is made to a third-country person or entity that is not subject to U.S. jurisdiction. Examples of costs commonly incurred by persons traveling to, from, and within Cuba are expenses for meals, lodging, transportation, bunkering of vessels or aircraft, visas, entry or exit fees, and gratuities. Fully-hosted travel to and from Cuba cannot be aboard a direct flight between the United States and Cuba. The authorization for licensed travelers to purchase and return to the United States with \$100 worth of Cuban merchandise does not apply to fully-hosted travelers.

Any person subject to U.S. jurisdiction determined to have traveled to Cuba without an OFAC general or specific license is presumed to have engaged in prohibited travel-related transactions. In order to overcome this presumption, any traveler who claims to have been fully hosted or not to have engaged in any travel-related transactions may be asked by Federal enforcement agencies to provide a signed explanatory statement accompanied by any relevant supporting documentation.

■ **SENDING OR CARRYING MONEY TO CUBA** - U.S. persons aged 18 or older may send to the household of any individual in Cuba "individual-to-household" cash remittances of up to \$300 per household in any consecutive three-month period, provided that no member of the household is a senior-level Cuban government or senior-level Cuban communist party official.

U.S. persons aged 18 or older may send to the household of any close relative of the remitter or the remitter's spouse "family" cash remittances of up to \$300 per household in any consecutive three-month period. No more than a combined total of \$300 of individual-to-household and family remittances may be sent by a remitter to any one household in any consecutive three-month period, regardless of the number of close relatives or other persons residing in that household. A close relative means a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, nephew, niece, first cousin, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, or spouse, widow, or widower of any of those people.

U.S. persons also may send up to \$1,000 per payee on a one-time basis as an "emigration-related" remittance to a Cuban national to enable the payee to emigrate from Cuba to the United States. Specifically, up to \$500 may be remitted to a Cuban national prior to the payee's receipt of a valid U.S. visa or other U.S. immigration document, and up to \$500 may be remitted to the Cuban national after the payee receives a valid U.S. visa or other U.S. immigration document.

Remittances may be transferred through a financial institution or through an OFAC-licensed remittance forwarder. Service providers, including

financial institutions originating transfers on behalf of non-aggregating customers, must obtain an affidavit from the remitter certifying that each individual-to-household and family remittance does not exceed \$300 in any consecutive three month period and that each emigration-related remittance meets the requirements of the Regulations (see TDF 90-22.52 on last page of brochure). Remitters can expect to have their identity, date of birth, address, and telephone number verified.

Persons licensed to engage in travel-related transactions (this does not include fully-hosted travelers) may carry their own remittances, provided that they may carry no more than a combined total of \$300 of individual-to-household and family remittances, and provided that no emigration-related remittances may be carried before the payee has received a valid U.S. visa or other immigration document and the traveler can supply the visa number and the date of issuance.

Specific licenses may be issued on a case-by-case basis authorizing remittances:

- ✓ to independent nongovernmental organizations in Cuba;
- ✓ by Cuban scholars authorized to teach or engage in scholarly activity at a U.S. college or university who wish to repatriate earnings in excess of \$300;
- ✓ to households of Cuban nationals living outside of Cuba in excess of \$300 per quarter from blocked accounts; or
- ✓ to individuals in Cuba to facilitate their non-immigrant travel to the United States under circumstances where humanitarian need is demonstrated, including illness or medical emergency.

■ **FAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES** - Anyone authorized by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to provide Cuban travel services or services in connection with sending money to Cuba is prohibited from participating in discriminatory practices of the Cuban government against individuals or particular classes of travelers. The assessment of consular fees by the Cuban government, which are applicable worldwide, is not considered to be a discriminatory practice. However, requiring the purchase of services not desired by the traveler is not permitted. Persons wishing to provide information on such activities should call 305/810-5170. All information regarding arbitrary fees, payments for unauthorized purposes, or other possible violations furnished to the U.S. Treasury Department will be handled confidentially.

■ **ESTATES AND SAFE DEPOSIT BOXES** - An estate becomes blocked whenever a Cuban national is an heir or is the deceased; money from a life insurance policy is blocked whenever the deceased is a Cuban resident. The heir of a person who died in Cuba, or the beneficiary of a life insurance policy of a person who died in Cuba, may apply for a license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control to unblock the estate or insurance proceeds. Persons administering or interested in a blocked estate should contact the Office of Foreign Assets Control at 202/622-2480 for more information. A safe-deposit box is blocked whenever a Cuban has an interest in the property contained in the box. Access to a blocked safe deposit box for inventory purposes may be granted under certain conditions, but the contents of the box remain blocked and may not be removed without the permission of the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

■ **PAYMENTS FOR OVERFLIGHTS** - Private and commercial aviators must obtain a specific license authorizing payments for overflight charges to Cuba. Banks will ask to see the originals of such licenses before executing transfers and keep a copy for their files. Such transfers must be in a currency other than U.S. dollars.

If you have information regarding possible violations of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations, please call the Office of Foreign Assets Control at 305/810-5170. Your call will be handled confidentially.