

The 2017 Revised Import Guidelines Procedures – What you need to know about e Form M

What is an e Form M and how does it affect you?

Except you are new to the import business, you will be familiar with the term Form M. e-Form 'M' is used by Importers to declare their intention to import goods to Nigeria and it is issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) through commercial banks.

e-Form M is a mandatory documentation process put in place by the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Nigeria Customs to monitor goods that are imported into the country as well as enable collection of import duties when applicable.

The Import guidelines says, **“Any person intending to import physical goods into Nigeria shall in the first instance process the e-Form M through any Authorized Dealer Bank irrespective of the value and whether or not payment is involved.”**

This form is applied for and obtained by the importer and has a unique number which must be quoted or written on all the shipping documents; although there are exemptions such as diplomatic cargos (of reasonable quantity), personal effects, goods shipped into Free Trade Zones in Nigeria.

In a bid to streamline trade processes, the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2017 reviewed the validity of e-Form 'M' as detailed below:

- a. General Merchandise has been revised to an initial 360 days and an allowable extension for further 180 days by banks. Any other extension after the 540 days (360days+180days) window will be passed through CBN for approval.
- b. Capital goods have been revised to initial 720 days validity and an allowable extension for further 360 days by banks. Any other extension after the 3 years (720days+360days) window will be passed through CBN for approval.

Approved e-Form M	Initial Validity Period	Maximum Extension by Authorized dealer	Further Extension by CBN
For General Merchandise	360 days	180 days	180days
For Capital Goods	720 days	360 days	360 days

Kindly note that **an e-form M is deemed cancelled if no shipment had taken place on the form after a period of Two (2) years for importation of general merchandize and five (5) years for capital goods e.g. plant and machinery.**

Sanction

Any importer or bank discovered to be operating or have issued multiple e-form M for the same transaction (proforma invoice or commercial invoice) shall have their license seized or blacklisted from doing business with the Nigerian Customs Service.

What are the Requirements to open an e-form M in Nigeria?

To open an e-form M, the importer requires the following.

- Certificate of incorporation/Registration of the company in Nigeria
- Registration with Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS)
- a Tax Identification Number (TIN)
- Valid email address tagged to Tax Identification Number
- A Proforma Invoice
- Import Permit (SONCAP Product certificate or NAFDAC permit depending on the type of Import item)
- Local Insurance certificate
- Authorized Dealer Bank to process e-form M and Initiate clearance of the Pre- Arrival Assessment Report (PAAR)

Note: SONCAP Product Certificate: - This Import permit is required for all goods except those items regulated by NAFDAC which are: Food, Medicine, and Chemical

Supplier to contact one of the accredited inspection agencies by SON namely: INTERTEK, COTECNA, SGS, CCIC nearest to him to obtain a product certificate

Once you have fulfilled the requirements above, please click here to download an [e-Form M](#). If you need help in obtaining an e-form M, kindly contact us, we are ready to help.

How can we help you?

As a new importer or existing importer seeking for a seamless and professional importation of your goods, we will assist you with all of your documentation process. We offer a unique and special documentation service such as e-Form M management, processing of PAAR (Pre-arrival assessment report), customs duty and account management, **SONCAP, NAFDAC and ASYCUDA** registration.

If you have more questions about your goods documentation for your next shipments, contact one of our documentation experts [here](#).

We encourage you to subscribe to our newsletter and also follow our social media pages to get up-to-date information in the freight forwarding services and also participate in thought leadership conversations.