



**Lower Bucks County
Chamber of Commerce**

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Certificate of Origin Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why is the Chamber implementing these revisions?

A: Our policy changes were prompted by recent lawsuits incurred by other Chambers in the U.S. that issued Certificates of Origin accompany shipments where the exporter of record misrepresented the actual origin of the materials. These cases resulted in fines, monetary settlements, and associated liability insurance premiums, causing all Chambers to review existing policies.

Q: Why do I need a Certificate of Origin to ship my product?

A: There are a number of reasons why governments require a Certificate of Origin. The United States has numerous trade agreements with many foreign countries, and under the terms of many of these agreements, American products receive lower tariff rates. The foreign customs office verifies product qualifications for these preferential duty rates by accompanying Certificate of Origin. Also, some countries have banned certain products from countries that have been caught dumping. The Certificate of Origin helps prove that the product is allowed into that particular country.

Q: What are the differences in Certificates of Origin?

A: There are several types of Certificates of Origin. The descriptions are as follows:

- 1) **General Certificate of Origin:** This form is used for almost all exports. There are several versions available because the government has updated the form on numerous occasions, but older versions are still valid. Also, a number of private companies produce the forms and they each have slightly different formats.
- 2) **NAFTA Certificates of Origin:** This form is used only for products that are made in the U.S., and are being shipped into Mexico or Canada. The form must be included with the shipment or else the manufacturer will have to pay the tariffs and duties imposed on non-NAFTA countries. It can be used only for goods produced in the U.S, and not just passing through from another country. The Chamber is not required to sign this form.
- 3) **Mexican Certificate of Origin:** This form differs from the NAFTA form as its purpose is to prevent Asian textiles and footwear from being dumped into Mexico via the U.S. The law took effect September 15, 1994, and affects foreign origin goods entering Mexico from the U.S. If the good being shipped are from textile or footwear industries, the Mexican Consulate must notarize the form. If the products are from any other industry, only the shipper must sign the form. The Chamber is not required to sign this form.
- 4) **Israeli Certificate of Origin:** This form is a result of a trade agreement between Israel and the United States, which requires the use of this form for all American goods shipped into Israel, if the shipper wishes to take advantage of the tariff and duty breaks allowed to U.S. products under the terms of the agreement. The Chamber of Commerce must sign these forms.
- 5) **Japanese Certificate of Origin:** This form is required only if exported goods have been assigned preferential tax treatment under GATT. The Chamber of Commerce must sign these forms.
- 6) **South African Certificates of Origin:** This form is required when the goods qualify for a lower rate of duty or when the goods are liable to antidumping or countervailing duty. The Chamber of Commerce is usually required to sign these forms.
- 7) **Turkey Certificates of Origin:** This form is required when the goods qualify for a lower rate of duty or when the goods are liable to antidumping or countervailing duty. The Chamber of Commerce is usually required to sign these forms.

Q: Why is the Chamber of Commerce in the business of signing Certificates of Origin?

A: Through world trade agreements on an international level, it has been determined and agreed upon by all countries that the local Chamber of Commerce is reputable, and would be in the best position to know the local companies and their product lines.

Q: Does the Certificate have to be notarized?

A: All certificates, with the exception of the NAFTA Certificate, require a notary signature and stamp.

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