



Certificate of Origin Policy

The Seminole County Chamber's policy on issuing Certificates of Origin is effective September 1, 2021.

Certificate of Origin (CO) is a document that certifies a shipment's country of origin. It attests that goods in a particular export shipment are wholly obtained, produced, manufactured, or processed in a particular country (country of origin). Virtually every country in the world considers the origin of imported goods when determining what duty will be assessed on the goods or, in some cases, whether the goods may be legally imported.

All Certificates of Origin and additional papers submitted to the Seminole County Chamber are to be filled out truthfully, and the products named on the Certificate of Origin are manufactured in the United States of America and are of United States of America origin.

1. The Certificate of Origin must be completed before being presented to the Seminole County Chamber. Once the Certificate of Origin is sealed, it may not be changed or altered.
2. A company officer must complete and sign An Affidavit of Origin and present it to the Seminole County Chamber. For those businesses that are members of the Chamber of Commerce, this document can be signed yearly and kept on file with the membership investment records. For a non-member business, an Affidavit of Origin and Indemnification agreement must accompany each Certificate of Origin. This document must be provided to the Chamber before issuing a Certificate of Origin.
3. Certificates of Origin are completed at no additional fee for Chamber members and \$100 per page for non-members.

Please adhere to the following steps to ensure timely processing of your Certificates of Origin:

- ✓ Ensure you are filling out the proper Certificates of Origin for the country you are exporting to.
- ✓ Make sure you fill out the Certificate completely and accurately.
- ✓ Ensure the product information listed is verbatim to what is on the invoice. Do not leave off product numbers, quantities, or descriptions.
- ✓ Do not alter the completed and sealed Certificate in any way.
- ✓ You are responsible for understanding the specific documentation requirements for the destination country of your shipment.
- ✓ Check with the Chamber office anytime during or near the holidays to confirm holiday hours.
- ✓ Certificates of Origin may be obtained with no appointment Monday-Friday, 9a-1p. However, we do recommend calling ahead. Outside of those hours, please call in advance at 407-708-4600.

The Chamber staff member has the right of refusal for any document that they feel does not meet the Seminole County Chamber's guidelines.



Certificate of Origin **Frequently Asked Questions**

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 Certificates 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?

There is no universally standardized format for a Certificate of Origin (CO) in the realm of global trade. However, a typical CO, generally prepared by the exporting party, includes essential information about the shipped product, its tariff code, details of the exporter and importer, and the country of origin. The exporter, well-versed in the specific requirements of the importing country's border control, meticulously documents these particulars, obtains notarization from a chamber of commerce, and submits the form along with the shipment. The specific requirements for a CO depend on the nature of the exported goods and their destination.

There are primarily two categories of COs: non-preferential and preferential.

Non-Preferential Certificates of Origin

Non-preferential COs, often referred to as "ordinary COs," signify that the goods do not qualify for reduced tariffs or tariff exemptions based on trade agreements between countries.

If there is no existing trade treaty or agreement between the exporting and importing nations, or if a particular product is excluded from tariff concessions, an ordinary CO becomes mandatory.

Preferential Certificates of Origin

Preferential COs indicate the existence of a free trade agreement or reduced tariff arrangements between countries. For instance, exports between the United States, Mexico, and Canada enjoy tariff exemptions under the USMCA free trade agreement, and such shipments necessitate a preferential CO. In such instances, commercial invoices or bills of lading may also serve as proof of origin.

In the United States, the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), established by Congress in 1974 to support the economic development of disadvantaged nations, eliminates duties on thousands of products imported from over one hundred countries that hold preferential status. Countries like Bolivia, Cambodia, Haiti, Namibia, and Pakistan are currently on the list, alongside various other developing nations. The European Union (EU) and countries worldwide have their own versions of GSP, primarily aimed at fostering economic growth through trade with friendly nations.

Free Trade Agreement Certificates of Origin

Free trade agreements concluded by the United States with other nations may require specific CO forms to be issued by exporters as proof of origin, enabling the products to qualify for preferential duty rates. Examples of these forms can be found on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website, export.gov, or the websites of customs authorities and chambers of commerce in the destination country.

Additionally, various shipping solutions websites offer downloadable sample certificates of origin for specific agreements, such as those with [Australia](#), [CAFTA-DR](#), [Chile](#), [Colombia](#), [Korea](#), and the USMCA (which replaced [NAFTA](#)).

Q: What role do Chambers of Commerce play?

A: Chambers of Commerce are recognized worldwide as the official body to issue, sign and stamp certificates of origin due to the widespread network of the chamber of commerce community around the world and its respected reputation of serving the business community. This came about under the provisions of the International Convention relating to the Simplification of Customs Formalities held in Geneva in 1923. Under those provisions, national governments were allowed to delegate the administration of the certification scheme to suitable organizations – namely Chambers of Commerce.