



TRADE LOGISTICS

YOUR KEY TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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HS Codes / Tariff Codes

Tariff codes (also called HS or harmonized system codes):

When goods are imported or exported you have to classify them. The tariff code is the international system that is used to classify traded items. Tariff codes exist for almost every product involved in global trade. This number is the same anywhere in the world and therefore enables customs departments from different countries to be able to communicate with each other.

The tariff code is often also called the HS (Harmonised System) number. A complete tariff code will have a minimum of six digits, and can be up to 10. A code with less than six digits is considered a partial tariff code and this represents a broad category of products. The more digits there are in a code, the more specific the product is which it identifies. In the following example you can see how the digits (on the left) increase as the product gets more specific in its definition.

Below is an example from the Customs Tariff book.

Heading/ Subheading	Article Description
06.03	Cut flowers and flower buds of a kind suitable for bouquets or for ornamental purposes, fresh, dried, dyed, bleached, impregnated or otherwise prepared
06 03.1	- Fresh:
06 03.11	-- Roses

It is important that you use the correct tariff code as the duty tax you or your buyer will pay is linked to the tariff code. The use of the wrong tariff code could therefore make a big impact on the cost of your goods. Additionally using the wrong tariff code could result in customs clearing delays and/or customs charging hefty penalties.

The easiest way to get the correct tariff code is to ask your supplier. They need to put the tariff code on all their export documents and will have made the effort to get the correct one. If you are a first time exporter or want to double check your tariff code you can arrange for a [professional tariff determination](#). There is also a table of all the tariff codes and the corresponding product descriptions in the [Member's Area](#).

For more information on how to calculate the import duty and VAT of your shipment consult our [Calculating Import Duties and VAT](#) guide.



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