

**§ 1496a. Clearance restrictions of individuals returning from abroad; special circumstances; “baggage and effects” defined**

Except as otherwise provided by law, no individual returning to the United States from abroad shall be—

- (1) entitled to the admission of his or her baggage and effects free of duty without entry; or
- (2) entitled to expedited customs examination and clearance of his or her baggage and effects.

Paragraph (2) shall not apply to individuals in special circumstances (including being seriously ill or infirm, having been summoned by news of affliction or disaster, and accompanying the body of a deceased relative). For purposes of this section, the term “baggage and effects” means any article which was in the possession of the individual while abroad and is being imported in connection with his or her arrival and is intended for his or her bona fide personal or household use. Such term does not include any article imported as an accommodation to others or for sale or other commercial use.

(Pub. L. 95-410, title II, §215, Oct. 3, 1978, 92 Stat. 904.)

**Editorial Notes**

**CODIFICATION**

Section was enacted as part of Customs Procedural Reform and Simplification Act of 1978, and not as part of Tariff Act of 1930 which comprises this chapter.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

**CLEARANCE PROCEDURES STUDY; REPORT TO CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES**

Pub. L. 95-410, title II, §216, Oct. 3, 1978, 92 Stat. 904, provided that the Comptroller General, in cooperation with the Customs Service of the Department of the Treasury and the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice, study clearance procedures for individuals entering or reentering the United States, and to report the results of his study and any recommendations for expediting the clearance process to specific committees of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives not later than Sept. 1, 1979.

**§ 1497. Penalties for failure to declare**

**(a) In general**

- (1) Any article which—
  - (A) is not included in the declaration and entry as made or transmitted; and
  - (B) is not mentioned before examination of the baggage begins—
    - (i) in writing by such person, if written declaration and entry was required, or
    - (ii) orally, if written declaration and entry was not required;

shall be subject to forfeiture and such person shall be liable for a penalty determined under paragraph (2) with respect to such article.

(2) The amount of the penalty imposed under paragraph (1) with respect to any article is equal to—

- (A) if the article is a controlled substance, either \$500 or an amount equal to 1,000 percent

of the value of the article, whichever amount is greater; and

(B) if the article is not a controlled substance, the value of the article.

**(b) Value of controlled substances**

(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the value of any controlled substance shall, for purposes of this section, be equal to the amount determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Attorney General of the United States, to be equal to the price at which such controlled substance is likely to be illegally sold to the consumer of such controlled substance.

(2) The Secretary and the Attorney General of the United States shall establish a method of determining the price at which each controlled substance is likely to be illegally sold to the consumer of such controlled substance.

(June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, §497, 46 Stat. 728; Pub. L. 99-570, title III, §3116, Oct. 27, 1986, 100 Stat. 3207-83; Pub. L. 100-690, title VII, §7367(a), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4479; Pub. L. 103-182, title VI, §612, Dec. 8, 1993, 107 Stat. 2170.)

**Editorial Notes**

**PRIOR PROVISIONS**

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in act Sept. 21, 1922, ch. 356, title IV, §497, 42 Stat. 964. That section was superseded by section 497 of act June 17, 1930, comprising this section, and repealed by section 651(a)(1) of the 1930 act.

A prior provision for forfeiture of any article subject to duty found in baggage, and not mentioned to the collector before whom entry was made, and for a penalty of treble the value of the article, was contained in R.S. §2802, prior to repeal by act Sept. 21, 1922, ch. 356, title IV, §642, 42 Stat. 989.

**AMENDMENTS**

1993—Subsec. (a)(1)(A). Pub. L. 103-182, §612(1), inserted “or transmitted” after “made”.

Subsec. (a)(2)(A). Pub. L. 103-182, §612(2), amended subpar. (A) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (A) read as follows: “if the article is a controlled substance, 1,000 percent of the value of the article; and”.

1988—Subsec. (a)(2)(A). Pub. L. 100-690 substituted “1,000 percent” for “200 percent”.

1986—Pub. L. 99-570 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section read as follows: “Any article not included in the declaration and entry as made, and, before examination of the baggage was begun, not mentioned in writing by such person, if written declaration and entry was required, or orally if written declaration and entry was not required, shall be subject to forfeiture and such person shall be liable to a penalty equal to the value of such article.”

**§ 1498. Entry under regulations**

**(a) Authorized for certain merchandise**

The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to prescribe rules and regulations for the declaration and entry of—

- (1) Merchandise, when—

(A) the aggregate value of the shipment does not exceed an amount specified by the Secretary by regulation, but not more than \$2,500; or

(B) different commercial facilitation and risk considerations that may vary for different classes or kinds of merchandise or different classes of transactions may dictate;