Tourists who travel to Colombia should not face too many inconveniences when staying in the country. However, there is some important information to keep in mind:

Emergency Numbers (free countrywide phone lines)

- National Police: 112
- Civil Defense: 144 or 640 0090 in Bogotá
- Administrative Security Department DAS: 153
- Colombian Red Cross: Log on to www.cruzrojacolombiana.org and check the office number of the corresponding department.

Customs

The traveler from abroad arriving in Colombia will be given the Declaration of Baggage and Currency form, which will be signed by the traveler, specifying the personal effects, merchandise and the amount of currency that he is bringing into the country.

Personal effects

Personal effects are all new and used articles a traveler may need for his personal use during his trip, taking into account the circumstances of the trip, contained in the baggage accompanying him or those which he carries on his person or in his hand baggage, but excluding any merchandise that is brought in for commercial purposes.

Baggage

Accompanying baggage Accompanying baggage is that which the traveler brings with him on entering the country. It may contain his personal effects and/or permitted articles.Non-accompanied baggage Non-accompanied baggage is that which enters the country before or after the arrival of the traveler, and should be consigned in his name. If part of the baggage has already entered or will enter as cargo, it must be declared on the Declaration of Baggage and Currency, and inform the customs officer before leaving the customs area. Otherwise the baggage will be treated as goods to be nationalized. Baggage that enters thirty days before or ninety days after the date of arrival of the traveler must pay a duty of 15%.Duty-free entry of merchandise The traveler may bring duty-free merchandise into Colombia in addition to his personal effects.

Duty-free entry of merchandise

The traveler may bring duty-free merchandise into Colombia in addition to his personal effects.

Conditions of duty-free merchandise

- Permanence abroad: any length of time.
- Value of merchandise in US dollars: $1.500.
- Type of goods: for personal and family use.
- Maximum quantity: non-commercial quantities.
- Type of baggage: accompanied.

Procedure

The procedure employs a “traffic light”, a system that randomly selects a piece of baggage.

If on pressing the button at the traffic light entrance the light turns green, the traveler may continue, but if it turns red the baggage must be checked.

Passengers from abroad whose baggage consists of duty-free merchandise may take the “Nothing to Declare” route (traffic light). Passengers who bring in articles to be declared should approach customs officers to pay the duty.

ExampleA person who has been abroad for four days may bring with him a vacuum cleaner, a sewing machine, a television set, a video camera or a computer, or goods for personal use when they are not worth more than US$500.

Entering merchandise on which duty is payable

The traveler may bring with him, in addition to his personal effects, merchandise on which duty is payable.

Conditions of merchandise on which duty is payable:

- Permanence abroad: 5 days or more.
- Value of merchandise in US dollars: $2.500.

- Types of goods: articles for domestic use, whether electrical or otherwise, sports goods, and goods relevant to the traveler's activity.
- Maximum quantity: 3 of each article.
- Duty payable: up to US$ 1.500 is duty free, a duty of 15% is payable on US$2.500. Only once a year.
- Type of baggage: accompanied or non-accompanied baggage.

Entering of merchandise by children under age

Children under age may only bring merchandise equivalent of 50% of the value of the indicated amounts.

Articles or goods that may not enter by this means:

- Vehicles and railway or automobile material.
- Aircraft, hot-air balloons, zeppelins and gliders.
- Ships or any floating artifacts and/or their parts.
- Arms, munitions and explosives.
- Transport materials such as tires and spare parts for cars or machines.
- Exception: bicycles, wheel chairs and prams.

Example If the traveler has been abroad for more than five days, the limit is US$4.000. Included are articles for domestic use, sports goods and those that are relevant for the traveler's activity. He may enter 3 of each that do not exceed the US$ 4.000 limit, of which US$ 1.500 are duty-free. The remaining US$2.500 pay a duty of 15% (only once a year). For this reason, it is important to carry the receipt for the acquired articles to verify their value.

Declaration of baggage and payment of duty

The declaration form is filled out. For the payment of duty, you should take the "Something to Declare" route for your baggage to be checked, and have ready:

- Receipts for the merchandise.
- Passport.
- Air ticket stub.

You can pay the duty in local or foreign currency. Merchandise that should pay duty but is not presented to customs will be confiscated.

Airport tax

For further information, inquire at the Airport Services Headquarters, Tel: (+571) 425.1000 ext. 2588 and 2083, or fax (+571) 413.9459.

National: Is paid at the airport.

Exempted persons:

- Passengers in transit who arrive and leave on the same date with a different destination from the point of origin.
- Crew members of Colombian airlines who travel for the exclusive purpose of carrying out their duties.
- Personnel of the Colombian national armed forces and police who travel on official business.
- Children under age.
- Officials of the civil aviation authority who travel on official business.

International: Fixed in accordance with the representative rate, TRM.

Exempted persons:

- International passengers in transit.
- Official sports delegations accredited by the Colombian government.
- Officials of the civil aviation authority who travel on official business.
- Deported persons or persons not admitted to the country.
- Los miembros de las fuerzas militares y de la policía nacional colombiana en servicio activo que viajen en misión oficial.
- Members of the Colombian national armed forces and police in active service who travel on official business.
- Members of regular airline crews who travel for the exclusive purpose of carrying out their duties
- Diplomatic bags
- Musical instruments that occupy an aircraft seat.

- Children under age.

Entering foreign currency

The traveler who enters the country with more than ten thousand United States dollars, or their equivalent in other currencies, including Colombian currency in cash in excess of this amount, are required by law to declare them on the Declaration of Baggage and Currency Form.

The traveler may bring into the country, when the amount does not exceed that legally permitted:

- Foreign currency in cash.
- Foreign currency in securities or bonds.
- Negotiable instruments in foreign currency.

Sanctions and retentions

If the traveler does not make the required declaration of foreign currency that he brings with him, or makes false, incomplete, disfigured or erroneous declarations, the authorities may retain the securities and impose the corresponding foreign exchange sanctions.

Temporary imports

Non-resident travelers may enter, duty-free and for a limited period: Articles for personal or professional use or goods that will be used during their stay in the country. Such articles or goods must be mentioned on the Declaration of Baggage and Currency form. On ending his travel to Colombia, the articles or goods must be taken out of the country by the traveler.

Vegetable or animal material

Colombian health legislation restricts the entry of plants, plant parts, animals or animal products.

If the traveler brings in vegetable or animal material he must immediately inform the official at the airport of the health service of the Colombian Institute of Agriculture and Livestock, ICA.

Transport of pets

The requirements for transporting pets on international flights are:

- Health certificate issued a maximum of eight days previously and signed by a vet.
- Valid vaccination certificate.

For national flights you should request:

- An internal waybill, once you have presented a valid vaccination certificate issued by a vet. For further information, call 4251000 ext. 2297 – 2330.

Household goods

Non-residents in the country who enter Colombia to live may bring, without an import license, personal effects and household goods that correspond to their family unit. The household goods are subject to customs duty and cannot be declared before the arrival of their owner in the country, in whose name they should be consigned.

To declare them, a form must be completed of the National Office of Taxes and Customs Excise – DIAN. In accordance with article 92 of Law 488 of 1988, merchandise that form part of household goods pays an overall 15% duty ad-valorem.

The time limit for the arrival of household goods at customs is one month before or four months after the arrival of their owner.