

ESRA International Shipping Information

ESRA frequently receives requests for advice on transporting rockets from outside the United States to the event. This document is a compilation of anecdotes from teams to assist teams. Getting to the event is a team responsibility. ESRA cannot provide individualized logistical assistance to teams.

1. Primacy of Local Knowledge and Experience

Make every effort to locate people in your country who have transported rockets, or at least other significant goods, to the United States before. Their experience will be the best matched to your specific circumstances.

2. Most common transportation methods

Most international teams bring their rocket and equipment in parts in airline checked baggage. Some teams have elected to ship large wooden crates with their rockets and all equipment. Teams from Canada and Mexico often elect to drive.

3. Consider Transportation at Design Phase

Determine your preferred rocket transportation method at design time. Transportation in airline luggage may impose length or weight limitations that must be considered from the beginning. Consult with the relevant airlines to determine the size and weight limits that apply to you. Some teams have reported airlines being willing to waive baggage fees or certain size/weight limits as a form of sponsorship. Some teams also find that transportation loads exceed flight loads for their airframe and therefore require design consideration.

4. Consider preparing an ATA Carnet document

An ATA Carnet is a customs document that indicates the goods are for an approved purpose and will leave the United States within a year. It is available to participants from most (but not all) countries. Securing an ATA carnet document may help you avoid any customs duties when you or the goods enter the United States. It also requires some fees and time to prepare. Many teams have found it useful, and many teams have declined to pursue it. Consider it for your specific situation.

5. Consider using a freight forwarder for crate shipments

In practice, professional freight forwarders are experienced with shipping to the United States and may be able to do it faster, cheaper, and better than you can yourself. They are experienced with customs documents and have access to preferred rates from shippers. The difference will be most apparent with crate shipments. Note that crates in international shipments must be made with particular types of wood for biosecurity reasons.

6. The Las Cruces Convention Center can accept shipments

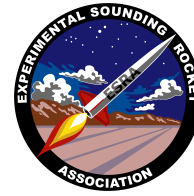
The Las Cruces Convention Center can accept packages and crates sent to them for a time window before the event and bring them to your booth on the first day. There is a fee for this service. The relevant form with fee computation is posted on the ESRA website. The delivery time window will end on the last convention center day. The delivery time window start date will be announced on HeroX. As described on the form, each team must directly contact the convention center to arrange shipment services.

7. Thoroughly clean your rocket and all transported goods before shipment

Thoroughly remove all traces of energetic materials before shipping. This includes after the event. Teams have been stopped, questioned, and blocked from flying with their rocket as a result of ejection charge residue.



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8. Bring documentation to show the event is real and you are a student participant

Rockets are subject to high levels of scrutiny while in transit. Teams have experienced police responses in their home country when their rocket is discovered in airline checked baggage. Teams most often travel together and designate a spokesperson to speak with government officials. Bring organized, hard-copy documentation that shows the event exists, the event involves rocket launches for students, you have been invited, you have the needed visas to enter the United States, and you are students enrolled at your university. Feel free to supplement with additional documentation, such as pictures and media articles from prior years. Having such information prepared has greatly helped teams smoothly resolve security encounters.

9. Energetic materials

Do not attempt to transport pyrotechnic materials across international borders. Also note batteries have special shipping restrictions for all forms of transport.