

# ATA Carnet FAQs

## General ATA Carnet questions

### What is an ATA Carnet?

An ATA Carnet is an international customs document, often described as a passport for goods. It allows eligible goods to be taken temporarily out of the UK and temporarily imported into participating countries without paying import duty and taxes at each border, provided the goods return within the permitted period and carnet rules are met.

### Who can apply for an ATA Carnet?

A company or an individual that is permanently established or resident in the United Kingdom can apply for an ATA Carnet.

### Can I apply online?

Yes. Applications can be submitted online using the eCarnet issuing system used by TVCC. Please contact us if you need guidance before starting an application.

### How long is an ATA Carnet valid for?

An ATA Carnet is usually valid for up to one year from the date of issue.

### What goods can usually be covered?

ATA Carnets are commonly used for professional equipment, exhibition and trade fair goods, and commercial samples.

### What goods are not normally suitable?

ATA Carnets are not normally suitable for goods for sale, perishable or consumable goods, goods for processing or repair, or most transport vehicles used as means of transport. Destination-specific restrictions may also apply.

### Can someone else use the carnet on my behalf?

Yes. A named representative or agent can use the carnet on the holder's behalf if properly authorised. Where a freight forwarder or representative is acting for the holder, a letter of authorisation may also be required.

### Can I add extra vouchers after the carnet has been issued?

Additional vouchers may be requested from the issuing Chamber after issue if needed for the journey. However, additional goods cannot be added to the carnet once it has been issued.

### What happens if my carnet is lost or stolen?

Please contact TVCC immediately. A substitute carnet may be possible if the relevant customs authority confirms that it will accept one. The substitute carnet would expire on the same date as the original carnet.

### **Can I use an ATA Carnet in Taiwan?**

No. Taiwan movements require a different carnet format rather than a standard ATA Carnet. Please contact TVCC for guidance before applying.

## **Digital ATA Carnet questions**

### **Are ATA Carnets going digital?**

Yes. From 1 June 2026, the UK, EU, Norway and Switzerland begin the transition to digital ATA Carnets. During the transition period, paper and digital carnets will coexist, depending on the itinerary and the customs authorities involved. The wider international transition is expected to continue through to 2028.

### **What is a digital ATA Carnet?**

A digital ATA Carnet is the electronic version of the carnet. It can be accessed through the ATA Carnet App or ATA Carnet Desktop, where the holder or authorised representative can prepare declarations and present transaction-specific QR codes to customs.

### **Will paper carnets disappear immediately?**

No. Paper and digital carnets will coexist during the transition period. Whether a carnet is issued as paper, digital, or both depends on the itinerary.

### **What happens if my itinerary is paper only?**

If all destinations on the itinerary remain paper-processing locations, the carnet will be issued and used on paper.

### **What happens if my itinerary is digital only?**

If all destinations on the itinerary are digital-processing locations, the carnet will be issued and used digitally. The holder will receive the Carnet ID and PIN and use the ATA Carnet App or ATA Carnet Desktop to prepare travels and present QR codes to customs.

### **What happens if my itinerary includes both paper and digital destinations?**

If the itinerary includes both paper and digital destinations, both formats may be needed. The paper carnet is used at paper destinations and the digital carnet is used at digital destinations.

### **What is the ATA Carnet App?**

The ATA Carnet App allows holders to download and store the carnet on a smartphone, prepare declarations, present QR codes to customs and receive near real-time transaction confirmation.

### **What is ATA Carnet Desktop?**

ATA Carnet Desktop is the web-based version of the same digital system. It offers the same core functionality and is especially useful for businesses, company managers, freight forwarders and users handling multiple carnets.

### **What do I need to use a digital ATA Carnet?**

You will need the Carnet ID and PIN issued through the eCarnet issuing system. These are used to download the carnet into the ATA Carnet App or ATA Carnet Desktop.

### **What is a Travel in the digital system?**

A Travel is the digital declaration created before arrival at customs. It covers the relevant leg of the journey and generates the transaction QR codes needed for customs processing.

### **Do I need to activate a digital carnet on first use?**

In many cases, yes. The digital process may require an activation or validation step on first use before the outward movement proceeds.

## **Representatives, freight forwarders and complex movements**

### **Can my freight forwarder or representative use the digital carnet?**

Yes. The holder can either share a specific declaration or QR code for the relevant movement, or share the whole carnet by giving the Carnet ID and PIN so that the representative can download the carnet and prepare Travels.

### **Who remains responsible if someone else uses the carnet?**

The carnet holder remains responsible for correct use of the carnet, including where a representative or freight forwarder is using it on the holder's behalf.

### **What if my goods move in split consignments?**

Where goods move in more than one shipment, separate Travels should be created for each partial movement. Each Travel should cover only the goods physically moving in that shipment.

### **Can customs be notified in advance for a digital movement?**

In some cases, yes. Some customs locations may support pre-arrival notice, pre-arrival declaration or remote commitment functions. Availability depends on whether the relevant customs office supports them.

### **What records should I keep?**

You should keep full supporting records for the carnet movement, including the issued carnet details, itinerary, goods list, customs processing evidence, instructions to representatives, and any relevant screenshots or confirmations. This is particularly important for mixed paper and digital itineraries.

## **Claims, support and contact**

### **Can I still be liable for a claim if I use the Carnet Security Scheme?**

Yes. The carnet holder may still be asked to settle a claim if customs charges arise. You may wish to speak to your insurer about whether cover can be extended to include potential carnet claims.

### **Where can I get help?**

TVCC can help with ATA Carnet applications, suitability checks, itinerary and destination queries, paper, digital and mixed itinerary guidance, representative and freight forwarder scenarios, and training and workshops.

### **Do you offer ATA Carnet training?**

Yes. TVCC offers training and workshops as part of its wider international trade support. This can help businesses understand ATA Carnet basics, digital carnet processes, mixed itineraries and practical compliance points.

Explore training and workshops here: <https://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/training-workshops/>

## How do I contact TVCC?

Contact the TVCC ATA Carnet team on 0208 564 6300 or by email at [carnet@tvchamber.co.uk](mailto:carnet@tvchamber.co.uk).

## Useful reminders before you submit

- Make sure the goods list is clear and specific. Avoid vague descriptions such as assorted, various or set.
- Include brand names, serial numbers and other identifiers wherever available.
- Check the destination rules before issue, especially if the itinerary is complex or includes multiple countries.
- If your route may involve both paper and digital processing, confirm this before the carnet is issued.
- If a representative or freight forwarder will handle customs formalities, make sure authority and access arrangements are in place before travel.