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MARKET FOCUS

How can Singapore companies take advantage of business opportunities in LA and the rest of the West Coast, even in the midst of a financial crisis? IE Singapore's Centre Director for LA offers tips and insights.

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CASE STUDY

Prima Taste: Our products serve as a reliable comfort food for Singaporeans living in the US. They also give a snapshot of what Singapore cuisine is all about for overseas visitors.

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Grow your business by exploring opportunities in Los Angeles

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Exporting to Los Angeles

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Los Angeles, situated on a hilly coastal plain with the Pacific Ocean as its southern and western boundaries, is a city of interesting multiplicity with a major Hispanic populace, a large Asian community and considerable populations of nearly every ethnic background in the world. It is home to people from more than 140 countries speaking 224 different languages.



The second largest city in the United States in terms of population and one of the largest in terms of area, Los Angeles's economic activity is driven by international trade, entertainment, aerospace, technology, petroleum, fashion, apparel and tourism.

Los Angeles is the largest port in terms of value of goods handled and tonnage in the US. Easy access to transcontinental rail and truck shipping and proximity to major Pacific manufacturing nations has propelled the city to prominence in international trade.

In 2008 the Los Angeles Customs District, led by the Los Angeles International Airport and the contiguous ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, emerged as the top Customs district by establishing a new US record for total trade at US\$357.3 billion.

Singapore - Los Angeles Trade

A trade turnover of US\$7.36 billion made Singapore one of Los Angeles's top 10 trade partners in 2008. Singapore exports to Los Angeles reached US\$1.82 billion, while imports were valued at US\$5.54 billion.

Overall, the US is Singapore's second largest foreign investor with about 1,500 US firms in Singapore. The bulk of the US investments in Singapore are in electronics manufacturing, oil refining and storage and in the chemical industries. There are also investments in other non-traditional sectors such as film animation and water research and development.

Meanwhile, Singapore's top exports to the US are electronic valves, office data processing machines and its parts, as well as telecommunications equipment.

The Singapore-United States economic link continues to be strong as attested by the United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement which came into force in 2004. Since then, bilateral trade has increased by 40 percent, while Singapore's exports grew by 28 percent. Foreign direct investments from the US have also grown by 10.5 percent.

Customs Regulations

There are special stipulations on specific commodities imported into the US. Information, such as whether your product is subject to quota restrictions or if it's eligible for reduced rates of duty, can be determined if you know your product's Harmonized Tariff Schedule classification number.

Other requirements depend on other agencies' safety, energy efficiency, health and other standards. Everything imported for use in the US must be marked with the country of origin. A permit may be necessary if your product is governed by the various rules in the US.

In November 2008 a new import requirement for consumer goods took effect. Importers must certify in writing that products being imported for warehousing, consumption or both conform to the rules, bans, regulations or standards administered by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The new requirements apply to nearly all categories of consumer goods, including the following: fabrics, wearing apparel, toys, jewelry, sporting goods, furniture, hazardous material, all-terrain vehicles and even pharmaceuticals subject to child-resistant cap standards.

FEATURED IADVISOR



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UPS INSIGHTS

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Adhering to the following stipulations will also help avoid delays and holds at US Customs:

- **Animals and Animal Products** - The US currently bans the importation of meat products including those for edible use, other than gelatin, milk, and milk products, from animals such as cows, deer, goats, sheep, and other cloven-hoofed animals.
- **Food** - Domestic and foreign facilities that manufacture, process, pack or hold food for human or animal consumption must register with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Articles may be held at the port of arrival until registration is complete.
- **Medical Items and Medicines** - Surgical and hospital instruments for humans or animals require FDA clearance. Shipments of medicines without FDA approval will be refused entry and will be returned to the export location or destroyed.
- **Computers** - Computers and laptops containing CD/DVD drives as components require clearance from the FDA as well. Other electrical items requiring FDA clearance are compact disc players, microwave ovens, televisions with cathode ray tubes, laser, infra-red and ultraviolet-emitting products.

Need further information? UPS can advise you on any restrictions or special requirements for shipping to Los Angeles, California, USA.

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