

For MSMEs in India

IEC (Import Export Code) – How to Apply for It, Benefits

[IEC \(Import Export Code\)](#) is required by anyone who is looking to kick-start his/her import/export business in the country. It is issued by the DGFT (Director General of Foreign Trade). IEC is a 10-digit code that has lifetime validity. Predominantly importer merchants cannot import goods without the Import Export Code and similarly, the exporter merchant cannot avail benefits from DGFT for the export scheme, etc., without IEC.

Situations where IEC is required

- When an importer has to clear his shipments from the customs then it's needed by the customs authorities.
- When an importer sends money abroad through banks then it's needed by the bank.
- When an exporter has to send his shipments then it's needed by the customs port.
- When an exporter receives money in foreign currency directly into his bank account then it's required by the bank.

Steps involved in IEC (Import/Export Code) registration

- Visit the [DGFT website](#).
- Click on the 'Services' tab on the homepage.
- Select the 'IEC Profile Management' option from the drop-down list.
- A new page will open. Click on the 'Apply for IEC' option on the page.
- Click on the 'Register' option. Enter the required details and click on the 'Sent OTP' button.
- Enter the OTP and click on the 'Register' button.
- Upon successful validation of the OTP, you will receive a notification containing the temporary password which you can change after logging into the DGFT website.
- After registering on the DGFT website, login to the website by entering the user name and password.
- Click on the 'Apply for IEC' option on the DGFT website dashboard.
- Click on the 'Start Fresh Application' button.
- Enter the general information, details of proprietor/partner/director/Karta/managing trustee, bank information, other details, attach Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and make the payment.
- After successful payment, it will be redirected to the DGFT website. The receipt will be displayed. Download the receipt for future reference.

- The IEC Certificate will be sent in the email. It can be downloaded after logging in to the DGFT website and clicking the 'Print IEC' option under the 'IEC Profile Management'.

Documents required for IEC (Import Export Code) registration

For IEC Code Registration, the following documents are required:

- Individual's, firm's or company's copy of PAN Card.
- Proprietor's voter ID, Aadhaar card or passport copy.
- Proof of establishment, incorporation or registration of the [partnership](#), society, [proprietorship firm](#), [company](#), HUF, etc.
- Proof of address of business premise, such as sale deed, lease deed, [rent agreement](#) or utility bills (electricity bill, telephone bill or mobile bill).
- Individual's or company's or firm's cancel cheque copies of current bank accounts.
- A self-addressed envelope for delivery of IEC certificate by registered post.

Benefits of IEC registration

Expansion of business

IEC assists you in taking your services or product to the global market and growing your businesses.

Availing several benefits

The Companies could avail several benefits of their imports/ exports from the DGFT, Export Promotion Council, Customs, etc., on the basis of their IEC registration.

No return filing

IEC does not require the filing of any returns. Once allotted, there isn't any requirement to follow any sort of process for sustaining its validity. Even for export transactions, there isn't any requirement for filing any returns with DGFT.

Easy processing

It is fairly easy to obtain IEC code from the DGFT within a period of 10 to 15 days after submitting the application. There isn't any need to provide proof of any export or import for getting IEC code.

No need for renewal

IEC code is effective for the lifetime of an entity and requires no renewal. After it is obtained, it could be used by an entity against all export and import transactions.

Cases where Import-Export Code (IEC) is not mandatory

According to the latest circular issued by the government, IEC is not mandatory for all traders [registered](#) under GST. In all such cases, the PAN of the trader shall be construed as a new IEC code for the purpose of import and export. Import Export Code (IEC) isn't required to be taken in case the goods exported or imported is for personal purposes and isn't used for any commercial purpose. Export/ Import done by the Government of India Departments and Ministries and Notified Charitable institutions need not require getting Import Export Code.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is IEC mandatory?

Yes. An Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) is mandatory for import to India or export from India. It is a significant business identification number for an import/export business.

A person/entity cannot export or import without obtaining an IEC unless specifically

exempted. However, IEC is not necessary for services exports, except when the service provider is taking benefits under the Foreign Trade Policy.

How much time does it take to get the IEC code?

Once the online application is submitted by paying the appropriate fees and requisite documents, IEC will be auto-generated. The DGFT will send the IEC Certificate to an applicant through the e-mail.

Can individuals obtain IEC?

Yes, individuals acting as proprietors of a business can obtain IEC registration.

Individuals can use either the name or the name of their company to apply for IEC registration.

How can I print my IEC certificate?

You can take print out of your IEC certificate by the below process:

- Visit the [DGFT website](#).
- Click on the 'Services' tab on the homepage.
- Select the 'IEC Profile Management' option from the drop-down list.
- A new page will open. Click on the 'Print IEC' option on the page.

- Verify your details and click on the 'Print IEC' button.

Should I update my IEC profile annually?

Yes. It is mandatory to update the IEC profile every year. In case of non-updation of the IEC profile, it will be deactivated. A deactivated IEC can be reactivated upon its successful updation. However, reactivation is subject to the condition that any other action should not be taken for violation of any provisions of the Foreign Trade Policy.

Is Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) required to apply for IEC?

A Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) is not compulsory to apply for an IEC. The IEC application can be signed through Aadhaar authentication. DSC has been introduced in IEC to strengthen the IEC issuance and modification processes.