MASTER CHECKLIST SECTIONS

- Pre-Departure Planning
- ATA Carnet Preparation
- Temporary Import Workflow
- Airline Cargo Handling
- Airport Check-In (Cargo Terminal)
- Hand-Carry Equipment Protocol
- Global Customs Best Practices
- India-Specific Customs Workflow
- Country-Specific Red Flags
- Drone & Wireless Equipment Compliance
- Re-Export Checklist
- Post-Shoot Documentation

PRE-DEPARTURE PLANNING

- Confirm all shoot countries and customs categories (Carnet / Temporary Import / Duty Paid)
- Prepare full inventory list
- List serial numbers for each item
- List accurate valuation for insurance and customs
- Assign cargo supervisor for the project
- Segregate gear into cargo vs hand-carry lists
- Verify lithium battery restrictions for all airlines
- Book cargo space with the airline
- Confirm cargo cut-off timing for each airport
- Prepare invoices and proof of ownership
- Pre-alert destination customs broker
- Check airport congestion forecasts (holidays, festivals)
- Create digital master file of all documents
- Print hard copies for travel

ATA CARNET PREPARATION

- Prepare carnet general list
- Match serial numbers with equipment labels
- Photograph high-value items for verification
- Ensure carnet descriptions are correct and complete
- Train crew on carnet exit and entry stamping
- Carry multiple photocopies of the carnet
- Assign one person to physically hold the carnet
- Ensure carnet reflects all cases and case numbers
- Use separate carnets for specialized rigs if needed
- Validate carnet expiry dates for long shoots

TEMPORARY IMPORT WORKFLOW (NON-CARNET COUNTRIES)

- Check if a financial guarantee or bond is required
- Prepare temporary import declaration forms
- Draft production company undertaking letter
- Draft local fixer / line producer supporting letter
- Attach filming schedule showing re-export date
- Prepare equipment valuation sheets
- Ensure invoices match declared values
- Identify restricted categories (drones, radios, firearms props)
- Submit documents to customs broker before arrival
- Confirm warehouse storage charges for potential delays

AIRLINE CARGO HANDLING

- Ensure cases meet IATA packaging standards
- Use protective foam and moisture barriers
- Apply external case numbers on all boxes
- List weight on each case
- Match case numbers to manifest
- Deliver cargo early for ETD / X-ray screening
- Provide MSDS sheets for lithium batteries
- Declare oversize items (jibs, cranes, dollies)
- Verify airline acceptance of high-density cases
- Get airline cargo acceptance receipt

AIRPORT CARGO TERMINAL CHECK-IN

- Arrive at cargo terminal 4–6 hours before flight
- Present airway bill (AWB)
- Carry printed inventory list
- Carry carnet or temporary import documents
- Escort cargo to screening area
- Stay during manual inspection, if requested
- Resolve weight or content mismatches immediately
- Obtain stamped cargo acceptance slip
- Email acceptance slip to production office

HAND-CARRY EQUIPMENT PROTOCOL

- Prepare separate hand-carry manifest
- Declare high-value items during departure
- Carry proof of ownership for lenses and electronics
- Store lithium batteries under 100Wh in fire-safe bags

- Keep data cards, SSDs, and digital media with DIT
- Prepare customs declaration for hand-carry cameras
- Keep laptop receipts if requested
- Avoid mixing personal and production items
- Carry fragile items in rigid protective bags

GLOBAL CUSTOMS BEST PRACTICES

- Use a universal case numbering system
- Do not change contents of cases mid-shoot
- Carry digital and printed copies of all documents
- Maintain accurate inward and outward scan logs
- Assign a customs liaison at each airport
- Use cargo tracking apps for real-time updates
- Keep equipment insurance handy
- Prepare back-up copies of all manifests
- Monitor validity of working visas for crew
- Avoid incomplete or vague equipment descriptions

INDIA-SPECIFIC CUSTOMS WORKFLOW

- Use ATA Carnet or Temporary Import Bond
- Match serial numbers precisely for all items
- Prepare Equipment Declaration List (EDL)
- Prepare letter from Indian line producer
- Submit re-export plan and shoot dates
- Expect physical inspection in Mumbai and Delhi
- Declare drones separately
- Declare walkie-talkies, VHF, UHF frequencies
- Prepare customs inspection location paperwork
- Plan for 24–48 hours clearance time for cargo
- Monitor bonded warehouse demurrage charges
- Ensure exit carnet stamping at departure airport

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RED FLAGS

- USA: Strict battery rules and heavy carnet checks
- EU: Serial number discrepancies penalized heavily
- UAE: Very strict on large lighting units and drones
- South Africa: Slow if valuations appear inconsistent
- Vietnam: Manual inspection likely for film cargo
- Morocco: Requires advance notification for large shoots
- Jordan: Smooth clearance but drones need military approval
- Turkey: Carnet friendly but strict on wireless gear

DRONE & WIRELESS EQUIPMENT COMPLIANCE

- Register drone serial numbers for each country
- Carry drone insurance documents
- Carry operator license or competency proof
- Submit drone flight route map if required
- Check restricted frequency bands for wireless systems
- Avoid carrying unlicensed transmitters
- Carry drone batteries in hand-carry only
- Prepare written purpose-of-use declaration for drones

RE-EXPORT CHECKLIST

- Match case numbers before departure
- Cross-check serial numbers with carnet
- Ensure no borrowed items remain inside cases
- Reconcile any swapped gear with updated manifest
- Obtain carnet exit stamp
- Collect airline acceptance receipt
- Notify customs broker of successful export
- File proof of re-export with production office

POST-SHOOT DOCUMENTATION

- Store scanned carnet pages for final audit
- Update central equipment database
- Record damages for insurance claims
- Upload updated manifests for next project
- File customs discrepancy logs
- Close temporary import bonds
- Submit cargo report to production office
- Debrief with customs team to improve workflow