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Exporting Alum from India

A comprehensive guide to quality standards , compliance requirements , and global market opportunities for potassium and ammonium alum exports

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INTRODUCTION

What is Alum and Why Does It Matter?



Alum, known as fitkari in India, is a double sulphate salt widely used across chemical, pharmaceutical, and water-treatment sectors. Its versatility stems from exceptional coagulation and astringent properties.

India's alum exports have grown significantly, driven by rising global demand for water purification solutions and pharmaceutical-grade materials. Understanding product specifications and compliance requirements is essential for successful market entry.

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Types and Grades of Alum for Export

Potash Alum

Potassium aluminium sulphate ($KAl(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$) – the most common form used in water treatment and food processing

Ammonium Alum

Ammonium aluminium sulphate ($NH_4Al(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$) – primarily used in pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications

Industrial Grade

Suitablefor water treatment, paper sizing, and textile processing with purity levels of 95-98%

Pharmaceutical Grade

High-purityalum

(99%+) meeting USP, BP, or IP standards for medicinal and cosmetic use

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Key International Markets for Indian Alum

Indian alum exports reach diverse markets across five continents , with particularly strong demand in regions facing water quality challenges and expanding pharmaceutical manufacturing.



Middle East & Gulf

High demand for water treatment grade due to desalination and municipal water projects



Southeast Asia

Growing markets in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand for both industrial and pharmaceutical grades



East Africa

Emerging opportunities in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia for water purification applications



European Union

Demand for pharmaceutical -grade alum meeting stringent REACH compliance requirements

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QUALITY STANDARDS

Critical Quality Parameters for Export-Grade Alum

What Matters Most

Export-grade alum must meet rigorous specifications that vary by application and destination market. Quality parameters directly impact performance in end-use applications and regulatory acceptance.

Buyers typically request detailed certificates of analysis (CoA) demonstrating compliance with international standards before placing orders.

1

Purity Level

Minimum 95% for industrial, 99%+ for pharmaceutical grade

2

Crystal Size

Uniform granulation between 2-5mm for optimal solubility

3

Solubility Rate

Complete dissolution in water within specified time parameters

4

Moisture Content

Controlled at <1% to prevent caking and ensure stability

5

Heavy Metal Limits

Arsenic, lead, mercury below 1-5 ppm depending on grade

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Essential Certifications and Compliance Requirements

Navigating the regulatory landscape requires multiple certifications depending on target markets and intended applications . Meeting these standards ensures smooth customs clearance and buyer confidence.



ISO Certifications

ISO 9001:2015 for quality management systems and ISO 14001:2015 for environmental management demonstrate manufacturing excellence



Pharmacopoeia Standards

Pharmaceutical-grade alum must comply with USP (United States), BP (British), IP (Indian), or EP (European) pharmacopoeia specifications



REACH Registration

EU exports require Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) compliance for chemical safety



Food Safety Certs

Kosher, Halal, and FSSAI certifications necessary for food-grade applications and specific regional markets



GMP Certification

Good Manufacturing Practices certification essential for pharmaceutical and cosmetic-grade product exports



Safety Data Sheets

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) compliant with GHS classification must accompany all shipments

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TESTING & DOCUMENTATION

Laboratory Testing and Safety Documentation

01

Third-Party Lab Testing

Independent NABL-accredited laboratories conduct comprehensive chemical analysis for each production batch

02

Certificate of Analysis

Detailed CoA documenting purity, heavy metals, pH, solubility, and other parameters against specification

03

MSDS Preparation

Safety data sheets covering hazard identification, handling, storage, emergency procedures, and disposal

04

Stability Studies

Long-termstabilitytesting demonstrating shelf life under various storage conditions



Comprehensive testing protocols ensure product consistency and regulatory compliance across international markets, building trust with buyers and facilitating repeat orders.

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Packaging, Labelling, and Handling Standards

Primar y Packaging

Food-grade HDPE bags (25kg, 50kg) or multi-wall paper bags with polyethylene lining to prevent moisture ingress

Labelling Requirements

Labels must include product name, chemical formula, grade, batch number, manufacturing date, expiry, weight, and hazard symbols per GHS standards

Handling Instructions

Clear markingsfor "Keep Dry", handling precautions, and storage temperature ranges to maintain product integrity

Export Packing

Palletised loads wrapped in stretch film, containerised for sea freight with desiccant sachets to control humidity



EXPORT DOCUMENTATION

HS Codes and Required Export Documents

Key HS Code

HS Code 2833 22 00

Aluminium sulphates (alum) classification under the Harmonised System of Nomenclature

Proper classification ensures correct duty calculation and smooth customs clearance at both origin and destination ports.

Essential Documentation

- Commercial invoice with detailed product description and declared value
- Packing list specifying quantity, weight, and packaging details
- Certificate of Origin (preferential or non-preferential as required)
- Bill of Lading or Airway Bill for shipment tracking
- Certificate of Analysis from accredited laboratory
- MSDS and compliance certificates (ISO, REACH, GMP as applicable)
- Pre-shipment inspection certificate if required by buyer
- Insurance certificate covering marine/transit risks

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Major Buyer Segments and Logistics Challenges

Understanding your buyers and anticipating operational challenges enables more strategic export planning and stronger customer relationships.



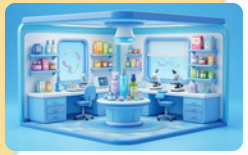
Water Treatment Companies

Municipal authorities and private water utilities using alum as primary coagulant for drinking water purification



Pharmaceutical Manufacturers

Drug manufacturers requiring pharmaceutical-grade alum for vaccines, dermatological preparations, and antiseptic formulations



Cosmetic Producers

Personal care companies incorporating alum in deodorants, aftershaves, and skin-care products for astringent properties



Industrial Users

Paper mills, textile processors, and leather tanning facilities using alum in manufacturing processes

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Key Operational Challenges

Logistics Considerations

- Moisture-sensitive cargo requiring climate-controlled containers
- Weight-based freight costs favouring bulk shipments
- Long sea transit times necessitating careful inventory planning

Regulatory Hurdles

- Varying chemical safety regulations across jurisdictions
- Complex customs procedures in emerging markets
- Periodic updates to international chemical classifications

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