



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Department of Tourism on the Review of Immigration Regulations

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The Department of Tourism welcomes the recent Cabinet announcement on immigration regulations and is working with the Department of Home Affairs and tourism stakeholders in implementing the changes.

The Cabinet announcement follows recommendations made by the Inter-Ministerial Committee established by President Jacob Zuma to find a better balance between South Africa's security and economic development needs.

The recommendations will be implemented in a phased approach, and will make it easier for tourists to travel to South Africa without compromising national security or the safety of children.

The following concessions will be implemented in the next three months:

- The Department of Home Affairs will accept visa applications by post in countries where no SA Missions exist.
- Selected travel companies will be accredited to process visa applications on behalf of tourists in China, India and Russia within the next three months. The Department of Tourism is assisting the Department of Home Affairs to identify suitable companies in these countries to speed up the process. This programme could be extended to other visa requiring countries in the future.

The following concessions will be implemented in the next 12 months:

- Long term multiple entry visas will be issued for business and academic visitors from Africa.
- The Department of Home Affairs will consider a programme which issues visas on arrival for nationals already holding valid visas from the UK, USA, Canada and other countries who undertake stringent checks on visitors.
- Additional Visa Facilitation Centres will be opened in a number of countries to assist with applications for visas and permits.

In the longer term, the Department of Home Affairs will install systems for pre-flight checks at international airports. Advance Passenger Processing systems will be upgraded and a Passenger Name Record will be implemented to enhance risk assessment.

The Department of Home Affairs will finalise the automation of the visa and permitting system within the next few years.

In respect of children from visa-exempt countries, the Cabinet approved a dispensation in terms of which travellers will be strongly advised to bring along proof of the relation and consent from the absent parent/s or guardian/s. This means that Immigration Regulations may require that such documents be produced on arrival in SA. Currently, the status quo remains, until such time that the Department of Home Affairs has facilitated a legal instrument to implement this recommendation.

Travelers from countries where visas are required, provision of original birth certificates or certified copies of required documents should continue during the visa application process as this is in line with practice in many other countries.

South African children travelling abroad are still required to carry Unabridged Birth Certificates as well as parental consent affidavits from non-accompanying parents or guardians.

In addition Cabinet approved the following concessions:

- The validity of the Parental Consent Affidavit will be extended to six months.
- Within the next 3 months school principals will issue letters confirming permission for children to travel on school tours. This authority will also be extended to include registered sports bodies.
- In the next year, the term “Unabridged Birth Certificate” will be changed to “Birth Certificate” containing parental details.
- Details of parents will be printed in their children’s passports, so that parents would not be required to carry birth certificates.

The process of establishing administrative mechanisms to give effect to the revised regulations has begun, with the focus on the measures which must be implemented within three months.

The Department of Tourism continues to support all measures and efforts to protect the safety of children and the security of our national borders.

The department is confident that these concessions will successfully balance the interests of national security and economic growth.

The Department of Tourism welcomes Cabinet’s extension of the life of the IMC in order to deal with any issues that may arise whilst implementing the Cabinet decision.

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