



Applying for a South African Visa

General information about South African Visas

Visitors' visas are for international travelers (citizens of other countries) who have permanent residence outside South Africa and who wish to visit the country on a temporary basis for tourism or business purposes for a period of 90 days or less.

A visa simply indicates that your application has been reviewed at a South African embassy, mission or consulate and that the consular officer has determined you are eligible to enter the country for a specific purpose.

The visa will allow you to travel to a South African port of entry where an immigration official will then determine if you are allowed to enter South Africa and for how long you can stay for that particular visit. Visitors are restricted to the activity or reason for which their visas were issued.

On entry to South Africa, a visa is considered to be a visitor's permit. The permit's period of validity is calculated from the date of entry into the country and will be set out under the heading "conditions" on the visa label. You must ensure that you apply for the correct visa/permit. Entry in the country may be refused if the purpose of visit was not correctly stated.

Requirements for visitor's visas differ from country to country, and the requirements are subject to change. As each application is treated as an individual case and you should make enquiries with your nearest South African mission or consulate abroad or any office of the Department of Home Affairs to see whether or not you are required to apply for a visa.

Remember that there is a fee charged for issuing a visa, and you should check the cost with the office as well as this is updated annually. The fee is payable in different currencies in different countries.

Visas are not issued at South African ports of entry, and airline officials are obliged to insist on visas before allowing passengers to board. If you arrive without a visa, immigration officials are obliged to put you onto a flight back to your home country.

Foreigners with long term status (work permits/permit residence) in the neighboring countries who transit the Republic to return to their employment or residence are not subject to the transit visa, provided they are in possession of proof of their status.

South African visitors' visas may be granted for:

- visits to family or friends and also for tourism purposes
- business purposes
- spouse to join a spouse who is in South Africa on a work or study permit
- children to join parents who are in South Africa on work or study permits
- fiancée/ fiancé to join his or her partner with the intension of marrying within 90 days
- study purposes (max stay 3-months)
- charitable or voluntary activities
- research
- conferences
- to work in the production of an movie or show (i.e. in the entertainment industry)
- for medical purposes (max stay 3-months)
- sport events

Documents required to apply for a visa

- A passport or travel document valid for no less than 30 days after the expiry of your intended visit
- Your passport must have at least TWO unused page for entry / departure endorsements
- A completed Form BI-84 (application for a visa)
- Payment of the prescribed fee
- A yellow-fever vaccination certificate (if required)
- Statement and/or documentation confirming the purpose and duration of your visit
- Two colour passport photographs
- A return or onward ticket if you are travelling by air
- If you have children (minors) travelling with you or joining in South Africa, you will need to provide the following additional documents
 - Proof of guardianship or custody or
 - Consent from the guardian in the case of an unaccompanied minor
- Proof of financial means to pay for your living expenses while in South Africa in the form of:
 - Bank statements
 - Salary advances
 - Undertakings by the host(s) in South Africa
 - Bursary
 - Medical cover or
 - Cash available (including credit cards and travellers' cheques)

Requirements for entering South Africa

You will need the following if you wish to visit South Africa:

- A valid and acceptable passport or travel document for your intended stay
- At least one blank page in your passport for endorsements
- A valid visa, if required
- Sufficient funds to pay for your day-to-day expenses during your stay
- A return or onward ticket
- Yellow fever certificates if your journey starts or entails passing through the yellow fever belt of Africa or South America.