

IMMIGRATION PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS

TYPES OF VISA/ENTRY PERMIT

The knowledge of the various types of visa/entry permit is of crucial importance both to the applicant and to the company or organisation sponsoring him/her. This is because in the Nigerian visa system, the type that is given is tied to the purpose for which the journey is intended and any variation of the visa with the purpose of journey will render such a visa inappropriate for entry, leading to either a refusal of landing or deportation, in the case of a foreigner already in the country.

There are three main types of visa, viz.

- (1) Ordinary Visa
- (2) Diplomatic Visa
- (3) Gratis Courtesy Visa

The **Ordinary Visa** is further divided as follows:

- (a) Transit
- (b) Single journey
- (c) Multiple journeys

ORDINARY VISA

Transit

This type of visa is issued to applicants who wish to pass through Nigeria to a further destination. It may be obtained at a Nigerian mission and is given for a period not exceeding seven **(7)** days without reference to the Comptroller-General of Immigration.

An applicant seeking this type of visa must be in possession of an express approval (visa or any form of permission) to enter a specified third country, as well as a confirmed ticket or sufficient funds to pay for any means of transportation appropriate to reach that country. A transit visa may also be given at the port of entry on the specific approval of the Comptroller-General of Immigration. A transit pass is

normally issued whether in the former or latter case, and it takes the form of an endorsement by rubber stamp on the passport of the applicant, which shall contain particulars of the port of entry, the date of entry and the period the person is permitted to remain in Nigeria in transit.

Single Journey Visa

This is valid for a single entry into Nigeria and may be issued as:

- Short Visit Visa;
- STR Visa (Subject To Regularisation for Residence Work Permit);
- T.W.P (Temporary Work Permit)

The Short Visit Visa

This type of single journey visa is issued to applicants who require a single entry to Nigeria for the purpose of tourism, to see places of interest, or visit friends and/or relations resident in Nigeria. It is also issued to applicants who wish to visit Nigeria for business or meeting. This visa is also issued at a Nigerian mission abroad without reference to the Comptroller-General of Immigration provided that, the applicant who fills Form (1MM 22), is in possession of a return air ticket to and from Nigeria or an onward ticket for a further destination, together with a visa or any other acceptable form of permission to enter that country. In case a passenger arrives at the port of entry without a return ticket or onward ticket to a further destination but is otherwise found to be admissible, he/she may be required to deposit the appropriate amount for the purchase of such ticket as may be necessary to enable him/her return to his/her country of domicile, or proceed to a further destination.

STR Visa (Subject to Regularisation)

This is the type of visa required by foreigners seeking to take up employment in Nigeria. Section 8, sub-section 1, of

the Immigration Act provides that “no person, not being a citizen of Nigeria, may take up employment in Nigeria other than employment with the federal or state government without the consent of the Comptroller-General of Immigration”. Section 33 of the Act further provides that an application must be made to the Comptroller-General by the prospective employer, in writing, confirming that he/she has a vacancy on the expatriate quota and at the same time stating the position in which prospective employee is to be employed and confirming acceptance of immigration responsibility”.

The employer company applies to the Nigerian embassy or consular office in the country where such intending employee/applicant resides, requesting that he (and his accompanying spouse/ fiancée/children, if applicable) be granted STR Visa (subject to regularisation for residence work permit) when he arrives in Nigeria. In such application, the employer company undertakes to assume immigration and other responsibilities for the employee (and his accompanying spouse/ fiancée/children, if applicable) in Nigeria.

The STR Visa is issued at Nigerian mission without reference to the Comptroller-General of Immigration provided that the applicant presents specified documents. STR visa is normally given for 90 days without reference, during which an application must be made to the Comptroller-General of Immigration, to regularise the stay of the prospective employee, and the person may assume his employment only when such application is approved and a **RESIDENCE WORK PERMIT** granted.

Registration of Aliens

Having undergone the various legal formalities for residency status, all foreigners are expected to register their presence at the immigration offices closest to their places of residence or occupation. It should be noted that for this purpose, all

the state immigration offices are representatives of the Comptroller-General of Immigration and application for regulation should be made to them, which they would refer accordingly, for approval to issue the residence permit.

Temporary Work Permit (T.W.P)

Companies and organisations wishing to engage the services of expatriates for short period assignments are required to apply direct to the Comptroller-General in Abuja for visa/entry permits for such expatriates. This is the temporary work permit visa and it is not issued without reference to the Comptroller-General of Immigration. If such applications are submitted at the Nigerian missions abroad, they must be referred to the Comptroller-General of Immigration for approval. The temporary assignments, which are eligible for such approval, include:

- erection/installation work;
- feasibility studies;
- repairs of machinery/equipment;
- auditing of accounts;
- research work, and such other assignments as may fall into this category.

The visa is normally approved by cablegram sent through NITEL offices in Nigeria to the Mission from where it would be issued. The cost of the transmission is borne by the company/ organisation applying for the facility. The T.W.P Visa is given for a period not exceeding 3 months and may be extended for a further period, upon application to the Comptroller-General of Immigration who will determine the desirability of such an extension.

Multiple Journey Visa

This type of visa is normally issued without reference to the Comptroller-General of Immigration by the Nigerian missions abroad for a period not exceeding 12 months, and

may be for a specified number of journeys within the period granted.

It is normally given mostly to non-resident directors of Nigerian based companies and other foreign businessmen and women for the purpose of attending meetings and for other frequent visits to pursue business arrangements, or make consultations regarding investment projects.

Both the single and multiple journey visas are also given in Nigeria to employees of companies/ organisations whose stay have been duly regularised, in order to enable them return to their employment whenever they travel out either for business or holidays. This is called return or re-entry visa. Applications for this must be made personally by the employee in Nigeria and not from outside the country. The application must be supported by the employer confirming that the employee is returning to his job, and reaffirming acceptance of Immigration responsibility on behalf of the applicant, as well as showing proof of the continued availability of the expatriate quota position to be occupied.

GRATIS COURTESY VISA

This type of visa is normally issued to persons who do not qualify for diplomatic visa, but who are foreign government officials traveling on official business. It may be granted in cases where it is considered undesirable to accede to an application for a diplomatic visa, but where it is desirable on grounds of international courtesy to facilitate a journey.