

VISAS & WORK PERMITS IN VIETNAM



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Visa Categories

Before you move to your new temporary home, you need to obtain a visa that allows you to stay in Vietnam for the required amount of time. Depending on the purpose and the duration of your stay, there are different types of visa available:

- **A tourist visa** is available for one month as a single-entry or multiple-entry permit. The maximum duration of this visa is 30 days.
- **Business visas** are a little trickier. Applications need to get an official entry clearance from their sponsor, usually their employer. This visa allows for multiple entries and last for up to one year. If you plan to apply for a business visa, you have to obtain approval from the Vietnamese Immigration Department through your sponsor. If you do not have a business partner, employer, or the other sponsor who can provide you with an entry clearance, you can also apply for a business visa for a stay of up to 90 days.
- **Diplomatic and official visas** can be applied for without having to pay any visa fees. Applicants are, however, required to submit an official letter by their government office or foreign mission.

Apply for a Vietnamese Visa: A Strict System

Many expatriates travel to their host country before the beginning of their assignment for a fact-finding trip, to find a place to live or to visit potential schools for their children. Some countries have bilateral agreements with Vietnam allowing their citizens to enter Vietnam freely for short-term (15 days for most of them) visits. If that is the case, you do not have to obtain a tourist visa.

Longer stays and business visits, however, require a visa. Make sure to submit your application well in advance of your departure. Documents you have to submit (unless stated otherwise) are:

- valid passport
- completed application form; it can be found online.
- passport-sized photograph
- application fee
- criminal record
- authorisation document issued by the Immigration Department

The exact paperwork you need to submit as well as the application fees, of course, depend on the type of visa you apply for, the duration of your stay, the number of intended entries and the purposes of your trip. You can pay your visa fees via postal order or check. Make sure to contact the nearest Vietnamese embassy or

consulate for details. In fact, the regulations tend to change at a fast pace in Vietnam, and as a result governmental information can be conflicting or outdated.

Visa on Arrival: Beware of Scams!

Certain websites offer online visa in exchange for a fee. Vietnamese embassies have issued a message to warn travelers that those websites are not official, and they often fail to issue visa. Also, certain travelers thought they were covered by these websites, but once at the airport in Vietnam, the authorities refused them the entry, and they had to go back to their country of origin.

Only the following applicants are eligible for a visa on arrival:

- those departing from a country where there is no competent Vietnamese visa-granting agency
- those traveling through many countries before entering Vietnam
- those visiting Vietnam on tours organised by an international travel agency operated in Vietnam
- foreign crewmembers on board vessels anchored in Vietnam's seaport wishing to exit through another border gate
- those visiting Vietnam to attend a relative's funeral or visit a seriously ill family member
- those entering Vietnam to engage in emergency response, search/secure activities, disaster or epidemic control or for the other special purposes at the request of a competent authority in Vietnam.

Before entering Vietnam, applicants for a visa on arrival must apply for a letter issued by the Immigration Department (Ministry of Public Security), Consular Department or Ho Chi Minh City Department of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Work Permits and Residential Cards: Legislation Changes Happen Regularly

Unfortunately, a business visa is not sufficient if you plan to live and work in Vietnam on a long-term basis, and you will need a work permit if you are going to stay longer than three months. Legislation in Vietnam changes very often, and this has also been the case for work permits. In fact, the government issued a decree in February 2016 which aims to simplify the work permit process, even though the decree it replaced has just been implemented in 2013. Furthermore, this decree extends the categories of people exempted for work permits.

Source: Internations.org

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