

Issuance of Visa on Arrival Standard Operating Procedures

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Foreword

The Immigration Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has performed impressively in the recent years. They reduced Human Trafficking considerably and helped save the National Airlines from being fined to the tune of several millions. This, consequently, resulted in the removal of Pakistan from the 'Watch List Tier II' as well as from the list of high-risk immigrants countries.

A number of facilitation measures at the entry and exits points have, without doubt, eased the movement of passengers. Travellers are now cleared with speed at the relevant counters and are being well looked after in the Immigration designated areas. This empathically professional approach has helped raise the image of the organization.

This commendable work by those responsible has been acknowledged within the country as well as by the international agencies. It is in the light of such credentials that the Government of Pakistan felt comfortable to entrust the organization with the task of issuing visas to travellers on arrival at the check posts. This is indeed a matter of pride for the department.

It is expected that the Immigration Wing will continue its endeavours to live up to its established standards and reputation and will diligently perform this duty with dignity, blending professionalism with integrity.

The standard operating procedures are in place to set the parameters and working methodology. Immigration wing officials must thoroughly go over and comprehend the new Manual of Passport and Visa - 2006, for better service delivery. Suggestions to improve the SOP would be welcomed. So lets' move along and provide a world-class Immigration service!

Tariq Parvez(SI)
Director General
Federal Investigation Agency

Visa Facility

Decision to transfer the responsibility to issue visa on arrival by FIA is a landmark in the history of our organization. The back ground of decision to transfer this responsibility to FIA was desire of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to ensure passenger facilitation at the International Airports. Presently the citizens of 93 countries, travelling to Pakistan for business or tourism are entitled for visa on arrival at the Pakistani International Airports. Previously visa on arrival was issued by the Immigration and Passport staff. But the various passengers were facing difficulties because of various inherent flaws in that system.

In a meeting held on 17th January 2007 in his secretariat, the PM asked the Secretary Interior to examine the proposal to transfer visa on arrival facility to FIA. As a result of the meetings held by Secretary Interior recommendation was made to the PM for transferring this responsibility to FIA. The trust and confidence reposed in FIA is matter of pride for us; but it also puts a heavy responsibility on us. Every department desires and makes endeavours to arrogate to itself as much authority as possible. But in this case the authority has been assigned to FIA without any initiative or desire on our part.

This was done firstly because FIA was a natural choice and in best possible position to provide this service, and secondly the commendable performance of FIA in different fields and improvement of its overall image during the last few years. The second factor played a significant role when the higher authorities looked for a department, which could deliver better in facilitating the businessmen and tourists on arrival. The impressive performance and improved image of our organization has earned acclaim of the higher authorities leading to expanding its role in many important areas; like, Counter-Terrorism, Intellectual Property Laws, Cyber Crime and now finally, the issuance of visa on arrival.

The credit for this goes to all the officers of FIA. We however need to be mindful of the fact that we should not betray the confidence reposed in us. I am sure that my officers will continue to work with the same dedication as shown in the recent past, and will provide the best possible service to the passengers in future, also.

Mirza Muhammad Yasin/PSP
Additional Director General/I&AHT

1. Introduction

In order to promote trade and investment in the country, Prime Minister of Pakistan has decided to establish "Visa Facilitation Desks" at International Airports Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar to facilitate foreign business community on arrival. This document provides the guidelines to issue the above mentioned visas as per the Policy decided by the Government of Pakistan.

2. Issuance of visa by the immigration officers

The Government of Pakistan, Ministry Of Interior Vide order No 628 dated 27th Feb 2007 has issued directions to the Federal Investigation Agency to provide the facility of one-window operations by issuing visas on arrival to the foreign businessmen and group tourists.

Establishment of visa facilitation desk

The immigration check post shall on the basis of above orders establish a visa facilitation desk at the arrival lounge. It shall be manned at the time of arrivals of international flights. The existing facility may be utilized for the purpose, as DG Immigration and Passport has very kindly consented to dispense over the same to FIA immigration. Immigration check post in-charge shall coordinate with his officials for the smooth transition and commencement of the process of issuing visas to the international passengers at the arrival lounge.

Categories of Visas to be issued on arrival

Visas may be issued on arrival to the two categories of passengers:-

▲ Business Visa

Foreign businessmen and investors from 69 countries (List enclosed as Annexure C) may be granted 30 days non-reporting visa on production of any of the following documents:-

- i. Recommendatory letter from Chamber of Commerce & Industries (CC&I) of the respective country of the foreigner.
- ii. Invitation letter from Business Organization duly recommended by the concerned Trade Organization / Association in Pakistan.
- iii. Recommendatory letter by Investor Consular of Board of Investment posted at Pakistan Missions abroad.

▲ Visa to Tourist Friendly Countries

Visa may be issued to the tourist of 24 friendly countries through their designated tour operators.

Procedure for Granting Visas

Visas will be issued manually at all Airports in the following manner:-

Immigration Visa Officer shall be required to:-

Cardially welcome and attend the visitor.

After initial collection of name and Passport number ask the applicant to fill out visa application form and sign it.

Check the requisite documents for issuing visa; like business recommendation letter or designated tour operator letter.

Shall discreetly check name / Passport against ECL / BL.

Collect the Visa fee in US Dollars.

Issue a duly stamped cash receipt, from the Receipt Book to the applicant.

Paste the duly filled in visa sticker on a new page of the passport.

Affix government of Pakistan round seal on the lower left corner of the visa sticker, with half of seal impression overlapping the passport page; writing the visa number as follows; mentioning the register number, year, name of the airport, with immigration abbreviation, e.g. 1/07/IIAP/IMMG to make a distinction from the other visa issuing authorities.

A visa issuing authority stamp shall also be stamped on the lower right side of the same page.

Take shortest possible time for disposal of case.

Sign the Visa Register after making every entry.

Deposit the collected fee in the authorized branch of National Bank of Pakistan during working hours.

6. General Administration

Visa fee shall be checked against "Bank Scroll" on next working day; the in-charge should personally ensure the process. -

Visa forms complete in all respects shall be kept by the in-charge of the shift and shall issue the same as per requirement.

Visa sticker shall be placed in safe custody of the Shift in-charge who shall issue the same to the immigration visa officer as per requirement.

The in-charge of the shift through Additional Director Airport will send a weekly report containing all the details of visas issued during the week to Directorate General Immigration & Passports Headquarters with a copy to Director Zone.

Imposing sign boards to indicate the visa policy and list of countries to be issued visa on arrival shall be placed at the immigration visa facilitation desk.

7. Capacity building programs

Following shall be ensured to build capacity of the staff:-

- a. In the first phase the immigration visa officers so designated to issue visas should be attached with already deputed officials of Immigration and Passport to acquire first hand knowledge of the working.
- b. Immigration and Passport officers shall impart training for at least two weeks to the earmarked immigration visa officers.
- c. Subsequently regular and unabated orientation on the subject be ensured on latest trends and developments through available expertise in the Ministry and foreign offices engaged in our capacity building programs.
- d. Immigration visa officers may also be apprised of the fact that Software solution for visa has been developed in-house by the Database / Software Wing of Directorate General Immigration & Passports and the same would be deployed at sites shortly.

8. General Directions

1. Primarily the Additional Director/Deputy Director Immigration of the international airports shall be the overall in-charge of the scheme to issue visa on arrival at the check post; he shall, however, through his Officers and Staff, ensure that standard operating procedures are being practiced in letter and spirit; carry out audit of visa stickers and visa amount being deposited regularly; and may take further measures if so required to uplift the visa facilitation scheme, under intimation to his superiors.
2. The Immigration and Passport office shall be providing 200 visa stickers to Karachi and 100 each to Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta visa facilitation desk every month; Number of visa stickers, however, may be increased depending on visa seekers load.