

FAST  FACTS

Visa Requirements & Work Permits

When traveling to a foreign country, you may be required to obtain a business visa or travel visa. Some countries allow visitors to enter without a visa for short stays, but require a visa for longer stays.

Is a Visa Required?

Visa requirements vary depending on the purpose of your trip, such as tourism, business, or employment, and the country you will be visiting. We recommend visiting the following resources to determine whether you will need a visa and what application materials are required:

- » [Visa Central](#) – Visa Central has a free search tool that will determine whether or not you need a visa and which application materials are needed. It is not necessary to create an account or use Visa Central's services to access the search tool.
- » [U.S. Department of State](#) – The State Department's international travel information provides links to foreign embassies under the "Entry/Exit Requirements for U.S. Citizens" section of their web page. Each embassy includes visa requirements on its website.

How to Apply for a Visa

Virginia Economic Development Partnership recommends Passport Visas Express in Arlington, VA for visa processing.

- » [Passport Visas Express](#) – Use the link on the homepage to begin a visa application.
- » You can also apply for a visa directly from a foreign embassy in the United States. Visit the [U.S. Department of State](#) for links to each country's embassy.

For information on work permits, continue to Page 2.

China Business Visas

As of October 1, 2013, the Chinese Consulate has begun using new visa application forms and will no longer accept the old application form. Invitation letters for business visas are still required.

For more information, visit the [U.S.-China Chamber of Commerce](#).

Check Visa Requirements Frequently

Visa requirements can change frequently. Even if you are returning to a country you have recently visited, check to see whether you will need a visa and if the application requirements have changed.



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Work Permits

Employees often travel to international markets to meet potential customers, conduct business, and execute projects. To work in a country or stay for an extended period, most countries require foreigners to obtain a work permit or visa.

How to Apply for a Work Permit

Work permit requirements vary by country and trip purpose (such as tourism, business, or work). It is often the responsibility of the employer, not the employee, to apply for a work permit. Permits are usually issued for a specific worker and a specific job. To learn more about country-specific requirements, refer to the following resources:

- » [Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP](#) – Review immigration and employment authorization information by country.
- » [AboutJobs.com](#) – Read about preparing for overseas employment and view country-by-country information for work permits and visas.
- » [U.S. Department of State](#) – Consulates and embassies have information about work conditions, application procedures, professional requirements, and immigration laws for their countries.
- » [Eurojobs.com Blog](#) – Find information on work permits in Europe.

Plan Ahead and Apply Early

It is important to consider foreign labor regulations early. The application for a work permit or visa can take up to several months to process, depending on the country that is issuing the permit.

Some countries may deny a work permit or visa if the foreign government believes that suitable labor is available within the country.

Employers may also be required to advertise the position in the foreign country and allow enough time to find a suitable resident worker before being issued a work permit.¹

Virginia Economic Development Partnership - International Trade offers a number of export-related services to Virginia businesses, including trade missions and market research by our Global Network of in-country consultants. These services are available to all Virginia exporters.

For more information, please visit our website: ExportVirginia.org

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¹ Reif, J., Woznick, A., Thurmond, M., Kelly, J., & Ostrea, R. (1997). *Services: The Export of the 21st Century*. World Trade Press.

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