



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Chile – Updates on Visas and Permanent Residency Procedures

In the past few months, the Chilean Immigration Department and the Chilean Immigration Police have introduced significant changes to different immigration processes. These updates affect permanent residency processes and requirements, new visas, new procedures on current visa processes, special exemptions and restrictions for tourists of specific nationalities, and benefits for tourists with special qualifications who apply for a special work permit.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- These announcements will impact specific nationalities who seek to enter Chile as tourists. This is relevant for those who apply for a special work permit for tourists and for individuals with expired visas who, while having filed a temporary residence visa renewal or a permanent residence request, are currently abroad and need to re-enter the country as tourists.
- A business visa for Chileans traveling to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Treaty (APEC) countries will broaden immigration alternatives for business executives on short-term assignments who do not seek residency in those countries.
- An expedited special work permit for tourists process will benefit professional artists and athletes with shorter processing times.
- A new online application process for Venezuelan and Mercosur nationals from Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia is expected to facilitate the related visa processes. New documentation requirements for permanent residency petitioners might lengthen the document gathering stage before applying for a permanent residency in country.

- An official pronouncement from the Immigration Department introduces some restrictions for international travels for residents with a visa renewal or a permanent residency application, who do not yet have a proof of “residence in progress” certificate.

Background

The current government administration instructed earlier this year that all public entities should digitalize their processes. This initiative is called “*Gobierno Digital*” and aims to strengthen and modernize public administration, bringing greater access and service to all users of the public apparatus.

For the Immigration Department and immigration-related public services, the current administration has additionally introduced as a guideline for their administrative practice the principle of regular, orderly, and safe migration. The aim of this principle is to implement public policy that identifies causes for irregular immigration and undertakes to solve them by providing clearer and safer immigration processes.

Following these developments, several updates have been implemented by both the Immigration Department and the Chilean Immigration Police office during 2019.

Updates to Tourist and Temporary Residency Visas

1. Effective from June 22, Venezuelan nationals without a valid residence visa or a valid proof of residence in progress certificate require a consular tourist visa to enter the country. This tourist visa must be requested through an online system and it will be approved and stamped into the passport at any Chile consular office abroad. The visa has a stay validity period of 90 days. Processing times vary depending on each consulate’s workload.
2. The Immigration Department has enforced an online request system for all Mercosur temporary residency visa renewal applications and for *Responsabilidad Democrática* temporary residence visas, eligible for Venezuelan nationals. This measure replaces paper-based applications sent via postal mail.

For Venezuelan nationals, this measure will allow applications made through any Chilean consulate, thus not restricting the process exclusively to Chile’s consulates in Venezuela.

3. Effective since April 1, a tourist visa exemption has been implemented for all nationals from the People’s Republic of China, India, and the Dominican Republic who hold a United States B1/B2 visa valid for at least six months at the date of entry or who are current U.S. green card holders.

This means that all nationals from these three countries, who normally require a consular tourist visa to enter Chile, will be exempt from this requirement and will be able to enter as tourists using their passports and stamped U.S. visas or green cards at the airport. A 90-day valid tourist card will be given to eligible candidates at the airport, upon arrival.

4. A business travel card has been introduced for members of the APEC without the need of a special visa process, with the exception of Canada and the United States. Additionally, this card will grant special access and departure lines at the main airports for the APEC country members.

Applicants can make a card request for up to five countries who are members of the APEC treaty. To apply for this benefit, a valid Chilean passport, a clean criminal and commercial record, and a business person or a public official with APEC-related activities status are required. The business card has a validity period equivalent to the passport

validity and up to a maximum of five years. The maximum stay period for each APEC country varies from 59 to 90 days depending on the country.

The request is made through special government-recognized private and commercial associations and it is reviewed by the Chile Immigration Department, which then sends the application to the immigration authorities of each country for approval. Estimated processing time is four months.

Update to Special Work Permit for Tourists

Effective from June 15, 2019, a special work permit for tourists fast track process has been implemented for professional athletes and artists. This benefit applies for groups of 15 or more legally represented athletes or artists with a scheduled stay in the country.

The application needs to be submitted at least 20 days in advance of the entry date and the approval for each case is subject to a criminal record analysis by the Chilean Immigration Police. This special work permit does not replace the need for a tourist visa for restricted nationalities and requires a support letter from a local company, plus a detailed itinerary of activities. Once approved, the special work permit can be retrieved after the beneficiaries enter the country, presenting the original passports and tourist cards.

Updates to Permanent Residency

1. A personal electronic password called *Clave Única* is now required for all applicants over 18 years old who will file their permanent residency requests. This password is provided by the government upon request from the applicant or by a third-party representative at any *Chile Atiende* or civil registry office. Since May 1, all permanent residence requests must be filed online using this *Clave Única*.

From September 23, the *Clave Única* is also required for all applicants to request their permanent residence in progress extension certificates. Furthermore, effective September 9, once the permanent residency is approved, the permanent resident card must be activated and downloaded from the Immigration Department web page using the personal password. After activation, the beneficiary will have a 30-day period to complete the permanent residency registration process with the local Chilean immigration police and to request a Chilean ID card at the civil registry office.

2. A country of origin "apostilled police clearance" certificate is now required for all permanent residency applicants over 18 years old. This new request does not differentiate between nationalities, neither does it distinguish between visa main holders and their dependents.

Thus, all applicants, including family members over 18 years old applying for a permanent residency must provide an apostilled police clearance certificate from the country that issued their passports. Although the majority of consulates in Chile are currently processing this document, in some cases it will need to be processed directly at the pertinent government office in the country of origin.

3. Permanent residency applicants from Brazil, China, Cuba, Haiti, and Peru must now file their applications at special government facilities called *Chile Atiende* offices, by providing all the physical supporting documentation required for this process. Government officials will make a first assessment of the required documentation, upload the information to the government database, and file the request online.
4. If a permanent residency application contains incomplete or incorrect documentation, the Immigration Department will grant the applicant five working days from the notification communicating the missing documents to amend the original request. Non-compliant applications will be nullified.

Travel Exemption for Foreign Nationals with an Expired Visa and Residence in Progress Status

Effective October 11, the Immigration Department has provided special instructions for residents who need to travel abroad and have not yet received their proof of residence in progress government certificates. Residents with an ongoing temporary residency renewal or with a permanent residency application, who have expired visas and have still not yet received a proof of residence in progress certificate, will need to file an online request with the Immigration Department within five to 20 days prior to the travel date, attaching the permanent residency or temporary residence filing proof receipt, travel tickets, and an explanatory letter with the motives for the request.

The Immigration Department will examine the request and will either approve or deny it. With the approval, a proof of residence in progress certificate will be issued and it will allow the applicant to exit and re-enter the country with a “resident” status. In any case, this will not impact the visa renewal or the permanent residency applications, as these are separate processes.

RELATED RESOURCES:

Immigration Department legal regulations database (in Spanish): <https://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/leyes-migratorias/> .

The Government Administration Digital Transformation Instructive (in Spanish): <https://digital.gob.cl/instructivo/acerca-de>.

The Government Administration Digital Transformation Instructive video resource (in Spanish): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifismrPW4Xo> .

International immigration-related treaties: <https://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/acuerdos-internacionales/> .

List of restricted nationalities with a tourist visa requirement (in Spanish): https://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/media/2019/04/CuadroVisaciones_2018_.pdf .

Contact us

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