



17 September 2025

**IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND INSTRUCTIONS: Amendment Circular No. 2025-30
AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND OPERATIONAL MANUAL**

Introduction

This circular outlines changes to immigration instructions. A copy of the amended instructions is attached.

All immigration officers dealing with immigration applications should read the amendments and operate in accordance with the amended instructions from the effective date.

Note

The amendments described in this circular will be published in the Immigration New Zealand Operational Manual in due course.

Information about these changes is available on our website www.immigration.govt.nz.

Description of changes

U6.40 Conditions of student visas

Immigration instructions have been updated to clarify that student visa labels for school students specify the level of study: primary, intermediate, or secondary.

WJ5.45.1 Vessel Working and Living Conditions

Changes have been made to immigration instructions to pause the scheduled increase to the Fishing Crew Work Visa minimum wage rate, originally set for 31 October 2025. The wage rate will remain at the current rate of NZD \$29.50/hour, rather than increasing to the median wage.

Appendix 1: Amendments to Temporary Entry instructions effective on and after 9 September 2025

U6.40 Conditions of student visas

- a. All visas for school students must state **primary, intermediate, or secondary studies**.
- b. If the student has provided acceptable guarantees of funds and onward travel, the visa must state: 'Evidence of financial support not required' and 'return/onward ticket not required'.
- c. All student visas must allow multiple journeys.
- d. Two currency dates must be specified on student visas:
 - i. the date on which the visa expires; and
 - ii. the date on which the permission to travel expires.
- e. A student visa may be granted with conditions allowing the student to work (see [U13](#)).

Note: See also [E3.20](#) for further student visa conditions

Appendix 2: Amendments to Temporary Entry instructions effective on and after 26 September 2025

WJ5.45.1 Vessel Working and Living Conditions

The employer must ensure that facilities and provisions for the working and living conditions of foreign crew on board vessels at least meet:

- a. New Zealand safety standards, including the legislative and regulatory standards in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and
- b. any applicable safety, marine protection, crew living and hygiene standards required by the Director of Maritime New Zealand, including (but not limited to) that:
 - i. all crew have access to sufficient fresh water for their needs, including hot water;
 - ii. adequate food (quantity and type) is provided;
 - iii. crew accommodation is clean and dry;
 - iv. all crew have their own bed and suitable bedding;
 - v. washing facilities and toilets are sufficient for the number of crew on board;
 - vi. the vessel carries adequate medical stores;
 - vii. at least one crew member holds suitable "ship's medic" qualifications;
 - viii. crew are provided with suitable protective clothing and equipment to perform their duties; and
 - ix. vessel safety and emergency drills are carried out on a regular basis.

WJ5.45.5 Foreign Crew Welfare

- a. The New Zealand employer must ensure that foreign crew have access to the following services:
 - i. the manning agent (where applicable);
 - ii. medical and dental treatment;
 - iii. assistance with banking services, if requested;
 - iv. translation services, if requested;
 - v. mail service; and
 - vi. NZ government agencies (i.e. the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, Police, Customs, Primary Industry) if requested.
- b. The employer must ensure that their representative is present at the vessel for port calls, and that the representative is accessible to foreign crew at that time.

WJ5.45.10 Employment Agreements

The employer must ensure that the foreign crew members' employment agreements are made in accordance with the Employment Relations Act 2000.

WJ5.45.15 Minimum remuneration

- a. The table below sets out minimum remuneration for foreign crew by date. The applicable date is either:
 - i. the day a work visa application was made if there is not an associated AIP, or
 - ii. the day when an AIP was made if there is an AIP associated with the work visa application.

Date of either work visa application or associated AIP (as per (a) above)	Foreign crew must be paid at least
On and after 31 October 2025	\$29.50 per hour
From 31 October 2024 – 30 October 2025	New Zealand minimum statutory hourly wage plus \$6 per hour
From 31 October 2023 – 30 October 2024	New Zealand minimum statutory hourly wage plus \$5 per hour
From 31 October 2022 – 30 October 2023	New Zealand minimum statutory hourly wage plus \$4 per hour
From 4 July 2022 – 30 October 2022	\$27.76 per hour or

	New Zealand minimum statutory hourly wage plus \$4 per hour if it was approved as part of a sector agreement
Before 4 July 2022	New Zealand minimum statutory hourly wage plus \$2 per hour

- b. The minimum remuneration specified above applies to all hours worked.
- c. The employment agreement must provide that the minimum remuneration is payment for no less than 42 hours per week averaged over the course of their engagement.

Note: These provisions do not supersede the need for applications to meet the requirements of W1 and W2.10. The current New Zealand minimum statutory hourly wage under the Minimum Wage Act 1983 can be found at www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/pay/minimum-wage.

- d. The only allowable deductions that can be taken from foreign crew remuneration are:
 - i. food (calculated at a maximum of 10% of hours worked multiplied by the minimum wage);
 - ii. airfares to and from New Zealand; and
 - iii. Immigration New Zealand work visa application fees.

Note: Deductions must be based on actual, reasonable, verified expenses.

Genuine and verified personal expenses such as cigarettes, phone cards and non-protective clothing (effectively personal wage advances and not connected with the work) are allowed and will not be treated as deductions.

- e. Allowable deductions cannot bring the hourly wage below the New Zealand minimum statutory wage for all hours worked.

WJ5.45.20 Frequency of remuneration payments

- a. Crew must receive at least the minimum remuneration guaranteed under WJ5.45.15(a)(ii), less deductions provided for in WJ5.45.15(b), in regular periodic payments, either monthly or at every port call as specified in each crew's employment agreement.
- b. Where crew have only received the minimum remuneration at (a), they must be paid all outstanding wages for any hours worked above the 42 hours per week, in line with WJ5.45.15(a)(i), at least 24 hours before departing New Zealand.

WJ5.45.25 Payment of crew wages

- a. The employer must make a personal, individual New Zealand bank account available to each foreign crew member.
- b. The default wage payment method in foreign crew's employment agreements must be direct credit into the New Zealand bank account detailed above.
- c. Foreign crew members who elect to receive wage payments in cash instead of using the New Zealand bank account provided, must notify the employer of their decision in writing in their own language.

Note: It is solely at the foreign crew member's discretion to refuse to use this New Zealand bank account.

- d. The employer, manning agents, crew representatives, and any person associated with them, may not have access to, or Power of Attorney over, any foreign crew member's New Zealand bank account.
- e. Where a foreign crew member refuses to use the available New Zealand bank account, payment of wages must be made directly to them in cash, in New Zealand.
- f. Where payment is made in cash in a foreign currency, the exchange rate used must be recorded, and notified to the foreign crew member at the time the payment is made.
- g. Foreign crew members must receive a final payslip at least 24 hours before their departure from New Zealand so that they have the opportunity to contact and meet with their authorised representative before departing New Zealand (see [WJ5.50](#)).