NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION

12 November 2026

**IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND INSTRUCTIONS: Amendment Circular No. 2026-35**

**AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND OPERATIONAL MANUAL**

**Introduction**

This circular outlines changes to operational 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

### E2.1 People to whom a visa waiver applies

Changes have been made to operational instructions to reflect the suspension of visa waiver status for citizens of Kuwait.

These changes take effect 11:59pm 12 November 2026.

# Appendix 1: Amendments to operational instructions effective on and after 11:59pm 12 November 2026

### E2.1 People to whom a visa waiver applies

*See also Immigration Act 2009, ss 4, 69*

*See also Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010, Part 4A, and Schedule 2*

A visa waiver means a waiver of the requirement to hold a visa permitting travel to New Zealand in relation to any class of persons. A person travelling to New Zealand visa waiver is required to hold an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) unless exempt (see E12 Electronic Travel Authority). A visa waiver applies to, but is not limited to, the following people:

a. citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia; and

b. people who hold:
   i. a current permanent residence visa issued by the Government of Australia; or
   ii. a current resident return visa issued by the Government of Australia; and

c. people granted a visa waiver by special direction; and

d. members of a visiting force (including members of the civilian component of the visiting force) but only if:
   i. each person is travelling to New Zealand in the ordinary course of the person's duty or employment; and
   ii. each person is seeking a temporary entry class visa at an immigration control area; and
   iii. the craft transporting the visiting force is a commercial craft; and

e. members of, or any person associated with, a scientific programme or expedition under the auspices of a Contracting Party to the Antarctic Treaty (within the meaning of the Antarctica Act 1960) or any person to whom section 5 of that Act applies, but only if:
   i. the person concerned is seeking a temporary entry class visa; and
   ii. the application is made at an immigration control area; and

f. cruise ship passengers; and

g. cruise ship crew travelling in the ordinary course of business of the ship; and

h. positioning cruise ship crew; and

i. aircraft crew of an aircraft on a flight between any other country and New Zealand in the course of a scheduled international service; and

j. positioning aircraft crew; and

k. cargo ship passengers travelling between any foreign port and New Zealand (from 1 April 2025 onwards); and

l. cargo ship crew travelling in the ordinary course of business of the ship between any foreign port and New Zealand (from 1 April 2025 onwards); and

m. crew on a foreign ship authorised by the Minister of Transport under section 198(2) of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 to carry coastal cargo within the meaning of section 198(6) of that Act (from 1 April 2025 onwards); and

n. positioning cargo ship crew (from 1 April 2025 onwards); and

o. British citizens, and other British passport holders who produce evidence of the right to reside permanently in the United Kingdom, but only if the person concerned is seeking a visitor visa current for not more than six months and the purposes of the visit do not include medical consultation or treatment; and

p. people travelling on a United Nations (UN) laissez-passer who are seeking a visitor visa current for not more than three months; and

q. any other class of persons specified in the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010; and

r. citizens of the following countries, but only if the person concerned is seeking a visitor visa current for not more than three months and the purposes of the visit is not for medical consultation or treatment:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Andorra | Hungary | Oman |
| Argentina | Iceland | Poland |
| Austria | Ireland | Portugal[5] |
| Bahrain | Israel | Qatar |
| Belgium | Italy | Romania |
| Brazil | Japan | San Marino |
| Brunei | Korea (South) | Saudi Arabia |
| Bulgaria | Kuwait (suspended[8]) | Seychelles |
| Canada | Latvia[1] | Singapore |
| Chile | Liechtenstein | Slovak Republic |
| Croatia | Lithuania[1] | Slovenia |
| Cyprus | Luxembourg | Spain |
| Czech Republic | Macau[4] | Sweden |
| Denmark | Malaysia | Switzerland |
| Estonia[1] | Malta | Taiwan[6] |
| Finland | Mauritius | United Arab Emirates |
| France | Mexico | United States of America[7] |
| Germany | Monaco | Uruguay |
| Greece[2] | Netherlands | Vatican City |
| Hong Kong[3] | Norway | |

[1]Visa waiver does not apply to people travelling on alien's (non-citizen's) passports issued by these countries.

[2]Greek passport holders whose passports were issued on and after 1 January 2006. (Greek passports issued before 1 January 2006 are not acceptable for travel after 1 January 2007, see A2.10.50)

[3]Residents of Hong Kong travelling on Hong Kong Special Administrative Region or British National (Overseas) passports.

[4]Residents of Macau travelling on Macau Special Administrative Region passports.

[5]Portuguese passport holders must also have the right to live permanently in Portugal.

[6]Permanent residents of Taiwan travelling on Taiwan passports. A personal identity number printed within the visible section of the biographical page of the Taiwan passport demonstrates that the holder is a permanent resident of Taiwan (see A2.10.40).

[7]including nationals of the USA.

[8]Kuwait's visa waiver status is suspended from 11:59pm on 12 November 2026 to 11:59pm on 11 February 2027 as per a special direction made by the Minister of Immigration on 4 November 2026.

s. citizens of the following countries, but only if:
   i. the person concerned is seeking a visitor visa current for not more than three months; and
   ii. the purpose of the visit is not for medical consultation or treatment; and
   iii. the person is travelling from Australia; and
   iv. the person holds one of the eligible Australian visa types as set out at E2.1.1 below.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| China | Nauru | Samoa |
| Federated States of Micronesia | Palau | Solomon Islands |
| Fiji | Papua New Guinea | Tonga |
| Kiribati | Republic of Marshall Islands | Tuvalu |
| | | Vanuatu |

Note: only Pacific Islands Forum countries which require visas for travel to New Zealand have been listed above.

### E2.1.1 Eligible Australian Visas

*See also Immigration Act 2009, ss 4, 69*

*See also Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010, Part 4A and Schedule 2*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| EB188 Business Innovation and Investment (Provisional) | TQ410 Retirement | UR162 Investor (Provisional) |
| FA600 Visitor | TU500 Student | UR163 State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner (Provisional) |
| GA400 Temporary Work (Short stay Specialist) | TU590 Student Guardian | UR164 State/Territory Sponsored Senior Executive (Provisional) |
| GF407 Training | TV651 e-Visitor | UR165 State/Territory Sponsored Investor (Provisional) |
| GH870 Sponsored Parent | TZ417 Working Holiday | US462 Work and Holiday |
| GK482 Skills in Demand | UC457 Business (Long Stay) | UT173 Contributory Parent (Temporary) |
| PS491 Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) | UF309 Partner (Provisional) Visa | UU884 Contributory Aged Parent |
| PE494 Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) | UK820 Partner Visa (temporary) | UY405 Investor Retirement |
| SP489 Skilled Regional (Provisional) | UP461 New Zealand Citizen Family Relationship | VC485 Temporary Graduate Visa |
| TK445 Dependent Child Visa | UR160 Business Owner (Provisional) | VF476 Skilled - Recognized Graduate |
| TO300 Prospective Marriage | UR161 Senior Executive (Provisional) | |