

## VISA APPLICATION PROCESSES FOR VICTIMS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH MASS SHOOTINGS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has priority processing for the families of the people killed or injured in the mass shooting at the Masjid Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch. INZ recognises this is a difficult time, and will process visa applications with urgency.

This information is also available on the INZ website:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/family-members-of-mosque-incident>

### How to apply for a visa

If a visa is required, please follow these steps to apply for a visitor visa:

1. Apply for a visitor visa online.
2. Submit the application and make a note of the reference number.
3. Send INZ an email ([NZEmergencyVisa@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:NZEmergencyVisa@mbie.govt.nz)) so that we can prioritise the application.  
include:
  - a. the reference number in the subject line
  - b. the name, date of birth and passport number of the person who has applied for a visa
  - c. the date the online application was made, and
  - d. name and date of birth of the family member in New Zealand.

Affected people may also wish to contact INZ's contact centre on a dedicated number:

- Phone: 0508 22 52 88 - Within New Zealand
- Phone: +64 9 952 1679 - Outside New Zealand

These phone numbers are intended solely for the use of victims, their family members and those supporting them at this distressing time.

### Getting help in person

Information about getting help in person is also available online. INZ staff in Christchurch are working closely with New Zealand Police Victim Support who are leading support to victims and their families. Staff are available to meet with victims and their family members to provide guidance on the visa application process and answer questions about immigration status. To arrange a time to meet an immigration officer victims or family members should email [immigrationresponse@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:immigrationresponse@mbie.govt.nz). This email address is intended solely for the use of victims, their family members and those supporting them at this distressing time.

## **Some people do not need a visitor visa**

Individuals who are citizens of [visa-waiver countries](#) do not need a visa to come to New Zealand to visit their family.

## **Consular related matters**

If family members require any consular-related information, such as they do not have a passport to travel or they do not have funds to purchase tickets, please advise them to contact the Embassy/High Commission/Consulate with responsibility for New Zealand. If they do not know how to contact their diplomatic representative for New Zealand, they should contact their local Foreign Ministry who can assist with this information.

## **Media Personnel**

1. Apply for a Specific Purpose Work Visa online.
2. Submit the application and make a note of the reference number.
3. Send us an email so that we can prioritise the application. Include:
  - a. the reference number in the subject line
  - b. the name and date of birth of the person who has applied for a visa, and
  - c. the date the online application was made.

## **Diplomats and government officials**

Diplomats and government officials should contact the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), who will facilitate the priority processing of these visas.

## **Visa applications for victims of the mass shootings and their families who are based in Christchurch**

INZ understands that some migrants who hold temporary work visas to work in Christchurch may wish to relocate elsewhere in New Zealand. Here are the options currently available:

## **Varying the conditions of a work visa**

Some work visas restrict work to a particular occupation, employer or location. If a work visa has one of these restrictions an individual can sometimes change the conditions of their existing visa instead of applying for a new visa.

If a work visa allows someone to work in any job, for any employer and in any location, they don't need to apply for a variation of conditions.

### **Essential Skills Work Visa holders**

If an individual holds an Essential Skills work visa and their job is not on the skills shortage lists, the only condition they can vary is their employer. However, they can apply for a new work visa to change their job or location or to change employment to a lower skill-band. Before a new application is made, they

must ensure they have been offered a full-time job and have the necessary qualifications and experience to work in that job.

#### **Talent (Accredited Employers) Work Visa holders**

If an individual holds a Talent (Accredited Employer) work visa they can apply to vary the conditions if the base salary offered is not less than the base salary that was required at the time their initial work visa application was made. Their new employer must meet the requirements for compliant employers.

If an individual wants to vary the conditions on their work visa and they are eligible to do so, they must provide the following:

- Offer of employment or employment agreement
- 'Application for a Variation of Conditions or a Variation of Travel Conditions' (INZ 1020)
- Application fee
- Employer Supplementary form (INZ 1113), if the client is applying to work for a different employer – the new employer must complete the form. This is not required if the employer is an accredited employer who is supporting the application to vary the conditions of a Talent (Accredited Employers) work visa.

#### **Post Study (Employer-Assisted) Work Visa holder**

If an individual holds a Post Study (Employer-Assisted) Work Visa, they can apply to have their job, location and employer removed from their label conditions. They may then work for any employer. To do this, they must provide the following:

- Completed form INZ 1243
- Application fee
- Passport
- Application for a Variation of Conditions for holders of an employer-assisted post-study work visa (INZ 1243)

#### **Post Study (Open) Work Visa holder**

If an individual holds a Post Study (Open) Work Visa they can work for any employer. No Variation of Conditions is required to change their job, location and employer.

### **Further visa arrangements**

We know members of the Muslim community have been asking about residence options for those affected by the shootings. The New Zealand Government is currently considering options and will make any announcements in due course. In the meantime Immigration New Zealand will work with people to help them understand their visa options.

### **Non-visa related advice and support available in New Zealand**

The MFAT website outlines the advice and support services available in New Zealand following the events in Christchurch. <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/christchurch-terror-attacks-help-and-support/>



## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Questions from family members of the victims*

**Q: Can I submit a paper form?**

A: It is faster for us to receive your application if you submit it online but if you do not have access to the internet you can submit a paper application form through a Visa Application Centre (VAC). You must ensure all sections are completely filled out whether you apply online or using our paper application form.

**Q: What do I need to submit with my application form?**

A: You need to have a valid travel document. You also need to provide us with as much information as you can about your funds for your travel and your travel itinerary.

**Q: Do I have to pay for the application fee?**

A: If you submit the application online, you will have to pay the fee because the system will not accept an application without it. However, you can contact us and request a refund.

**Q: What if I don't have a credit card (to pay the fee)?**

A: You can ask family members/friends who may have a credit card. Alternatively, you can submit a paper application but you need to submit this to the VAC closest to you.

**Q: Do I have to pay for the VAC fee?**

A: Family members do not need to pay for any VAC fees.

**Q: How long will it take to get an emergency visa?**

A: We are unable to provide specific timeframes but INZ is operating 24/7 to ensure that visa applications are processed as quickly as possible.

**Q: What if I cannot provide all the information you need for my application?**

A: We understand the urgency of the need to travel and the distressing circumstances under which you are travelling. Please provide what information you can and we will make a decision based on that.

**Q: Is there any special consideration that INZ can give if I am unable to provide supporting documents?**

A: We understand the urgency of the need to travel and the distressing circumstances under which you are travelling. Please provide what information you can and we will make a decision based on that.

**Q: I do not have evidence of funds. Can I still apply for a visa?**

A: We understand the urgency of the need to travel and the distressing circumstances under which you are travelling. The lack of funds will not prevent a family member from being granted a visa. Please submit your visitor visa application online and provide us with as much information you can.

**Q: Do I have to send my passport to the VAC?**

A: We understand that it may be hard to send your original passport to the VAC given the circumstances and the timeframes. We have waived it in some cases. You may request for a waiver of this requirement. Include your request in the email that you send us and we will consider it.



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**Q: If I can't give you my passport how will I get my visa?**

A: We can grant you an electronic visa (eVisa) which will be uploaded on your online account. You will need to print that eVisa and carry it with you when you travel.

**Q: Do I have to have a return flight?**

A: You do not need to provide us with your return tickets at this stage but please provide us with your travel plans (when you are intending to travel, how long you intend to stay, etc.) when you submit an application.

**Q: What if I don't have a passport or my passport has expired, or will expire shortly?**

A: You need to have a valid travel document in order to travel to New Zealand. If you do not have a passport, or your current one is about to expire, please contact your local passport issuing authority. You may also get in touch with your Embassy/Consulate accredited to New Zealand for any consular assistance that they may be able to provide you.

***Questions from other community members***

**Q: I did not lose any family members in the mosque attack but I am very scared for my well-being. Can I ask my family members offshore to come and support me here in New Zealand?**

A: We understand that this is a distressing time for you and your family. Should you wish to invite your family overseas to come and support you, you may do so. Please advise them to apply for a visitor visa online.

**Q: What if I am a friend of a victim of the mass shooting. Can I get a visa? Will it be prioritised?**

A: At the moment our priority is the family members of those who were present at the mosque. Please submit your visitor visa application online and we will look at these applications sympathetically and prioritise where we can.

**Q: I am a religious leader, can I get a visa?**

A: You can apply for a visa relevant to the purpose of your travel. A visa will be granted if all immigration requirements are met.

**Q: My partner/child has submitted a visa application a little while ago and we are still waiting for the decision. Given what's happened in Christchurch is it possible to get the application decided sooner as I am scared for my safety?**

A: At the moment our priority is the family members of those who were present at the mosque. Please advise us of your family member's application details and we will look at these applications sympathetically and prioritise where we can.