

VISA PAK ISSUE 439 — 23 JUNE 2020

TRANSIT VISA CHANGES FROM 20 JUNE 2020

This item provides offices with guidance about passengers wishing to transit New Zealand from 20 June 2020 onwards.

Covid-19 - suspension of the transit regime

On 25 March 2020, New Zealand closed its borders to all but New Zealand citizens and residents, including incoming transit passengers. Exemptions were granted to allow passengers to transit New Zealand where there was a Government-to-Government assurance to ensure passenger's health requirements are met and that they will be allowed to enter their final destination and any third party countries they were transiting through after New Zealand.

Over this period, New Zealand entered into 38 transit arrangements. These were given effect by the Minister of Immigration issuing Special Directions. Passengers who were covered by a Special Direction did not require a transit visa or a transit NZeTA as a transit passenger.

With the exception of the Fiji Special Direction, the suspension of transits and all Special Directions expired on 19 June 2020. From 20 June 2020, the transit visa regime will be reinstated with a few changes to reflect the current COVID-19 environment outside of New Zealand.

Summary of transit requirements from 20 June 2020

Who does not need a transit visa or NZeTA

The following passengers can transit New Zealand **without** holding a transit visa or an NZeTA:

- A person who already holds a current New Zealand visa
- A Citizen of Australia
- Members of, or any person associated with, a scientific programme or expedition under the auspices of a Contracting Party to the Antarctic Treaty (as described in regulations)
- Members of a visiting military force (as described in regulations)
- Until 4 September 2020, citizens of Fiji where their final destination after New Zealand is Fiji.
- Until 19 September 2020 a person in the Pacific if they meet the following conditions:
 - They are not transit visa waiver countries (note people who are transit visa waiver can transit but require an NZeTA (see below)), and
 - Their final destination after transiting New Zealand and/or through any third party country which will allow you to transit, is the country they are a citizen of, and
 - must be in one of the follow Pacific countries or territories immediately before travelling to New Zealand: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Mariana Islands, New Caledonia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu or Vanuatu.

Who does not need a transit visa but requires an NZeTA

The following passengers can transit New Zealand **without** holding a transit visa but **are required** to hold an NZeTA:

- A person from a [visa waiver](#), or [transit visa waiver](#) country
- A person who already holds a current permanent residence visa (including a returning resident visa) issued by the Government of Australia
- A person whose immediate or ultimate destination after transiting through New Zealand is Australia and who holds a current visa issued by the Government of Australia to enter Australia
- A person travelling from Australia (including a person who began their journey outside Australia)



- British citizens and British passport holders who produce evidence of the right to reside permanently in the United Kingdom
- Residents of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan
- People who are travelling on a United Nations laissez-passer passport

Who requires a transit visa

Any person who is not a person listed above will be required to apply for and be granted a transit visa. Currently the offshore Immigration New Zealand and Visa Application Centres are closed. This means travellers can not apply in the normal way.

We have a temporary process in place to submit applications by email. Applications and supporting evidence can be emailed to transit.visa@mbie.govt.nz

The requirement to provide an original passport, passport photos or pay the normal fee has been waived temporarily. Applicants will be required to provide a copy of their passport biopage instead.

Additional evidence may be required

Due to complicated and fast changing border restrictions globally, we may also require additional assurances that a transit passenger will be accepted by their final port or through any other transit ports on their way home when they check in at the airport. It is the travellers' responsibility to make sure they can transit and/or enter any country on their journey.

Transits exceeding 24 hours

Transits cannot exceed 24 hours. If a transit has to be longer than 24 hours (because of irregular flight schedules for example), then the passenger will have to enter New Zealand. They will have to apply for one of the exceptions to be allowed entry. They will also need to apply to the Ministry of Health for an exemption to the 14 day quarantine requirement to be allowed to quarantine for only the time until their next flight.