

The new rules for travelling with children

Flight Centre is urging all travellers to be aware of new regulations governing travel with minors. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has announced new, strict procedures for parents travelling with children under the age of 18 years in and out of South Africa.



Image: www.freedigitalphotos.net

With effect from 1 October, 2014, all adults travelling with children will need to produce a copy of an unabridged birth certificate for each child they are travelling with, among other documents.

"This new regulation is line with the DHA's efforts to limit the incidents of child trafficking and we are glad to see this issue being taken seriously," said Andrew Stark, Flight Centre South Africa's MD. "We are particularly relieved that the DHA has issued a grace period for travellers and extended the start date of these new regulations to 1 October and not 1 July as previously announced," said Stark.

This extension has accommodated the plans of the many South African families who have holiday trips planned for the forthcoming school holidays. "This extension is not to be taken lightly though," he added. "We encourage all our customers to still make the necessary plans in well in advance of their travels, to avoid any inconveniences."

Applying for an unabridged birth certificate

"The application process for an unabridged certificate is simple, but we want to alert our clients that although there has previously been a six- to eight-week waiting period, this process could take anything from three to six months," he cautioned.

One parent travelling with a child

In instances where one parent is travelling with a child for any reason, whether as a single parent, or merely in the absence of the other parent, the following documents must be produced for immigration officials:

- A copy of an unabridged birth certificate;
- An affidavit from the other parent or legal guardian of the child, confirming their consent for the accompanying adult to travel with the child;
- Single parents are required to produce a court order (and not just an affidavit) granting full parental responsibilities and rights or legal guardianship in respect of the child, if he/she is the parent or legal guardian of the child; and
- If applicable, a death certificate of a deceased parent must be produced.

Adult travelling with a child who is not his/her biological child

We live in a society of extended family and there are many instances where adults may need to travel with children who are not their biological children. This could be for family, school or religious reasons. In instances where an adult is travelling with a child who is not his/her biological child, the following documents must be produced for immigration officials:

- A copy of an unabridged birth certificate;
- An affidavit from the parents or legal guardians of the child, confirming their consent for the accompanying adult to travel with the child;
- Copies of the identity documents or passports of the parents or legal guardians of the child; and
- Contact details of the parents or legal guardians of the child.

Where one or two adults are travelling with a large group of children, the adults must have these documents for each child travelling. "Although not required, it may be a good idea for the adults to have a letter from the trip organisers, giving authority to these adults to attend to these children," added Stark.

An unaccompanied minor

Even though a child of 16 or 17 can travel comfortably on their own from one country to another, the DHA requires that an unaccompanied minor produce the following documents to the immigration officials:

- Proof of consent from one or both his/her parents or legal guardian, in the form of a letter or affidavit for the child to travel into or depart from South Africa;
- In the case where one parent provides proof of consent, that parent must also provide a copy of a court order issued to him/her in terms of which he/she has been granted full parental responsibilities and rights in respect of the child;
- A letter from the person who is to receive the child in the destination country, containing his/her residential address and contact details where the child will be residing;
- A copy of the identity document or valid passport and visa or permanent residence permit of the person who is to receive the child in the destination country; and
- The contact details of the parents or legal guardian of the child in the country of origin.

These regulations should be considered when children want to apply for exchange programmes, or even when visiting family within southern Africa or neighbouring countries.

"Given that the legal age of majority in South Africa is 18, all children below this age fit into the new regulations," said Stark. They are also applicable to all parents, regardless of whether both parents are accompanying the children at the time of travelling or not, and to non-South African passport holders travelling in and out of the country.

Flight Centre advises its customers preparing to travel out of the country with their children to make urgent plans to apply for the relevant documents to ensure that they are prepared to travel under these new regulations.

"As a customer-centric travel retailer, all of our call centre staff have been equipped with as much information as possible on this matter, and any travellers who require further clarity on this regulation can contact us on 0877 40 50 00," concluded Stark.

Customers can also visit the [DHA website](#) for further clarity on the new regulations, and to locate their closest DHA office.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>