

## I. Immigration Regime

This chapter describes the policies laid down by the Ministry of Foreign Relations which regulate the entrance and departure of foreigners visiting the country. It lists the countries whose citizens do not require a visitor's visa to enter Colombia, as well as the different categories of current visas and the procedures required for those who wish to undertake a commercial or business activity in the country.

### A. Countries whose citizens do not require a temporary visitor's visa

The starting point for people who wish to enter Colombia without wanting to remain in the country but whose aim is to engage in sports or cultural activities; seminars, symposiums or exhibitions; educational courses which do not surpass an academic semester; medical treatment; job interviews and the establishment of commercial or corporative contacts is to verify whether they belong to a country whose citizens are not required to have a temporary visitor's visa.

At the time of publication of this Guide, the country whose citizens do not require a visitor's visa to enter Colombia are: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Holy Seat, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, St. Kitts & Nevis, San Marino, Santa Lucia, San Vicente and the Grenadines, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

One should bear in mind that in these cases there must be no working link with Colombia and permission to enter the country is granted for a period of up to 180 calendar days, within the same year.

## B. Visa Categories

Depending on the interests of a foreign visitor to the country, there are different classes of visas which allow them to enter the country. The main ones are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1 Visa categories**

Type of visa	Description	Conditions	Cost on the date of publication of this Guide
<b>Business Visa</b>	For persons who can accredit their status as: businessmen; industrialists; suppliers of goods and services; or managers, representatives or directors of foreign companies who wish to enter the country for business purposes; or persons interested in undertaking marketing studies or negotiating future sales and/or establishing a commercial presence in the country	It may be granted for up to four (4) years for multiple entries and authorizes a stay of up to one continuous year for each entrance.	US\$ 170
<b>Temporary worker's visa</b>	<p>a. To the foreigner contracted to realize a job or activity in his specialization, or provide technical training.</p> <p>b. To the foreigner who intends to enter or remain in the country by virtue of academic or inter-administrative agreements in specialized areas. The person must accredit his</p>	It may be granted for up to two (2) years, for multiple entries, except in the case of numeral d., when it is issued for up to 6 months.	US\$ 205

	<p>or her status.</p> <p>c. To the foreign journalist hired by a news agency devoted to national or international information, or to one who has the status of a correspondent, which must be duly accredited.</p> <p>d. To the foreigner who is a member of an artistic, sports or cultural group, contracted to realize such an activity when it is remunerated.</p> <p>e. To the foreigner named by a State body or entity.</p> <p>f. To staff transferred from abroad to hold specific posts in their companies or entities.</p> <p>g. To volunteers and missionaries who do not form part of a religious community</p> <p>h. To the foreigner who provides his services for the development of specific projects requested by a company domiciled in Colombian territory, without having an employment link with such a company.</p>		
<b>Beneficiary's Visa</b>	Granted to the spouse, permanent partner, parents or children who economically depend on the foreigner to whom a visa may be granted, subject to a prior proof of the family link and economic dependence.	The same conditions of the visa granted to the foreigner.	The same as the holder of the visa.
<b>Temporary visa</b>	To the foreigner who has	For a term of up	US\$ 160

<b>for the spouse or permanent partner of a Colombian national</b>	contracted a valid marriage with a Colombian national or who fulfills the requisites to be considered a permanent partner of a Colombian national in accordance with the Colombian legislation in force.	to three (3) years, with multiple entries.	
<b>Special temporary visa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. For medical treatment when this cannot be undertaken under the terms of the visitor's visa or entry permit.</li> <li>b. To participate in administrative or judicial processes.</li> <li>c. As the partner or owner of a valid business establishment or company whose share is at least one hundred (100) Legal Monthly Minimum Wages (SMLMV)<sup>1</sup>, or the owner of real estate who demonstrates that he or she has acquired it through an investment in his or her name, through the foreign exchange regime, for a value of no less than US\$100,000</li> <li>d. As a pensioner.</li> <li>e. As a rentier.</li> <li>f. As a member of an NGO or representative of a diplomatic mission for social or humanitarian aid.</li> <li>g. For adoption procedures.</li> <li>h. To undertake</li> </ul>	One (1) year, for multiple entries: one for up to two (2) years may be eventually granted in cases a. and b.	US\$ 175

<sup>1</sup> SMLMV are the Spanish initials for the Legal Monthly Minimum Wage, which is adjusted yearly and is COP\$ 535.600.

	professions and/or activities of an independent nature which do not adversely affect public spaces.		
<b>Tourist visitor's visa</b>	Granted to the foreigner who seeks to enter the country with the aim of engaging in activities of relaxation or recreation		In accordance with nationality.
<b>Temporary visitor's visa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For foreign journalists and their teams who are going to cover a special event.</li> <li>• To make contacts or engage in business or corporate activities.</li> <li>• To participate in academic activities that do not last longer than an academic semester</li> <li>• To participate in a job interview.</li> </ul>	Granted for a term of up to one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days, maximum, and allows multiple entries to the holder of the visa.	US\$ 100
<b>Technical visitor's visa</b>	To the foreigner who seeks to enter the country to provide urgent technical services to public or private entities.	Granted for up to forty-five (45) calendar days, which may be extended up to one hundred and eighty (180) days.	US\$ 100
<b>Temporary student's visa</b>	<p>Granted to foreigners who seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake studies in public or private educational establishments legally recognized by the Colombian government, with a minimum weekly timetable of ten (10) hours or who take part in student exchange programs.</li> </ul>	Up to one (1) year, with a possibility of extension until the end of the studies.	US\$ 40

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in job-training or internships under programs of practical studies.</li> <li>Engage in student exchange programs sponsored by entities which have government recognition.</li> </ul>		
<b>Investor's resident visa</b>	For the foreigner who undertakes, in his or her name, a direct foreign investment of no less than US\$100,000 in accordance with the stipulations of the Statute on International Investments.	It may be indefinite.	US\$ 425
<b>Crew member's visa</b>	Granted to the foreigner who enters the country as a crew member or member of a medium of international transport or fishing vessel.	The stay of the crew member will be authorized for the period of time during which the medium of transport remains in the country.	US\$ 115
<b>Temporary visa for a refugee or political exile</b>	Granted to the foreigner awarded that status by the said Ministry, through a resolution issued for that purpose, and in accordance with the treaties and agreements on the subject ratified by the Colombian government and which have entered into force.	For a term of up to three (3) years and it will allow for multiple entries.	Rate not available.

For further information on the different classes of visas and the rates charged at the time of application, one may consult the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Relations ([www.cancilleria.gov.co](http://www.cancilleria.gov.co)) or the Colombian consulate nearest to the place where you live.

### C. Procedure for obtaining the visa

Visas are granted by the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Relations, either directly or through Colombian consulates in other countries, even though the first application must be generally made outside of the country. The visa application must be directly handled by the foreigner or the legal entity for whom the foreigner works or his or her legal representative. It may equally be handled by a proxy, who must personally present himself or herself at the respective office responsible for issuing visas, with his or her identity document.

The general requirements for applying for a visa are as follows:

- Original passport, which should have a minimum validity of at least three months and at least three clean pages.
- A photocopy of the passport.
- Visa application form, signed by the applicant. This form is directly obtained at the Ministry of Foreign Relations or the corresponding consulate or on the website of these entities.
- Two color photographs of the applicant against a white background, whose size is 3 cm x 3 cm (1.18 inches x 1.18 inches).
- Attach the documents required in accordance with the type of visa being applied for, complying with the formalities in each case. All of these requirements must be met when the application is submitted.

Once the visa is granted, it is indispensable for the foreigner to take note of the privileges and restrictions of the same, which will govern his or her activities in the country.

#### **D. Entities at which one realizes the visa procedures**

The entity at which the procedure is undertaken is the office for the Coordination of Visas and Immigration of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, when the person is in Colombia; when, on the contrary, the person is abroad, the procedure is undertaken at the consulates or consular sections of Colombian embassies.

Contact entity: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Relations) – Coordinación de Visas e Inmigración (Office for the Coordination of Visas and Immigration): Telephone: 57 (1) – 3814000.

More detailed information about the requirements, as well as the application forms, may be found at the following websites.

- [www.cancilleria.gov.co](http://www.cancilleria.gov.co)
- [www.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co](http://www.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co), “Trámites” (Procedures) section

## E. Foreigner's Identity Card

The foreigner's identity card ("cédula de extranjería") is an identity document granted to foreigners who hold a visa whose term is longer than three (3) months and to their beneficiaries. Once it is obtained, it allows foreigners to enter into contracts, undertake banking operations and transactions and engage in procedures with entities, among other privileges.

Foreigners should apply for this document within the fifteen (15) days following their arrival in Colombia or the date on which the visa has been granted, if was granted in the country. To do this, the foreigner must register his or her visa at the Administrative Department of Security (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad – "DAS"). Once the visa is registered, the DAS will proceed to issue the foreigner's identity card. This does not apply to visitor's visas or preferential ones (diplomatic, official, for services).

The validity of the foreigner's identity card is the same as the term of the visa itself. Holders of a resident's visa must renew it every five (5) years.

### Aplicable legal Framework

- Decreto (Decree) 4000, of 2004.
- Decreto 4248, of 2004.
- Decreto 2622, of 2009.
- Resolución (Resolution) 4700, of 2009, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Relations)

The following links to the relevant entities may be consulted:

- Gobierno en Línea (Government Online) – Portal del Estado Colombiano (Portal of the Colombian State): [www.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co](http://www.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co), "Trámites" (Procedures) section.
- Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores: [www.cancilleria.gov.co](http://www.cancilleria.gov.co).
- Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS): [www.das.gov.co](http://www.das.gov.co).

## Warning

The information outlined in this chapter has been prepared on the basis of the norms in effect at time of publication. However, they may be modified by subsequent regulations. Thus, before applying for a visa, it is recommended that the applicant verify the details of the visa requirements and application with the government authorities, Colombian consulates and specialists in the field.

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Please contact us at:

Email: [info@investinbogota.org](mailto:info@investinbogota.org)

Phone: +57 (1) 742-3030

Fax: +57 (1) 742-3050

Address: Carrera 7 N. ° 71-21, Torre B, oficina 901, Bogotá, Colombia.