



**POSSIBLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE NEW VISA REGIME FOR  
MALAWI**

**30<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2016**

**Question: Can I get a Visa on arrival?**

**Answer:** Following the introduction of the new Visa Regime for the Republic of Malawi, it has been noted that there is need to clarify some grey areas regarding the issuance of visas on arrival.

The Department wishes to clarify that as in all cases, travellers coming from countries whose nationals are required to have visas prior to entry into the Republic of Malawi **they are strongly advised to obtain their visas well in advance at their nearest Malawi Diplomatic Mission abroad before travelling.** However, where it is not possible to get the visa in advance, a visa can be obtained at the port of entry in Malawi upon getting prior authorization by the Immigration Department of the Republic of Malawi. This authorisation is in form of a Visa Letter, which is issued by the Immigration Department to the traveller before he/she travels.

However, to make it seamless the Government of Malawi is considering introduction of an Electronic Visa issuance system. But in the interim these Visa Letters can be applied for using the following email address; **permitcounter@gmail.com**

**Question: What privileges does Visa give you in Malawi?**

**Answer:** A Visa in Malawi, only grants permission to someone to enter into the country. Once it has been issued, it has to be used within the validity period from the date of issue. However, the validity of the Visa is not the same as the authorized period of stay in Malawi.

The validity of the Visa indicates the time period when entry is permitted into the country. Depending on the purpose of visit, a traveler who has a valid Visa is granted a Visitors Permit (VP) or Business Visit (BV) at the port of entry valid for 30 days and can be extended up to a maximum period of 90 days.

**Question: Which nationalities require visas to enter Malawi?**

**Answer:** Any person coming from a country that require Malawians to obtain a Visa when going there except for;

- a. Nationals from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries, except for those countries that subject Malawians to a Visa within SADC;
- b. Nationals from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries, except for those countries that subject Malawians to a Visa within COMESA;
- c. Diplomats accredited to Malawi; and
- d. All Diplomatic and Service/Official Passport holders

**Question:** What are the categories of visas in Malawi

**Answer:**

**a. Transit Visa**

This is for the purpose of passing through Malawi to a destination outside Malawi. Validity of transit visa is limited to 7 days in Malawi.

**b. Single Entry Visa**

In Malawi, Single Entry Visa means the traveler is granted permission to enter Malawi and apply for a visitors permit and the visa is canceled as soon as the holder enters Malawi. However, if a traveler leaves Malawi just after making an entry, it means he has to buy another visa if he intends to enter Malawi again.

**c. Multiple Entry visa**

This visa allows travelers to make multiple entries into Malawi with the same visa depending on the validity, whether it is six months multiple entry visa or twelve months multiple entry visa.

**d. Gratis visa**

This is the visa which is issued for free to those fitting the exceptions provided for above.

**Question: What are the Visa fees in Malawi?**

The table below shows categories of Visas and fees to be paid within Malawi and at Malawi Diplomatic Missions:

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Within Malawi (US Dollars)</b>	<b>Malawi Diplomatic Missions (US Dollars)</b>
Transit valid for 7 days	50	70
Single entry (to be used within 3 months from date of issue)	75	100
Multiple entry valid for 6months	150	220
Multiple entry valid for 12months	250	300
Gratis	Free	Free

**Question:** Who are affected by the new Visa regime?

**Answer:** *All nationals coming from countries where Malawians are required to pay visas except for;*

- a. Nationals from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries, except for those countries that subject Malawians to a Visa within SADC;*

- b. Nationals from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries, except for those countries that subject Malawians to a Visa within COMESA;**
- c. Diplomats accredited to Malawi;**
- d. All Diplomatic and Service/Official Passport holders coming for official business, and**
- e. Other ordinary Passport holders coming on official Government business.**

**Question:** Does the validity of a Visa entitle someone to stay in Malawi for a period of the validity of the Visa i.e. Single Entry Visa for 3 months?

**Answer:** *In Malawi and some other countries, a visa just grants permission to someone to enter into the country. Once it has been issued, it has to be used typically within a certain period of time provided by way of validity. However, the validity of the visa is not the same as the authorized period of stay. The validity of the visa indicates the time period when entry is permitted into the country.*

*Depending on the purpose of visit, a traveller who has a valid visa is granted a Visitors Permit (VP) or Business Visit (BV) at the point of entry valid for 30 days and can be extended up to 90 days. Within the 90 days, he can apply for a Temporary Residence Permit valid for six months and can be extended for another six months. Within this period one can apply for a Business Residence Permit (BRP) valid for five years and can be renewed for another five years. If he is coming for the purpose of employment and studying, he can apply for Temporary Employment Permit (TEP) and Student Permit (SP) valid for two years and one year respectively.*

*This interpretation is common in Africa and America while in other countries, visas are issued basing on the purpose of visit i.e. tourist visa, residence visa, business visa, employment visa, student visa and so forth. In those countries if a person applies for residence visa it will allow him entry and residence as opposed to Malawi where visa just allows entry and one has to apply for a residence permit. In such countries, a person may not stay beyond the period of validity of their visa, which is usually set within the period of validity of their passport. The visa may also limit the total number of days the visitor may spend in the territory within the period of validity. This interpretation of visas is common in Europe.*

**Question :** What mode of payment is acceptable for Visa fees in Malawi?

**Answer:** *Presently all the Visa fees are payable in cash and the currency is United States Dollars*

**Question :** Can visitors pay Visa fees in advance?

**Answer:** *Visas are supposed to be obtained well in advance from the visitor's nearest Malawi Diplomatic Missions abroad. However, efforts are very much at an advanced stage to see to it that the E – Visa system is introduced soon.*

**The E-Visa platform will have the following capabilities;**

- a. Applicants will be able to apply on – line**
- b. Approvals/rejections for the granting of the Visas will be done on-line and the applicants will be advised of the decision on their application online.**

- c. Applicants will be able to track progress of their Visa application online, and**
- d. Most importantly the government is exploring ways on how payments for Visas can also be made online**

**Question:** If visitors cannot pay for any reason what is the process?

**Answer:** **Obviously they will be denied entry into Malawi**

**Question:** With the new Visa regime what happens to nationals from countries requiring Visas who are holders of various residential permits?

**Answer:** **In Malawi the holders of Temporary Employment Permits (valid for 2 years), Business Residence Permits (valid for 5 years), Students Permits (valid for 1 year), and Permanent Residence Permits are considered to be holders of long term permits. Whereas, holders of Visitors Permits or Business Visit Permits (valid for 30 days and can be extended for another 60 days) and Temporary Residence Permits (valid for 6 months) are considered to be holders of short term permits.**

**With regard to Visa requirements to enter Malawi, only holders of long term permits coming from countries that require a Visa to enter Malawi will be exempted from the Visa requirement when they exit the country and would like to come back because they are treated like returning residents. Whereas as all holders of short term permits will be required to have a Visa once they exit Malawi and would like to come back**

**Question:** Are there going to be different forms for different categories of Visas? And where can they be found?

**Answer:** *At the meantime there are no different forms for different categories of Visas; Malawi has one generic form for all categories of Visas.*

*These forms can be obtained at the Immigration Headquarters, Regional Immigration Offices and all other Immigration Offices across the country, Malawi Embassies and Consular Offices, and most importantly they can be downloaded from our website [www.immigration.gov.mw](http://www.immigration.gov.mw)*

**Question:** Will applicants have to come to the embassy personally?

**Answer:** *In an event that the E-Visa system is fully operational applicants will not need to go to the embassy personally. However, they may be required to send their Passports to the embassy so that after the approval process is done their Passports can be endorsed with a Visa Sticker.*

**Question:** Does a Visa apply to children travelling with parents?

**Answer:** *A Visa in Malawi applies to all Passport holders coming from countries that require a Visa to enter Malawi, and as long as children are holding their own Passports which is the practice presently, the Visa will apply to them as well*

**Question:** Why has the Malawi Government introduced the new Visa regime?

**Answer:** *Imposition of Visas in Malawi is not a new phenomenon; there are countries that have been paying for Visas to enter Malawi since time immemorial. What has just happened is not a new introduction but rather an extension of the Visa regime to other countries that were previously not on the list.*

**Question:** What will happen to those travellers that paid for a Visa a few weeks ago when the immigration department implemented the new Visa regime before the implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2015? Are they going to be refunded?

**Answer:** *The Immigration Department being an enforcement agent did nothing wrong during that week because they were just enforcing the law. This is so because the effective date for the Visa regime according to the gazette is 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015. However, the Government considered views from the Diplomatic Community to provide some adequate notice to inform their nationals, to the effect that Government decided to put a moratorium on the implementation of the new visa regime to accommodate this.*

*The issue of refund therefore will not arise because what happened was done within the law until there was a temporary suspension. The issue of refund can only perhaps arise if someone (from the countries the visa regime has been extended to) was made to pay before the effective date of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015. But if one paid after the effective date of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015 they paid legitimate fees.*