

ADVISORY: NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN TRAVELLING THROUGH SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS OF ENTRY - EFFECTIVE 1 JUNE 2015

The new requirements for children travelling to or from the Republic of South Africa take effect on 1 June 2015. The requirements are aimed at establishing the principle that all minors require the consent of their parents when traveling into or out of the Republic.

1. APPLICATION OF THE NEW REQUIREMENTS

1.1. The documents listed under paragraph 4 shall upon request be produced at a port of entry by:

- South African minors upon leaving the Republic, and
- Minors who are foreign nationals and who are visa exempt when travelling through a port of entry of the Republic.

1.2. Minors who apply for a South African visa at any mission or VFS service-point shall be required to submit as part of the application, documents listed hereunder at paragraph 4, prior to such visa being issued.

1.3. Where a minor applies for a visa inside South Africa or at a South African embassy abroad it shall be standard practice for all supporting documents to be submitted prior to the visa being issued. Sworn translations of the documents should be submitted with the visa application as stipulated in Regulation 9(4) of the Immigration Regulations, 2014. However, persons who are visa exempt need not submit any translations when reporting to an Immigration Officer at a port of entry. Supporting documents should either be the originals or certified copies of the originals.

2. EXEMPTIONS

- Minors who began their journey prior to 1 June 2015 shall not be required to produce the documents listed in paragraph 4 should the return leg of the journey occur after 1 June 2015.
- No supporting documents will be required in the case of minors in direct transit at an International Airport.
- *Minors in possession of valid South African visas shall not be required to produce the documents listed in paragraph 4 when travelling through a port of entry of the Republic.*

• In the case of countries that endorse the particulars of parents in children's passports, or other official identification documents, these documents shall be acceptable for the purpose of establishing the identity of parents of the travelling minor. Example: Indian passports record the parents' names on the passport. In this instance, the requirement of an Unabridged Birth Certificate as stated in paragraph 4 may be dispensed with.

• In the case of school tours, the parental consent affidavit may be replaced with an affidavit from the school principal confirming that all consent letters are held by the school. Upon producing this affidavit, immigration officers at ports of entry and South African missions abroad would not require any additional documents from individual scholars such as parental consent, unabridged birth certificates, death certificates, court orders or copies of the passports or identity documents of the parents and of the person receiving the child in SA. This special dispensation applies to all schools registered with the Department of Basic Education and its equivalent abroad. Download the suggested format for this affidavit [here](#).

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. Alternative Care

• Section 167 of the Children's Act, 2005 (Act No. 38 of 2005), states that a child is in Alternative Care if the child has been placed in:° foster care;

the care of a child and youth care centre following an order of a court in terms of that Act or the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act No. 51 of 1977); or

temporary safe care.

3.2. Child/Minor

• South African law regards any person younger than 18 years as a child or minor.

3.3. Equivalent Document

• Any official document (Example: identity document or passport issued by the relevant authority of any country) or letter issued by a foreign government (including a foreign embassy) or a letter issued by the Director-General of Home Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, recording the identity of the parents of a child shall be accepted in lieu of an Unabridged Birth Certificate. These instruments shall serve to identify the parents of the child intending to travel through a port of entry of the Republic.

3.4. Parent

- Unless the context indicates otherwise, the word “parent” includes adoptive parents and legal guardians.

3.5. Parental Consent Affidavit

- Parental Consent Affidavit is an affidavit which must accompany an Unabridged Birth Certificate or Equivalent Document when any parent is not travelling with his or her child.
- A South African Embassy in the traveller’s country of residence may be approached to commission the oath or solemn declaration required in the Affidavit free of charge.
- The Affidavit must not be older than 6 months when presented. The same affidavit will still be valid for the departure or return in relation to the same journey regardless of the period of the journey.
- A suggested format of the Parental Consent Affidavit is here: [Parental Consent Affidavit](#).

3.6. Unabridged Birth Certificate

- In South Africa, an Unabridged Birth Certificate (UBC) is an extract from the Birth Register containing the particulars of a minor and those of his or her parent or parents. UBCs are official documents issued by the Department of Home Affairs in terms of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1992 (Act No. 51 of 1992). All birth certificates containing the details of a child as well as the parents of the child shall be accepted for the purposes of these Requirements as UBCs , regardless of the country of issue.
- In the case of countries that do not issue UBCs, an ‘Equivalent Document’ containing the particulars of the child and his or her parent or parents, issued by the competent authority of that country, or an embassy of that country may be used instead of an UBC. A suggested format for such an Equivalent Document is available at [here](#)

4. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR TRAVEL THROUGH A PORT OF ENTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Where both parents are travelling accompanied by one or more of their children, such children have to produce:

- Valid passports and an UBC or Equivalent Document for each child travelling.

4.2. Where only one parent is travelling with a child, (or children), each child has to produce:

- A valid passport, an UBC or Equivalent Document for each travelling child and the Parental Consent Affidavit from the non-travelling parent whose details are recorded on the UBC or Equivalent Document.

4.3. An unaccompanied minor has to produce:

- A valid passport; an UBC or Equivalent Document; Parental Consent Affidavit; letter from the person who is to receive the minor in the Republic containing such person's residential and work address and full contact details in the Republic, a copy of the identity document or valid passport and visa or permanent residence permit of the person who is to receive the minor in the Republic.

4.4. A person who is travelling with a child who is not his or her biological child, such child must produce:

- A valid passport, an UBC or Equivalent Document and Parental Consent Affidavit.

4.5. A child in alternative care shall produce:

- A valid passport and a letter from the Provincial Head of the Department of Social Development where the child resides authorising his or her departure from the Republic as contemplated in section 169 of the Children's Act (Act No. 38 of 2005).

4.6. Explanatory Notes:

- One of the following documents may be presented in the absence of a Parental Consent Affidavit referred to above:
 - A court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or full legal guardianship of the child exclusively to the travelling parent ;
 - A court order granted in terms of section 18(5) of the Children's Act, 2015, (Act No. 38 of 2005) which is a court order granting permission for the child to travel in the event that there is a dispute or no consent forthcoming from the parent/s of a child; or
 - a death certificate of the deceased parent.
- Where only one parent's particulars appear on the UBC or equivalent document, no parental consent affidavit is required when that parent travels with the child.

- In the case of divorce, where custody of a child/children is shared, parental consent by both parents is required.
- Where a Parental Consent Affidavit is presented, also required are full contact details and copies of the identity documents or passports of the parents or legal guardian of the child.
- The consent of parents recorded as such on the Unabridged Birth Certificate or Equivalent Document shall be required regardless of the marital status of the parents of the child.

5. INABILITY TO CONSENT DUE TO RECENT DEATH OR MENTAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITY:

5.1. Where any parent/s recorded in an UBC, or equivalent document, are unable to consent to the travel by a child due to recent death, or mental or physical disability, persons acting on behalf of the child/children may apply for a special dispensation in lieu of the parental consent affidavit by directing a request and full motivation, together with all supporting documents (example, treating medical practitioners certificate), to the Office of the Director-General of Home Affairs, at the following e-mail address: consent@dha.gov.za.

5.2. Explanatory Note:

- This dispensation only applies to incapacity, and does not apply where a parent is either unwilling to consent or unable to be located due to separation or divorce.
- Where a parent refuses to give consent, a court order in terms of section 18(5) of the Children's Act, 2005 (Act No. 38 of 2005), may be presented in lieu of such parental consent.