



BAHAMAS IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT Offices Temporarily Closed to the Public



Department's Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Delays in services as a direct result of COVID-19

The Bahamas Immigration Department recognizes and understands that the public has been directly affected by the global crisis (COVID-19) as it relates to services offered by our agency. It is also vital to inform stakeholders that the pandemic has likewise affected our capability to offer the aforementioned services in a timely manner. To this end, we continue to monitor the crisis in an effort to systematically address all immigration related issues as timely and effectively as practicable. The Department like all other local agencies is guided by the laws and orders enacted by the Government of The Bahamas to safeguard citizens, residents and visitors alike, and are actively working toward a number of policies and procedures as it relates to the resumption of services.

Extension of Stay

The Department is monitoring the borders of the country as well as actions taken by other affected nations in an effort to adequately address issues related to extension of stay. Under normal circumstances, visitors must depart the country prior to the expiration of time granted upon initial entry. Further, applicants who qualified and desired to remain in the country longer than the time granted would seek an extension on their stay from the Department in a timely manner. However, we recognize that due to COVID-19 and the closure of borders around the world, many visitors may have unexpectedly remained in The Bahamas beyond the intended period. With this reality in mind, the following option is available to applicants:

Apply for an Electronic Extension

The Department of Immigration's update to the extension service during the Emergency Order for the COVID-19 pandemic enacted by the Government of The Bahamas on 23rd March 2020; this update will remain in effect until such time as the order is lifted.

An electronic extension on visitors' stay may be granted to applicants who qualify. Please note that this process in no way nullifies the usual process that requires applicants to be interviewed in person by the extension officer.

To apply, please provide the following for each person in your party to complete the electronic extension process:

1. Biographical data page of your passport
2. Page bearing the entry stamp granted upon arrival into The Bahamas
3. If you previously had an extension on your stay, a copy of page bearing initial extension(s)
4. The immigration landing card
5. Return ticket if traveling via airplane
6. Cruising permit if traveling via sea
7. Sponsor's information if applicable (only required for those who initially entered to reside with a resident of The Bahamas or has had to take on a sponsor due to hotel/accommodation closure).

***Required sponsor's information**

- Copy of sponsor's passport
- Address
- Proof of legal status in The Bahamas if sponsor is a non- Bahamian
- Telephone contact

Please note that the documents should be attached as a portable document format (pdf) or a jpg image to immigration@bahamas.gov.bs. The subject line of your email should read Electronic Extension and the island in which you are currently on. For example: ***“Electronic Extension – Grand Bahama.”***

Once a decision has been made, applicants will be notified via email.

Importance of Applying in a Timely Manner

Once application is submitted in a timely manner and applicant meets all requirements, a favorable response is more likely to be granted; however, consideration will be given to those applications submitted late once analyzed and the time line as it relates to COVID-19 is assessed. Please note that the length of stay must commensurate with the period of crisis and that credible evidence must be submitted to substantiate your claim for late submission.

Applying for an Electronic Extension when a Bahamas Entry Visa is required

Visa Requirements

In accordance with official international visa regulation agreements, Bahamas Entry Visa requirements are waived for citizens of countries who wish to visit and remain in The Bahamas for a period not exceeding three (3) months or eight (8) months as each individual agreement may dictate. Please [click here](#) to find a list of countries and their visa requirements.

For applicants requiring an extension on their stay who has reached the maximum time allotted to them without having a Bahamas Entry Visa, please note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the authorizing agency with responsibility for the processing and issuance of the visa recently implemented the facilitation of an online visa application process. Please log onto the agency's website at www.mofa.gov.bs to apply for the visa prior to submitting an application to the Department of Immigration for an electronic extension.

Payments for Approved Permits

For clients in possession of approvals from the Department, please be advised that your payments can now be processed electronically with a debit or credit card. To successfully make payment, clients must submit the following to the Department's finance officer at altheasmith@bahamas.gov.bs:

1. Signed authorization letter outlining amount to be charged to the card
2. Copy of the card (front and back)
3. Photo identification of the card holder/individual authorizing payment
4. Copy of the approval letter from the Department

Renewal of Status, Submission of New Application & Collection of Permits

As the offices processing the above applications are closed to the public in accordance with the **COVID-19 Emergency Orders**, the ability to render these services has also been directly impacted and application processing capacity likewise affected; however, compliance is vital in the observance of the orders as well as to the safety and well being of staff and clients alike.

Your patience and adherence to the safety protocols are greatly appreciated during this time of unprecedented global crisis. You are encouraged to follow the updates on our Facebook page

(Bahamas Department of Immigration) and our website (www.immigration.gov.bs) for official notices as to how and when these services will resume. The Department is aware that permits may expire during this period and assures clients that no penalties will be levied against you as these are extenuating circumstances.

The Detention Center and Safe House

Visitation at the Carmichael Road Detention Center and Safe House is temporarily suspended to members of the public to ensure the safety and protection of staff and detainees. Further, all **special/emergency** requests by attorneys or relative embassy officials in this regard must be made in writing to the DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION at: clarencerrussell@bahamas.gov.bs or via the Department's email at immigration@bahamas.gov.bs, or by contacting the Detention Center at telephone number 1- 242-604-0171.

For other policies updates, operational changes, and other COVID-19 related information please visit our website at www.immigration.gov.bs or email queries, concerns and or questions to immigration@bahamas.gov.bs or contact us via the Department's COVID-19 hotline at 1-242-225-5337. The Department apologizes for any inconvenience caused during this time.