

# Mobility: Immigration alert

November 2020



## Israel

### Updated COVID-19 Immigration Alert: Entry of business travelers into Israel

#### Executive summary

Cancellation of special approval process by a relevant Government Ministry: As of 28 October 2020, for work permit applications, the special approval by the relevant Government Ministry will be required only for arrival from a "red" country for a 7-day visit exempt from quarantine requirement. Authorization to board the flight is still required for all arriving foreign nationals.

As of 16 October 2020, business travelers from "green" countries will be allowed to enter Israel for business visits for up to seven days and from "red" countries for up to four days, according to the procedure detailed below.

Due to the lockdowns imposed in Israel during COVID-19 period, an additional round of automatic work visa extensions has been approved, for experts currently present in Israel, without the need to pay Government charges.

On 20 October 2020, Israel and the United Arab Emirates announced a mutual visa exemption agreement, allowing Israeli citizens and Emirati citizens to visit each other's countries visa free.

#### Key issues

***Elimination of the request for Government Ministry principle approval for work permit applications:***

The Population and Immigration Authority announced that as of 28 October 2020 there will be no requirement to obtain a principle approval from the relevant Government Ministry, when applying for a work permit in the below cases:

1. Foreign assignees arriving from a "green" country
2. Foreign assignees arriving from a "red" country including 14 days quarantine

A principle approval thus will be necessary only for obtaining a work permit for arrival of a foreign assignee from a "red" country for a 7-day visit exempt from a quarantine requirement.

All foreign nationals are still required to obtain an Authorization to board the flight prior to arrival in Israel.

#### ***Entry of business travelers into Israel from "green" and "red" countries***

The Ministry of Economy and Industry has announced that business travellers, from "green" countries as well as "red" countries, wishing to arrive in Israel for business purposes during COVID-19 period, can submit a special application to arrive in Israel for a 7-day business or a 4- day business visit, respectively.

The business visitor and the inviting company are required to submit online applications, stating, inter alia, the purpose of the business visit (for example: transferring or receiving professional knowledge, maintaining functional and managerial continuity, promoting foreign investment, business development, marketing and sales), provide

clarifications why the meetings must take place physically face-to-face and not via conference meetings and emphasize the business added value expected from the visit.

A visitor from a "red" country is required to perform a PCR COVID-19 testing 48 hours prior to the flight to Israel. The visitor and the inviting company are obligated to meet certain health restrictions. The application should be submitted at least 15 business days before the expected arrival date of the business visitor in Israel.

In the following link the application forms for business visitors from "green" and "red" countries, can be found:

<https://www.gov.il/en/service/foreign-businesspeople-entry-during-covid19>

The immigration team at EY can provide guidance in completing the relevant forms for submitting the applications.

#### ***Automatic extension of experts Work Permits and B-1 work visas***

The Population and Immigration Authority has announced that Work Permits and B-1 work visas for assignees who are currently present in Israel, will be extended without the need to apply to the Immigration Authority and without the need to pay Government charges, in accordance with the below:

1. B-1 visas and work permits expiring between 1 July 2020 until 30 September 2020 and which have not been automatically extended in the past, will be extended for a period of three months from the original expiration date of the visa/permit.
2. B-1 visas and work permits expiring between 1 July 2020 until 31 August 2020 and which have previously been automatically extended for a period of ten weeks, will be extended for an additional period of 20 days, to complete total extension period of three months from the original expiration date of the visa/permit.
3. B-1 visas and work permits expiring between 1 October 2020 until 30 November 2020, and which previously have not been automatically extended, will be extended for a period of ten weeks from the original expiration date of the visa/ permit.

The extensions will be updated in the Immigration Authority's system and updated visa expiration dates can be checked with the Ministry of Interior offices. The automatic extension will apply as long as the Immigration Authority has not announced otherwise/not refused to renew the visa before the end of the visa period /not cancelled the visa and assuming all permit and visa conditions are still met. Closer to the expiration date of the extended B-1 visa, the company should submit an application to extend the work permit in accordance with the regular standard procedures.

#### ***Signing of an agreement with the United Arab Emirates***

On 20 October 2020, Israel and the United Arab Emirates announced a mutual visa exemption agreement to exempt visas for Israelis nationals for entering the Emirates for tourism and business travel. In addition, citizens of the UAE will be able to enter Israel for the same purposes without the need for an entry visa. Further details will be provided once specifics of the agreements are published.

#### **Next steps**

For companies who need to urgently assign employees to Israel for work or business purposes, please contact your local EY advisor or one of the contacts

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