APPLYING FOR AN OFFICIAL OR DIPLOMATIC RUSSIAN VISA

Department of State Instructional Guide

Prepared by the Visa Unit, Special Issuance Agency (SIA), U.S. Department of State

CA-PPT-SIA-VISA-UNIT@state.gov
202-485-8200/8152

(August 18th, 2016)

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I. Helpful Hints

This instruction is addressed to official U.S. Government travelers who hold official or diplomatic passports, as well as volunteer student interns of the Department of State who hold regular (tourist) passports.

1. The Russian visa application is filled out on line and then printed for submission to the Russian Embassy. Here is the link to the application site:

   https://visa.kdmid.ru/

2. Although you technically do not need a visa if you will be only transiting Russia and not leaving the airport between flights, the Department of State recommends that you obtain a visa in the event of unforeseen delays or problems. If you are transiting Russia en route to or from Kazakhstan or Belarus, you must have a visa, even if not leaving the airport.


   If you have not had a Russia CI briefing in the past twelve months, you need to have one before departure. If your home agency does not conduct a Russia CI briefing, you may attend the one conducted by the State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security. This briefing is conducted every Thursday at 2pm by the Diplomatic Security Counterintelligence Division (DS/ICI/CI) located on the nineteenth floor of SA-20, 1801 North Lynn Street in Rosslyn. The briefing takes one hour and a SECRET-level clearance is required. Reservations are not required. Inquiries may be directed to DS/ICI/CI - Defensive Briefings: DSICICIDefensiveBriefings@state.gov.

3. A Russian visa for PCS is a multiple-entry visa valid for up to 36 months, per reciprocity. A TDY visa is typically a multiple-entry visa valid for 1 year.

4. You may submit your application at any time (the Russian Embassy will accept applications more than three months before travelling, unlike many countries).

5. Russian visas must be obtained through the Department of State’s Special Issuance Agency (SIA). SIA processes the applications and coordinates with the Russian Embassy in Washington, DC. The Russian Embassy will not accept applications directly from applicants.

6. Passport validity. The Russian Embassy will issue a visa with validity up to the end date of the passport – they do not require six months validity remaining on the passport (though if you are transiting Europe, you may need this – you could be denied boarding the plane).

7. Adult children. The Russian Embassy will not issue a PCS family-member visa to an adult child (over 18 years old) unless that adult child will be studying full-time at a Russian university, or has special needs. For short visitations, adult children may obtain Private Visit Visas through the Invisa Logistics Services (ILS) company. Contact SIA for more information.
8. Multiple visas. It is permissible to have multiple Russian visas at one time, but they must each be in a separate passport. An older, still-valid visa will be cancelled if a new visa is placed in the same passport.

9. Letter of invitation (a.k.a. telex). An invitation is not required to travel to Russia for consultations or temporary duty at the U.S. Embassy or consulates. By mutual agreement, you will generally be issued a 1-year multiple-entry visa for these purposes. If you already have an invitation from a Russian entity, your visa will likely be limited in time or number of entries, whether you submit the invitation along with your packet or not. Failure to submit the invitation or the invitation number (telex) may delay issuance of your visa.

10. Born in Russia or USSR. See section III.4. below.

11. Processing times. Normal processing time is five business days once the Russian Embassy receives the application. If your application packet is in order, it will go to the Russian Embassy the day following reception at SIA. This is for informational purposes only. There is absolutely no guarantee that the visa will be issued in a timely fashion, or at all. Be proactive and submit your application early to avoid problems caused by delays.

12. Handwritten entries are not permitted on the application form (except for date and signature). If you need to make a correction to an application that has already been submitted, you cannot make edits. You must create a new application.

13. Note that holders of Diplomatic or Official passports do NOT need to complete questions pertaining to (denoted with ** when you print out a hard copy of your application):

- Medical Insurance
- Father’s and/or Mother’s Full Name
- Lost/Stolen Passport
- Countries Visited in the Last 10 Years
- Last Two Places of Work
- All Institutions of Higher Learning
- Membership in Organizations
- Special Skills
- Military Background
- Involvement in Armed Conflict

If you are prompted to answer these questions, you may leave the field blank or enter “n/a”. If you have correctly selected the type of passport and purpose of travel, these questions should not appear in your application at all.

14. Passport must be valid. If the passport is cancelled or damaged to the point it is no longer considered valid, then the Russian visa in it is also not valid.


**II. Sample Printout of Application.**

**ON-LINE VISA APPLICATION FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nationality (if you formerly had US or Russian citizenship, please indicate when and why you lost it).</td>
<td>UNITED STATES, 01/01/1996, EMIGRATED TO ISRAEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Surname (as in passport).</td>
<td>JOHNSON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First name, other names, patronymic (as in passport).</td>
<td>ROBERT MARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy).</td>
<td>01/01/1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sex.</td>
<td>MALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Passport.</td>
<td>DIPLOMATIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of passport:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport No:</td>
<td>0044446789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issued by:</td>
<td>UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of issue:</td>
<td>01/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid until:</td>
<td>31/12/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Purpose of visit.</td>
<td>OFFICIAL/JOURNEY/DIPLOMATIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Category and type of visa.</td>
<td>DIPLOMATIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Number of entries.</td>
<td>MULTI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Date of arrival and departure.</td>
<td>01/01/2017 - 14/01/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Host organisation you intend to visit.</td>
<td>U.S. EMBASSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIN:</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation No:</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive No:</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>BOLSHOY DEVYTINSKY PEREULOK, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Route of journey (destination points).</td>
<td>MOSCOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Photograph and signature.**

**Service information (Automatically generated).**

- **Application form recipient:** Embassy of Russia in the United States
- **Basis (Voucher, org. No., inv. No.):** NONE
- **The estimated date of visit to the RC:**
  - Application No (web-site): 10535557
  - The date of processing: 01/01/2016
  - Application No (VAC):
  - The date of processing by the VAC:
- **Request No in Russian Consulate (RC):**

I hereby agree to the processing and transfer of my personal data in electronic form for the purposes of making a decision on visa issuance. I declare that data provided in the application form are full and correct. I am aware that any false information may be a cause for the denial of visa or for the cancellation of the previously issued visa and may lead to other consequences provided for by the legislation of the Russian Federation. Subject to the receipt of visa, I pledge to leave the territory of the Russian Federation before the visa expiration date. I am aware that valid visa does not automatically allow to enter the territory of the Russian Federation. In case of denial of entry, I will not seek any compensation for potential losses.

Page 1 of 3
13. Your permanent address, telephone number, fax number, E-mail.

14. Place of work or study (position, company name, address, telephone number, fax number, E-mail).

15. Information about previous Russian Visas.
   Have you ever been issued a Russian Visa?
   YES
   When and where: 00/00/1986 WASHINGTON, DC

16. Who will pay for your trip to and stay in Russia?
   Company name: U.S. GOVERNMENT
   Notes: 

17. Information about health insurance.
   Do you have health insurance that is valid in Russia?
   NO

18. Other names used in the past ( maiden, pen-name, religious, etc.).
   NONE

19. Your place of birth (If you were born in Russia, please specify when and which country you emigrated to).
   RUSSIA 01/01/1986, ISRAEL

20. Additional information about your relatives.
   Marital status: SINGLE
   Do you currently have relatives in Russia?
   YES
   If yes, please indicate full name, relation degree, date of birth, address.
   ZALUPRIZ IVAN, OTHER KINSHIP, 00/00/1950, UNKNOWN

21. Additional information.
   A visa may be refused to persons who are within specific categories defined by the law as inadmissible to Russia. Your answer YES does not automatically signify ineligibility for a visa. In this case you may be required to personally appear before a consular officer.
   21.1. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any offense?
   NO
   21.2. Have you ever been afflicted with a communicable disease of public health significance or a CATEGOROUS PHYSICAL, mental or mental disorder? Have you ever been a drug abuser or an addict?
   NO
   21.3. Have you ever been refused a Russian Visa?
   NO
   21.4. Has your Russian visa ever been canceled?
   NO
   21.5. Have you ever been deported from Russia?
   NO
   21.6. Have you ever tried to obtain or assist others to obtain a Russian visa or enter Russia by providing misleading or false information?
   NO
   21.7. Have you ever overstayed your Russian visa or stayed unlawfully in Russia?
   NO

22. Planned place of stay in Russia.
   Name, birth date, address and phone number of person or hotel in Russia that you plan to stay with:
   HOTEL METROPOL, TEATRALNYY PR-D, 2, TEL: 7-408-101-78-00

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23. Information about completing the application:

Has this application been completed personally by you? YES
III. Online Russian Visa Application.

Here is the link to the online application:

https://visa.kdmid.ru/

Google Chrome works best.

The Russian visa application must be completed on-line and printed out in duplicate. Hand-written entries or corrections are not allowed.

One parent can sign for minor children.

Following are recommendations on selected parts of the application.

1. Initial screen.
   Always select United States as the country where you will be applying.
   Your session will time out after 20 minutes of inactivity – save your data often.
   Once completed, your visa application data will remain in their system for 30 days – your passport and hard-copy application must arrive at the Russian Embassy before it is purged.
2. **Password selection.**
Keep the password simple using only letters and numbers. Do not use special characters (the Russian system will not recognize them).

3. **Application ID confirmation.**
Record the application ID number for future use.

4. **Visa details.**

Nationality.
The question about USSR or Russian nationality concerns whether you currently possess Russian citizenship. This will be determined by the Russian Government in accordance with current Russian citizenship law.
If you were born in one of the other titular republics of the Soviet Union (Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, etc.), then you generally do not have claim to Russian citizenship, even if your parents and you are ethnic Russians.
If you were born in Russia (or the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic prior to 25 December 1991) – even if you have previously been issued Russian visas – be prepared to submit documentation that establishes you are no longer a Russian citizen (q.v. copies of Soviet/Russian passport and exit visa for permanent residence abroad).

Alternatively, if you were born in Russia but your father’s nationality was not “Russian” in his Soviet passport and you have strong ties to another titular republic, then you may be able to avoid Russian citizenship.

If it is determined that you still retain Russian citizenship, then you cannot be issued a Russian visa. You then have two options: 1. obtain a Russian passport with which to travel to Russia (a non-starter if you have a security clearance), or 2. Renounce your Russian citizenship. SIA can provide you with the point of contact at the Russian Embassy for this.

Purpose of visit (section).
All official business falls under OFFICIAL VISITS (except transit visas).

Purpose of visit.
For diplomatic passport holders going TDY, select OFFICAL JOURNEY/DIPLOMATIC.
For official passport holders going TDY, select OFFICIAL JOURNEY/ADMINISTRATIVE.
For holders of diplomatic or consular titles (e.g. First Secretary, Attache, Vice Consul, etc…) on PCS orders, select DIPLOMATIC SERVANT. Family members select MEMBER OF DIPLOMATIC SERVANT FAMILY.
For Administrative & Technical (A&T) Staff or Consular Employees on PCS orders, select TECHNICAL EMPLOYEE. Family members select MEMBER OF TECHNICAL EMPLOYEE FAMILY.
These four selections will be appropriate for 99% of applicants. Consult with SIA if you believe you should use a different purpose of visit.

Visa category and type.
Select the category that matches your type of passport, DIPLOMATIC of OFFICIAL.

Number of entries and dates of entry.
Select MULTIPLE and put the dates of your next trip to Russia. SIA will request a 1-year multiple-entry visa with dates that meet your needs. If you want to request a particular 1-year period, you can put that down, but ensure you tell SIA in your request memo what the actual dates are for your next trip.
Consular department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
Completion of electronic visa application form

Visa details

Nationality
UNITED STATES

If you had USSR or Russian nationality at some time please select "yes" and indicate when and why you lost it

When
01 January 2016

Why
Emigrated to Israel

Purpose of visit (section)
OFFICIAL VISITS

Purpose of visit
OFFICIAL JOURNEY/DIPLOMATIC

Visa category and type
DIPLOMATIC

Number of entries
MULTI

Date of entry into Russia
01 January 2017

Date of exit from Russia
14 January 2017

Enter your citizenship, in accordance with the country or organisation whose passport you will be entering Russian Federation with.

Enter "yes" in this field, if you formerly had USSR or Russian citizenship; if not enter "no". If yes, please answer the specifying questions.

Select your purpose of visit from the top drop menu list. Then from the lower drop menu list choose the specification of your purpose of visit

Select the specification for your purpose of visit

Enter the intended number of entries to Russian Federation

Enter your intended date of entry to Russia in "ddmm/yyyy" format

Enter your intended date of departure from Russia in "ddmm/yyyy" format
5. Personal details.
Self explanatory
6. Passport details.
Issued by UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

It is not required for your passport to be valid for 6 months (or any period) beyond your planned trip. The Russian Embassy will issue a visa up to the end of the validity of the passport.
7. Visit details.

Only list the cities or regions you plan to visit on your next trip to Russia.
You may list the Embassy address instead of the hotel.
8. Additional information.

By “cancelled”, they mean, “has your Russian visa ever been revoked,” a.k.a. “cancelled with prejudice”. The Russian Embassy will always cancel still-valid Russian visas in a passport when issuing new visas.
9. **Last visit details.**
Be as accurate as you can about the dates of previous visas. If you don’t remember exact dates, just enter the year (as shown).
10. **Miscellaneous information.**

Your permanent address and work address **cannot be the same.**

Be specific on your work position (duty title). An overly ambiguous title will only raise questions and attract more attention.
11. **Appointment details.**

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Select EMBASSY OF RUSSIA IN UNITED STATES for Destination name. If you do not, then the Russian Embassy will not have your data and cannot process your application.

**Printing the application.**
Use letter (8.5” x 11”) size paper.
You do not need to print on both sides – the Russian Embassy will accept single-sided printing. If you do print on both sides, flip the pages on the long side.

**IV. Photos.**

Russian Visa Photo Specifications
- **General Information.**
  The photograph must be a full-face view in which the visa applicant is facing the camera directly, with eyes open
  The photograph must have been taken within the last six months
- **Photo Size**
  The photo for each visa applicant submitted must measure:
35 mm X 45 mm (1 3/8" X 1 3/4") with the head centered in the frame.

-Photo Appearance

The applicant should not look down or to either side, and the face should cover about 50 percent of the photo area.

Side or angled views are NOT accepted.

Lighting should be such that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background.

The photos must be clear, well defined and taken against a plain white or light-colored background.

In general, the applicant's head, including both face and hair, should be shown from the crown of the head to the tip of the chin on top and bottom and from hairline side-to-side.

Sunglasses or other wear which detracts from the face are not acceptable unless required for medical reasons (an eye patch, for example).

Group photos are NOT acceptable. As a separate visa is issued to each qualified applicant, a photo of each applicant is required.

Your face must be square to the camera with a neutral expression, neither frowning nor smiling, and with your mouth closed.

Photocopied photographs are NOT accepted.

-Attaching the Photo

Glue the one photograph to the application in the designated space (a double-sided adhesive tape could be used). Do not staple photograph.

Do not enclose photographs in glassine or other types of envelopes.
V. What to submit in your visa packet.

For each applicant:
1. Passport
2. Visa applications, 1 signed original and 2 copies.
3. Photo, 1 ea., trimmed to fit in the box and glued onto the front of the application.
4. For holders of diplomatic passports: one (1) clear and legible copy of the passport data page, trimmed to size (to include both data page and signature page) and paper-clipped to the front of the original application.

For each group (families, delegations) packet:
1. Copy of assignment orders for PCS, or request memo for TDY (reproduced below), 1 ea.
2. For PCS: Assignment Worksheet (http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/sia-assets/visa_applications/_standard_visa_docs/PCS_TDY_InfoGuide.pdf). Also reproduced below.

VI. Where to submit your packet.

Special Issuance Agency:
   600 19th St. NW
   Washington, DC 20522
   (South Employee Entrance)
   0900-1600, Monday-Friday

Employee Service Center:
   Harry S. Truman Building (HST), Room 1252
   0900-1445, Monday-Friday

By Mail (allow an additional 2-5 days for security screening):
   PPT/SIA ATTN: VISA UNIT
   44132 Mercure Circle
   PO BOX 1185
   Sterling VA 20166-1185

VII. Additional documents.

If applying separately from sponsor, include copies of the sponsor’s
   -passport data page,
   -Russian visa,
   -Russian diplomatic ID, and
   -orders showing you as an Eligible Family Member (EFM) or Member of Household (MOH).
(It is preferable for all family members to apply together, but that is not always possible. If applying separately, the sponsor must apply first; dependents cannot get their visas before the sponsor).
Mr. Christopher Pressey  
Special Issuance Agency  
600 19th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20522

FROM: [NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON CERTIFYING TRAVEL IS AUTHORIZED]  

Subject: Request for Russian Visa.

1. Name(s) of traveler(s) and passport number(s):

2. Position and rank/title:

3. Date passport required to be returned:

4. Date departing US:

5. Actual dates in Russia (next/soonest trip only):

6. Purpose of trip: [actual purpose of trip, e.g. “Consultations with US Embassy officials, Moscow”; “Participate in scientific and technical exchange meetings, Moscow” etc. “TDY” is insufficient.]

7. Cities to be visited:

8. Will traveler have meeting(s) with US Embassy/Consulate officials? NO_____ YES____

9. Does traveler have an invitation letter/TELEX? NO_____ YES____  
(If YES, please include a copy in the application packet)

10. Visa needed less than 10 days from today? NO_____ YES____

Please contact [name, number, email] when the visa is ready for pickup.

Please contact [name, number, email] in case of questions.

NOTE: This letter is for TDY only; PCS travelers please submit travel orders (DS-1604, TM ONE, or TM FOUR) and “PCS Assignment Information Worksheet” instead.

END FORMAT
PCS ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION (submit with packet to SIA)

ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

TODAY'S DATE:

NAME OF APPLICANT/SPONSOR: ________________________________

DATE DEPARTING U.S.: ______________________________________

DATE ARRIVING IN COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT: ________________

YEARS ASSIGNED TO POST: __________________________________

FULL NAME OF PERSON BEING REPLACED AT POST: ________________

DIPLOMATIC TITLE (If Applicable, NO ABBREVIATIONS): ____________

FUNCTIONAL TITLE (NO ABBREVIATIONS): _________________________

SECTION ASSIGNED TO AT POST: _______________________________

U.S. PHONE NUMBER: _________________________________________

E-MAIL (Personal or State is ok): ________________________________

PICK-UP: *ESC: ______  *SIA: ______

STOP HERE (UNLESS YOU NEED YOUR PASSPORTS/DOCUMENTS SENT UPS)