

Applying for a work permit in Iraq can be relatively simple once you understand the correct documents, deadlines, and processes required. Missing a step or failing to provide accurate information, however, can lead to a rejected work permit and delays in productivity.

Types of Work Visas in Iraq

Non-Arab workers must obtain a work permit for legal employment in the country. Work permits are generally issued for one year at a time and can be renewed a month before the expiration date. The total visa and work permit processing time typically takes between four and six weeks. Foreign employees cannot begin employment before obtaining their work permits.

Requirements to Obtain Iraq Work Visas

To begin the work permit application process, the employee must first obtain an official employment offer. As the employer, you can then submit a written request to the Iraq Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. This application will typically include:

- A thoroughly completed visa application form.
- Two, color passport photographs.
- A copy of the applicant's valid passport.
- An official letter of employment.

Application Process

The steps to apply for a work visa are not overly complex — however, it is vital to follow each requirement correctly to obtain the proper work permit. The first step is to ensure your employee's paperwork is in order, including a passport that is valid for up to six months following the visa's issuance. You can begin the process by applying for an entry visa on behalf of your employee from the Iraqi embassy in the applicant's country of residence.

Upon successful issuance and entry into the country, the immigration department and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq will check the visa, along with the relevant

travel documents.

Once in the country, your employees can apply for both a residence and work permit. To qualify for a work permit, noncitizens must show proof of an employment contract with your company. If your employee is already located in-country and wants to commence work with your organization, they must submit documented proof of their legitimate entry and residency. You then have to submit a written request to the Department of Labor and Vocational Training.

Other Important Considerations

If your company doesn't have an entity established in-country, you may experience barriers to obtaining a legal work permit for your employees. Some businesses are tempted to skirt the regulations by using incorrect visas or extending employment without the proper documentation. Keep in mind that following improper immigration methods can lead to risks for both your company and your employees, including civil and criminal penalties, tax violations, and denial of entry into the country.

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