**How to Apply for a Visa Extension in New Zealand**

On arrival in NZ you will get a visitor visa for 3 months which can be extended for another 3 months giving you a total of 6months. For those that arrived too early, and for those that have boat problems or weather problems and cannot leave before the 6months come to an end, you will need to apply for an extension.

This can be a confusing process. I, (Patricia, Gulf Harbour Radio), had to resort to phoning Immigration NZ to even find the visa extension instructions on their web site. And the Eagles Wings crew got bound up in the identity verification process on the RealMe web site. In fact the latter is not needed. RealMe is two separate services: one is a login (username and password), the other is a verified identity. You do need to create a RealMe logon to start the process. Please note before I continue that

* You do not need to verify your physical address
* You do not need to verify your identity on RealMe
* You do not need to go to the Post office

So, what do you do.

1. Go to the Immigration NZ web site

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas>

1. Click on “**Log In**” on the top right. This takes you to a drop down menu and
2. select “**visitor visa**” from the list (scroll down to find it).
3. Click on “**log in or create an account**”
4. On the right click on **create your RealMe login**
5. Fill out the form which includes your name and contact details, along with a password, security questions and an optional PIN. After proving you are human and agreeing to the terms of use – you will receive confirmation your login is ready to go, and be returned to the Immigration website.
6. You will be asked to create a profile. Don’t panic. Just do it. You will then be sent an email which is valid for two weeks
7. This is what comes in your email.

“You have registered with Immigration Online. Verify your Immigration ONLINE account by clicking the link below:

Verification Link “

1. You will get an email message that says that your verification has been successful. It says “**view my account**”. Click on that. (You also get your login details on a separate email).
2. Click on “**visitor visa**”. Now I know you have one and want to extend it but in their view you are creating a new visa. Just go with the flow!
3. I cannot go further than this on the web site without having a problem as I am a citizen and don’t have an existing visa. You may have to log in again with your RealMe username and password and the details are on the second email you will have received. You may be asked if you are applying for yourself or someone else. Now the policy is that anyone who wants to stay one day more than 6 months will have to upload proof of having passed an XRay. Instead of this, upload a covering letter that explains why you are asking for an extension – weather related etc. It is up to the discretion of the officer handling the application whether this will be granted. More often than not you may be on your way before you hear! You may also be asked for a Police report and this will be a real pain as they take a long time to get and require fresh fingerprints and an FBI report if you are American. This seems to be a requirement if you have been in NZ for longer than 24months over your entire lifetime. Again, explain that you are only wanting a short extension as you wait for weather. You will definitely be gone by the time a police report is returned to NZ.

Now some of the guidelines I have now been given twice do not in fact align with what I have seen on the web site! If you need to phone the Immigration department, good luck as it took me 42minutes to get through today. Their toll free number is 0508 558 855. You may get told you cannot use a cell phone . This is contrary to what it says on their web site! You may even get asked if you want a call back and that beats waiting on the phone. I did yesterday, but not today.

Good luck, and let me know of any changes or further recommendations!

Patricia

Gulf Harbour Radio