

**Bureau of Immigration Guidelines related to the Declaration of Public Health
Emergency due to Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

Background

Pursuant to Proclamation Nos. 929 and 922 (series of 2020) and Republic Act No. 11332, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) was directed to adopt, coordinate, and implement guidelines with respect to the imposition of an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and stringent social distancing measures in Luzon, including the National Capital Region (NCR).

1. What transactions at the BI offices in Luzon are temporarily suspended during the period of ECQ?

The following transactions at the BI offices in Luzon, **except** for outbound passengers intending to depart the Philippines, are temporarily suspended during the effectivity of the ECQ:

- a. Filing of applications for extension of/conversion to non-immigrant/immigrant visa, including hearing/interview;
- b. Filing of applications regarding Filipino citizenship, including RA No. 9225, including hearing/interview;
- c. Filing for downgrading of visa status;
- d. Filing for extension of tourist visa;
- e. Filing of applications for Special Work Permits/Provisions Work Permits;
- f. Filing for the renewal of ACR I-Cards; and
- g. Implementation of Bureau of Customs (BOC) approved visa applications for extension of/conversion to non-immigrant/immigrant visas. (*Advisory to the Public dated 19 March 2020*)

2. When can aliens whose visas will expire during the ECQ file their applications for extension?

All aliens whose visas will expire during the ECQ shall be allowed to file their applications for extension without fines and penalties within thirty (30) days from the lifting of the ECQ. (*Advisory to the Public dated 19 March 2020*)

3. What documents can a departing passenger with pending application for renewal, extension or amendment of an immigrant or non-immigrant visa present in lieu of the Grace Period Order?

Such departing passenger shall present the following to the Immigration Officer:

- a. Visa stamps on their passport (whether expired or not);
- b. Original or machine copy of official receipt of their application for extension of their visas;
- c. Original or machine copy of official receipt for Grace Period application; and
- d. Official receipt of payment at the airport or seaport of the required SRC or RP and ECC.

Upon return, the foreign national shall present to the Immigration Officer the documents identified in items 1 to 3 above. (*ECQ Advisory [Note with Recommendation] dated 20 March 2020*)

4. Will outbound passengers whose visa extension expired during the period of the ECQ be liable for fines and penalties related to their application for visa extension?

No. The BI shall waive the payment of said fines and penalties. (*Advisory to the Public dated 26 March 2020*)

However, the waiver of fines and penalties does not apply to the following:

- a. Applications filed after the lapse of thirty (30) days from the lifting of the ECQ; and
- b. All aliens whose visas expired prior to the declaration of the ECQ.
(*Memorandum dated 31 March 2020*)

5. Where can foreign nationals acquire an Emigration Clearance Certificate (ECC)?

Holders of temporary visitors visa who have stayed in the country for less than one (1) years are temporarily allowed to acquire their ECCs at the international airports.

Biometrics capturing and fingerprinting, and the issuance of Special Security Registration Numbers as requirements for the processing of ECCs are temporarily suspended. The BI, however, will still conduct derogatory records checking before giving clearance to ensure that any foreign national who wish to leave the country has no pending obligation to the government. (*Press Release dated 26 March 2020*)

6. Will foreign nations with approved and implemented visas, but awaiting release of their Alien Certificate of Registration Identity Card (ACR I-Card) be allowed to depart the country?

Yes, the BI will temporarily allow such foreign nationals to depart the country. The BI will not require such foreign nationals to secure an ACR I-Card Waiver from the BI's main office.

In such case, the foreign national should present the following in lieu of the ACR I-Card Waiver Order:

- a. Passport with valid visa, as indicated in the implementation stamp;
- b. Official receipts of the ACR I-Card Waiver Application Fee; and
- c. ECC with Returning Permit or Special Resident Certificate, whichever is applicable.

The foreign nationals are advised to keep said requirements, as these will be needed when they enter the country again under their respective visas. *(Press Release dated 27 March 2020)*

7. Will foreign nationals with approved visa applications, but which visas have not been implemented and stamped on their passports, be allowed to leave the country?

Yes. Upon departure, the foreign national shall present the following in lieu of the visa implementation stamp:

- a. Valid passport;
- b. Printout of his name in the agenda when said visa was approved, Department of Justice Indorsement, or Certification from the approving office, whichever is applicable; and
- c. Official receipts evidencing payment of reentry and exit permit fees.

Their visas can be revalidated and implemented when they return. *(Press Release dated 03 April 2020)*

