

Israeli Visa Guide for Indian Expats

▪ **Employer or Sponsoring Entity**

An Israeli bona fide employer (or a well-known global foreign bona fide employer) must sponsor either visitor visa or work permit application.

The bona fide sponsoring company does not necessarily have to be the actual employer. For example, in many IT projects that are being carried in Israel by Indian companies (such as ERP rollout), it is acceptable by the various governmental bodies that the Israeli host company sponsors the work permit applications for the Indian IT specialists, while their employment with the Indian company continues throughout the assignment.

In such cases the Indian engineer will remain on his Indian employer payroll, while the Israeli sponsor will be obliged to keep full compliance in the employment, in terms of immigration and labor laws (including but not limited to payment of the prevailing wages, providing adequate housing, payment for over time, providing medical insurance, etc.).

▪ **Temporary Visas**

Business Visas

B-2 business visitor Visa – This visa is suitable for the purpose of conducting business, tourism and leisure. A valid passport and an entry visa, depending on the nationality of the visitor, are necessary for entry into Israel for these purposes.

The term “business trip” is not specifically defined under Israeli law. Nonetheless, it is clear that if the purpose of the proposed travel to Israel entails productive work of any kind, a work visa must be obtained. This is regardless of the expected duration of the individual’s stay in Israel.

An Indian national seeking to travel to Israel on business, must obtain a pre-entry entry visa from the Israeli consulate with jurisdiction over their place of residence. The state of Israel operates two consulates in India: in Mumbai & New Delhi (depending on the area of residency of the assignee). Israeli law generally provides for only one type of visa category for both tourists and business travelers: The B-2 visa.

For business travelers, the B-2 procedure normally includes three separate bureaucratic steps:

1. Submission of a visa application with the Ministry of Interior (“MOI”).



2. Issuance of the B-2 visa at the relevant Israeli consular post abroad, prior to entry into Israel.
3. Extension of the B-2 visa at the MOI after arrival in Israel, if necessary.

First Step: Visa Application

Israeli consulates in India normally require that business travelers be officially sponsored by an Israeli company. A company provides such sponsorship by filing an application with the MOI in Israel. The application must contain a detailed description of the proposed visit, and also provide complete details relating to the prospective visitor, including educational background, professional experience, accommodation arrangements, etc. Processing times for work permit applications currently range from 2-4 weeks.

If the application is approved, the MOI will issue instructions to the relevant Israeli consulate in India to issue the B-2 visa.

Second Step: Consular Processing in India

In accordance with the instructions issued by the MOI (as discussed above), the Israeli consulates in India will endorse the B-2 visa on the individual's passport. The visa will generally be valid for a single entry of up to 30 days only.

The individual will need at this stage to contact the Israeli consulate through VFS Visa Application Centre in New Delhi. VFS was appointed by the Israeli consulate to process the applications. The VFS website, Please see VFS website <http://isr.vfsglobal.co.in/> provides information & guidelines regarding the preparation of the documents. Following all VFS requirements closely will reduce the chances of your application being incomplete or not being processed.

Third Step: Visa Extension

Following entry into Israel, an application to extend a stay on a B-2 visa may be filed at the local offices of the MOI. Extensions may be given for up to an additional 90 days. Applications should include, among other things, an explanation regarding the need for the extension, and a detailed description of the activities planned during the requested extension period.

Employment Visas - An Indian national who has been assigned to work in Israel must obtain a work permit and an appropriate entry visa prior to entering Israel. Israeli law generally provides for only one type of work status relating to the employment of foreign professionals and non-professionals alike: the B-1 visa category.

The process for obtaining a B-1 visa includes four separate bureaucratic steps:

- Submissions of a work permit application with the Semech Unit operated by the MOI (Semech unit).
- Filing of a subsequent visa application
- Issuance of a short term single entry B-1 visa at the relevant Israeli consular post abroad prior to entry into Israel.
- Extension of the B-1 visa at the MOI after arrival in Israel, and obtaining a multiple entry visa for the entire B-1 approval period.

First Step: Work Permit Application

An Israeli *bona fide* employer (or a well-known global foreign *bona fide* employer) must sponsor either visitor visa or work permit application. There is no separate category or provision for a self-employment working permit. A work permit application must contain a detailed description of the job position offered and also provide complete details relating to the prospective employee, including educational background, professional experience, proposed salary in Israel, local hiring efforts made etc. Processing times for work permit applications currently range from 4-8 weeks.

If the application is approved, Semech Unit will issue a B-1 recommendation letter to the MOI.

Second and Third Steps: Visa Application & Consular Processing

Upon issuance of the Semech Unit recommendation letter, an application should be filed with the MOI, asking that it instruct the relevant Israeli consular post in India (Mumbai or New Delhi) to issue a B-1 work visa to the Indian national. Processing times for this notice short term single entry currently range from 2-4 weeks.

Under the MOI regulations, short term single entry B-1 visas must be sought at the consulate prior to entry to Israel, as petitions for B-1 visa classification cannot be made by way of change of status.

Fourth Step: Visa Extension in Israel

Following entry into Israel, an application for a new long-term multiple entry B-1 visa stamp for an extended validity period (up to one year) must be processed at the local MOI. This latter step should be completed as soon as the individual arrive to Israel, and prior to any departure.

Any departure from Israel on the basis of the short-term single entry visa, will cancel the applicant's B-1 visa obtained at the consulate in India, and will require reprocessing of the visa at the consulate in India.

B-1 visa: Short Term Expedited Process (STEP)

This process is for work permit applications submitted for Indian nationals seeking to enter Israel for up to 90 days, to perform their duties such as technical work activities. Work permit applications submitted under STEP are not subject to the normal prevailing wage obligations and also enjoy expedited processing.

Both Indian and Israeli companies can sponsor a foreign national under the STEP process. To take advantage of STEP, the Indian national must possess unique knowledge and expertise that is relevant to the proposed activities.

Temporary Visas

Both B-1 work visa and B-2 business visas are classified as temporary visas. While B-1 work visa may be extended for a maximum of 5 years and 3 month, visitor visa can be prolonged in rare situation to 6 month.

Training Visas

There is no dedicated visa category for training assignments. The required visa will be examined in light of the unique characteristics of the proposed training:

- Should the Indian national arrive to Israel to provide training to others; a B-1 visa will be required.
- Should the Indian national arrive to Israel to be trained in passive class room training: B-2 Visitor visa may be in compliance. No pro-active assignments will be permitted (such as: hand on tools, active operation of machines, software installations etc.).
- Should the Indian national arrive to Israel to be trained in an active training (such as: hand on tools, active operation of machines, software installations etc.): a B-1 work visa may be required.

Intra Company Transfer Visas

There is no dedicated visa category for Intra Company Transfer. The B-1 visa (expert category) is suitable for newly recruited employees as well as for Intra Company Transfer.

Visa Waiver for Indians

Indian nationals are not included in the visitor visa waiver program of Israel. As a result, an Indian national must obtain a pre-entry visa prior to any proposed visit in Israel.



Permanent Visa or naturalization

Permanent residency or naturalization if possible where:

1. **The applicant is Jewish or a decedent of Jewish roots** – This right is laid by the Law of Return, which accords any Jew and eligible non-Jews (a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew), the legal right to assisted immigration and settlement in Israel, as well as automatic Israeli citizenship or residency.