



ENTERING BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA WITH CHILDREN

Are you travelling with children to or through South Africa and/or Botswana? Then this information is essential to read and action!

All passengers under 18 entering either South Africa or Botswana must have with them approval from birth parents to be travelling and their original or certified copy of the Unabridged Birth Certificate.

Please explain I hear you say?

A new immigration law came into effect on 1 June 2015 in South Africa and in July 2016 for Botswana.

Under the new laws, all minors under the age of 18 years will be required to produce, in addition to their passport, an Unabridged Birth Certificate (showing the particulars of both parents) when exiting and entering South African ports of entry.

This is being done to curb human trafficking. According to the Department of Home Affairs, 30 000 minors are trafficked through South African borders every year. 50% of these minors are under the age of 14.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your children have the correct documentation or risk being denied boarding. The new law has been enforced by airlines and immigration officials across the board (land, sea and air). Although airlines and travel agents are doing everything to keep passengers informed, ultimately it will be passengers' responsibility to know what is required of them. In all cases an Unabridged Birth Certificate will be required for minors departing and arriving in South Africa ... they will not be allowed to travel without it. In cases where the Unabridged Birth Certificate is in a language other than English, it must be accompanied by a sworn translation issued by a competent authority in the country concerned.

Children travelling with only one birth parent

When a child travels with only one parent, additional documents should include an affidavit in which the absent birth parent gives consent for the child to travel, a court order granting full parental responsibilities or legal guardianship of the child, or the death certificate of the absent parent. The affidavit should be no more than 3 months old from date of travel.



Children travelling without either parent

In the case of a child travelling with a person other than a parent, the Unabridged Birth Certificate must be supplemented by affidavits from the birth parents or legal guardians confirming that the child may travel with that person, copies of the ID documents or passports of the parents or legal guardian, and the contact details of the parents or legal guardian.

Similarly, a child travelling as an unaccompanied minor would have to produce not only the Unabridged Birth Certificate, but also proof of consent from both parents or legal guardians and contact details, plus documentation relating to the person receiving the child in South Africa. The latter documentation should include a letter stating the person's contact details and residential address, contact details where the child will be residing, plus a copy of his or her ID document, passport or residence permit.

Minors travelling in school groups or with their grandparents are not exempt from the requirement.

We urge you to take steps to obtain Unabridged Birth Certificates, and any other documentation required as soon as possible to avoid delays at the airport.

Please contact your specialist should you have any questions or concerns.

The information on this page is a guide to assist people with new South African immigration laws. The information was correct at the time of publishing. Encompass Africa takes no responsibility for any of the information being out of date or incorrectly noted.