

Residency Issues: How Long Can I Stay?

The Embassy has consulted with the Greek Ministries of Interior and Public Order to develop this information. While we have done our best to insure its accuracy, the responsibility for setting immigration policy and procedures lies entirely with the Greek government.

NO VISA REQUIRED FOR VISITS OF 90 DAYS OR LESS

Greece is a member of the Schengen Zone**. A U.S. citizen may remain in any Schengen country (or travel between various Schengen countries) as a tourist for up to 90 days in a six month period, without a visa. Anyone staying in the Schengen zone beyond the 90-day period may be subject to a fine at the time of departure and will be barred from entry into any other Schengen country for 90 days. In Greece, fines for overstaying the three months run from 600 euros to 1,200 euros, depending on the length of time the person has remained here illegally.

At the time of entry into Greece, a stamp must be placed in the passport showing the date and place of entry. If the first port of entry is another Schengen country, even if you are only transiting that country, the entry stamp should be placed in the passport upon entry into that country. Persons who lack port of entry stamps may be fined upon departure from Greece and are not eligible to request an extension of their stay. In addition we recommend that all travelers hold on to their ticket receipts and boarding passes until they leave Greece.

**The Schengen Countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands.

TYPES OF RESIDENCE PERMITS

I. TEMPORARY RESIDENCE PERMITS

Please note that short-term residence permits (valid from 3-6 months) are issued by the Aliens police office in the area of residency of the individual concerned and ONLY if the individual can show evidence that he/she has a compelling reason to prolong his/her stay in Greece. The application must be submitted at least 15 days before the expiration of the original 90-day period. If a temporary residence permit is approved, a stamp will be placed in the applicant's passport. The fee for the short-term residence permit is 464 euros. EXTENSIONS FOR TOURIST PURPOSES ARE NOT GRANTED.

1. A passport bearing the entry stamp into Greece or any European Passport Control Office;
2. Two photocopies of the passport page bearing the entry stamp;
3. Four passport size photographs of the applicant;
4. Proof of sufficient finances (at least 1,375 euros for a three-month extension);
5. Proof of onward destination (open date ticket);
6. Proof of local residence (hotel certification, rent receipt, etc)
7. Proof of the reason as to why they U.S. citizen needs to stay longer.

Any person who has been granted a residence permit allowing for a total stay of at least 6 months may exit and re-enter Greece if he/she has remained in Greece for at least 6 months. Persons who have remained in Greece legally for at least 6 months are allowed to leave and re-enter Greece (or any other Schengen country) as early as the same day. Any person departing after a stay of 90 days, will have to stay out of the Schengen territory for a period of three months before he/she will be permitted to return to any Schengen country. For any questions concerning short-term residence permits you may call the following aliens' bureaus in the prefecture of Attica:

Petrou Ralli 24, Tavros	Tel. 210-3405-804/29
Agiou Orous 15	Tel. 210-6875-176
Karaiskaki 23	Tel. 210-9601-340/1
Iroon Politehniou 37	Tel. 210-4128-607, 210-4174-592

IMPORTANT NOTE: Short-term residence permits provided by local authorities are valid only within Greece. If the Greek authorities deny a U.S. citizen's request for a permit, he/she must depart the country without any other formalities.

A U.S. citizen who wishes to apply for a "one year" residence permit may do so by applying at the City Hall or Community Office of his/her place of residence in Greece at least two months prior to the expiration of his initial extension.

II. "ONE YEAR" RESIDENCE PERMIT

U.S. citizens who do not work, derive support and income from abroad and wish to stay in Greece for one year or more, may apply for the one year permit provided that, before coming to Greece, they obtain a visa from the Greek Consulate or Embassy from their place of residence. Renewal may be granted, provided that the application for renewal is submitted two months prior to the expiration of the initial permit.

The following documents must be submitted at the City Hall or Community Office of the area of residence at least two months before the expiration of the initial legal entry to Greece:

1. Visa from the Greek Consulate or Embassy
2. Copy of passport
3. Two color photographs
4. An approximate fee of 147 euros, paid to the Eforia (national tax office).
5. A certificate issued by an insurance company stating that the U.S. citizen has full medical coverage (for retired U.S. citizens, a certification for their insurance coverage from any U.S. State Fund is acceptable).
6. A health certificate issued by a Greek State Hospital, in accordance with international standards established by the World Health Organization, stating that the U.S. citizen is not suffering from any communicable disease. (The applicant must pay for all tests and examinations).
7. A simple statement in which the applicant gives his full local address.
8. Evidence proving that the applicant has the financial resources to live in Greece, without working (e.g. receipt for pension from abroad, bank statement, etc.)

After the Immigration Committee reviews the application, the applicant will be interviewed. The Secretary General of the Periphery (Region) will determine whether or not a residence permit will be granted.

Bearer of the "one year" residence permit may travel outside of Greece and return without a problem as long as the trip/s takes place within the one- year validity of the permit.

III. RESIDENCE PERMIT BASED ON THE MARRIAGE OF A U.S. CITIZEN TO A GREEK NATIONAL OR A EUROPEAN CITIZEN

A U.S. citizen who is married to a Greek or European citizen may apply for a 5-year residence permit authorizing the applicant to work. If approved, the applicant may apply to have the permit renewed for an additional 5 years.

An application for extension must be made two months prior to the expiration of the initial permit. Applications are submitted to the Municipality or City Hall of the area of residence of the individual concerned. Spouses of Greek citizens must secure a visa from the Greek consulate prior to coming to establish residence in Greece.

IV. RESIDENCE PERMIT FOR STUDIES (student visa)

The entry of a U. S. citizen into Greece for studies in institutes recognized by the Greek government is permitted if he/she obtains a visa for entry from a Greek Embassy or Consulate prior to arrival in Greece. This includes graduate, post-graduate and medical studies. Applicants must submit the following documents to the Greek Consulate:

1. Certification that the U.S. citizen has been accepted by an educational institution in Greece
2. An affidavit verifying that the U.S. citizen has secured funds for the tuition, fees and living expenses in Greece
3. A Passport
4. A police report (clearance) from the United States (contact the local police or sheriff's office in your place of residence in the U.S. for instructions)

Upon arrival in Greece, students must take the documents they received from the Embassy or Consulate in the U.S. and apply for student residence permits at the Municipality Office or City Hall in their area of residence in Greece. They must provide the following documents:

1. Certification of registration with the institute
2. Proof of sufficient funds for the duration of studies
3. A certificate of health issued by a local state hospital, along with proof of state or private insurance coverage for medical and hospital expenses (all expenses for examinations and tests are incurred by the student)
4. A statement providing his/her full local address

If the course of studies will last more than one school year, students must apply for an extension, which can be done two months prior to the expiration of the permit. The student must provide a statement from the institute establishing registration and participation in the school exams.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

U.S. citizens who wish to attend a professional training institute, public or private (I.E.K.), may do so by following the same steps for the issuance of student visas described above. The entry of the alien is permitted if the alien is accepted and a relevant statement of acceptance is granted by the Organization of Professional Education and Training (O.E.E.K.)

CHANGE OF ACADEMIC FIELD

U.S. citizens who have a residence permit for studies funded by the European Union and scholarship holders, may change their academic field or professional training, provided that the overall period of anticipated studies does not exceed the initial request.

The duration of the residence permit granted for studies is one year and may be renewed for the same period of time. Applications for renewal should be submitted two months prior to the expiration of the permit.

U.S. citizens who have been granted residence permits for educational purposes are allowed to work part time, provided that they obtain a part time work permit from the Nomarchy.

V. RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

An American who wishes to operate his/her own business in Greece must prove that he/she has sufficient funds to operate the business and that the business would contribute to the development of the national economy.

The U.S. citizen must submit an application to the Greek Embassy or Consulate having jurisdiction over the area of residence in the United States, along with the following documents:

1. A professionally prepared report indicating the type, amount and source of the investment
2. If the applicant has an ongoing business in the U.S., a recent IRS return
3. Proof of the scientific, technical, or professional qualifications of the applicant
4. A police report (clearance) from the United States (contact the local police or sheriff's office in your place of residence in the U.S. for instructions)

The Greek Consulate will forward the application with the supporting documents to the Aliens and Immigration authorities in Greece in the district where the American intends to settle and operate the business. When permission is approved, it will be forwarded to the Greek Consulate in the U.S., which will notify the individual concerned and provide him/her with a permit to enter Greece for the exercise of an independent financial activity.

When the U.S. citizen arrives in Greece, he/she must provide the following documents to the Municipal or Community Office in his/her place of residence:

1. Proof that he/she can cover his living and business expenses
2. Proof that he/she has full medical insurance coverage valid in Greece
3. Statement providing his/her local address
4. Health certificate issued by a local state hospital stating that he/she is healthy
(The applicant incurs all expenses for any examinations and tests.)

The residence permit is valid for two years and is renewable for another two years. The renewal will be granted provided that the specific financial activity is ongoing, the applicant has fulfilled all tax and insurance obligations, and the application for the renewal is submitted to the Municipal or Community Office in his/her area of residence at least two months prior to the expiration of the permit.

VI. RESIDENCE AND WORK PERMITS FOR PRIVATE FIRMS

Work permits are granted to foreigners who live abroad only in those cases where there are not enough local residents to cover all vacancies.

Every year the Greek Manpower Office (OAED) notifies Greek diplomatic missions and employment agencies abroad about current manpower needs and vacancies that may be filled by foreigners.

The Greek Missions send the names of people who have submitted applications to the Greek Manpower Office (OAED).

Interested prospective employers have to choose the person(s) who best qualifies for the vacant position(s) from the names on the list. The employer is responsible for initiating the procedure to apply for a work permit.

In order for an American citizen to apply at a Greek Consulate for approval to come to Greece and work, the following documents should be submitted:

1. Passport
2. Police report (clearance) from the United States
3. Work permit

When approval has been granted, upon arrival in Greece, the U.S. citizen should apply for a residence permit. The following criteria must be met:

1. Possession of a valid work permit
2. Possession of an employment agreement
3. Proof of medical insurance coverage
4. Confirmation that he/she has secured lodging

5. A statement from a local state hospital that he/she is healthy (The applicant incurs all expenses for all examinations and tests.)

A residence permit for the purpose of employment is valid for one year. It may be renewed annually. The application for renewal must be submitted two months before the expiration of the previous permit. Under new regulations, the alien is permitted to change to another employer while he/she is the bearer of a "work permit". Any change of the employee's status should be reported to the Nomarchy.

ENTRY AND RESIDENCE FOR BOARD MEMBERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND EXECUTIVES

The following individuals are permitted to enter Greece if they have received an entry permit from the Greek Consulate that has jurisdiction over the area of their residence in the United States:

Board members, administrators, and high ranking executives (general managers and directors) of subsidiary companies and branches of foreign companies legally operating in Greece; law 89 companies; technicians

employed by industries; and foreigners from third countries who are employed in companies established in another European country and are attached to those companies' subsidiaries or branches in Greece.

To apply for an entry permit in the one of the above categories, the following documents should be submitted to the Greek Consulate in the applicant's area of residence:

1. Passport
2. Company's statement verifying employment
3. Police report (clearance) from the United States (contact the local police or sheriff's office in your place of residence in the U.S. for instructions)

When the U.S. citizen arrives in Greece he/she should apply at the City Hall or Community Office in the area of his/her residence and provide the following documents:

1. Employment agreement
2. Medical insurance certification
3. Health certificate issued by a state hospital (all expenses are incurred by the applicant)
4. Statement providing applicant's full address

The residence permit issued in this case would be valid for one year and may be renewed for the same period of time indefinitely, provided that the application for renewal is submitted at least two months prior to the expiration of the residence permit.

Family members of American citizens working in Greece under the above category may accompany them. A separate residence permit will be issued for each family member. Those permits will expire at the same time as the one issued to the American working in Greece.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Any alien remaining in Greece for more than 90 days must report to the local competent authority any change concerning his/her residence, family status, lost or renewal of his/her passport or travel document, loss of his/her residence permit, or change of his/her occupation or his employer.

FEES

The fee for the issuance or renewal of a residence permit varies according to the duration of the permit as follows:

1. For duration of one year or less, the fee is approximately 147 euros
2. For duration from one year to two years, the fee is approximately 294 euros
3. For duration from two to six years, the fee is approximately 440 euros
4. For duration over six years, the fee is approximately 880 euros

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