

Work Permits

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from a friend...

I think we have set a record in obtaining our Work Permit...

ONE WEEK!!! Can you believe it??? (And that's with NO "GIFTING"!!!) Immigration called this morning and we were just in Belmopan last Wednesday...

So ~ I wanted to pass along the list of required documents/fees in case anyone else is going thru the same process for self-employment and maybe they can get thru quickly as well... We were told we had everything we needed and then some... I guess that doesn't happen often!!!

1. Write your letter to the local Village Council of your business intent... It helps if you plan on hiring a Belizean(s). A letter from the person(s) you plan on employing to back this up helps as well... It takes a week or two to receive the Council's recommendation... This letter is a MUST!!!
2. While you are waiting for your recommendation letter, apply for your Conduct Report thru the local Police Department - in Placencia, see CPL. Martinez in Independence. You can also apply for this at the Police Department in Belmopan. There is a \$12 BZ charge for this and you will need to bring with you 3 passport photos, your valid passport, a COPY of your passport, driver's license and birth certificate. This process also takes a couple - three weeks.
3. Make sure you keep your Visitor's Visa current... \$50 BZ per month for the first six months, \$100 BZ each month thereafter. If you wish to apply for permanent residency, a self-employment Work Permit makes you eligible to apply within six months of stay rather than one year. In some cases, the six-month wait is waived if you hire local employees and you can apply immediately!!!
4. Get your business name registered in Belmopan... The registration office is located at the Garden City Hotel. There is a \$25 BZ fee for this... If the name is not already taken, you can have your Certificate of Registration within a few hours. There is a catch ~ you cannot obtain a Work Permit in Belize without first registering your business. You cannot, however, register a business unless you are a resident. You cannot become a resident without obtaining a Work Permit... Such is Belize!!! So, bring a local friend that you trust with you to sign along on the registration!!!
5. While you are in Belmopan, head over to Angelus Press to get an Work Permit application form. Why they don't have them right at the Immigration office, I don't know... It will cost you .83 BZ for the copy...

Fill this out at home...

6. When you have your Recommendation Letter and your Conduct Report, gather up the following and head to the Immigration office in Belmopan (The Labour Department is no longer involved in this process):

Valid Passport

COPY of Passport, Driver's License, Birth Certificate

3 Passport Photos

Work Permit Application Form

Business Registration Certificate

Village Council Recommendation Letter

Police Conduct Report (not always required, but just in case...)

\$20 BZ Worth of Postage Stamps (don't ask me to explain...)

Letter of Intent to Hire (locals)

Letter From Your Intended Employee(s)

Bank Statement (local or from your home country or both)

Business Qualifications (Resume', Certifications, etc.)

Letter of Recommendation From Former Employer(s)

Letter With Details of Your Business

Copy of Commercial Lease

If the business is tourism related, you also need a letter of recommendation from the BTB; Agriculturally related requires a land title.

7. Save \$2000 BZ up to pay for your permit when it is approved!!! You do not have to pay this fee until the permit is approved and ready...

If you have all these things, there will be no need for several trips to Belmopan!!! We were told we had everything and then some!!! We were also told it would take about 3 to 4 weeks for processing and it only took ONE WEEK!!!

Oh, yeah ~ Don't be arrogant and pushy, but polite and patient... You get more bees with honey, so to speak... If you act impatient, your application will fall to the bottom of the pile and Immigration will make you wait forever!!! So, don't call every week to check on status, etc. If the 4 weeks comes and you have not received a phone call or an e-mail, THEN you can call to check. Just don't hound them!!!

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