

Introduction

Travel visa scams occur when you are applying for a visa or visa waiver to travel to another country, only to discover that you have entered your details and/or paid money to a non-official site. Please note that there are third-party companies that will process your visa or visa waiver application but may charge more for this service than if you were to use the official Government channels. Using a third-party site can increase the risk of your information becoming exposed if the transfer of information from the company to the visa issuing agency is not secure.

Prevention checklist

How can I avoid a travel visa scam?

- ☐ Check the travel visa requirements using the country's official government website, which can be found through [DFAT](#) or the [NZ MFAT](#). These websites will usually also provide links to the legitimate travel visa or waiver application sites or forms. If in doubt, contact the embassy, consulate or country representative directly.
- ☐ Be wary of websites offering "cheap" or "fast" application processing. Visas and waivers are processed by the issuing government or their contracted service provider, so no external organisation can offer to do this faster or more cheaply than the issuing authority.
- ☐ Most visa or waiver application sites operated by the country you wish to travel to will end in .gov or .go
- ☐ Before travel, give yourself plenty of time to research visa requirements and make the application. Many callers to IDCARE were under time pressure when they made their applications to fraudulent sites.

Detection checklist

How do I know if I've engaged with a travel visa scam?

- ☐ The visa or waiver approval does not arrive.
- ☐ The organisation requires additional payment after you submit your application.
- ☐ The organisation cannot be reached via the website, email address or other online contact details.
- ☐ The website no longer exists and/or their email address is no longer active.

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Response checklist

- ☐ If you provided your credit card details, contact your financial institution to advise them of the fraudulent payment, request additional security on your card, and seek advice regarding cancelling the card.
- ☐ There is a risk that your passport may be used fraudulently for identification purposes. You may wish to cancel your passport to reduce the risk (Australian passports contact [DFAT](#) on 131 232, for NZ passports contact [DIA](#) on 0800 22 50 50). If you do not wish to cancel your passport, IDCARE recommends that you:
 - ☐ Contact both [Credit Reporting Agencies](#) for your free credit reports and to arrange credit bans.
 - ☐ Contact any other organisations that you have used your passport to confirm your identity. Inform them of the compromise and request extra security on these accounts.
- ☐ Report the scam – you may not hear back from the agencies, but you will be assisting in raising awareness and reducing the harm caused by these scams to your community.
 - ☐ In Australia report to [ReportCyber](#) and the [ACCC](#)
 - ☐ In New Zealand, report to police [online](#) and choose “Report a Police non-emergency”, and to [NetSafe](#)
- ☐ If you are concerned that the company you have engaged to process your visa or waiver may not be legitimate, contact the embassy directly to confirm if your application has been received.

For additional support or information, contact IDCARE:

Submit [Get Help Form](#) | 1800 595 160 (Aus) | 0800 121 068 (NZ)

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