

Mobility: Immigration alert

April 2023



Brazil

New visa-free policy for seafarers

Executive summary

Effective 1 May 2023, crew members of international (i.e., non-Brazilian) vessels will no longer be allowed to enter Brazil using a Seafarers' Identity Document issued pursuant to Convention 108 of the International Labour Organization (SID C-108). They will only be allowed to enter using a SID issued pursuant to Convention 185 (SID C-185).

Background

Member States of the ILO ratified Convention 108 in 1958, introducing the concept of a universal identification system for seafarers and the first Seafarers' Identity Document, SID C-108. In June 2003, ILO Member States ratified Convention 185, which introduced Seafarers' Identity Document SID C-185. Holders of SID C-108 and SID C-185 may be admissible to ILO Member States without a visa.

In December 2020, Brazil introduced a concession for SID C-108 holders working on non-Brazilian vessels, which allows them to enter the country without a visa for up to 180 days in any migratory year (i.e., a 2-month period starting from the individual's date of first entry into the country).

Key developments

Effective 1 May 2023, the following changes will go into effect:

- SID C-108 holders who are not otherwise visa-exempt based on their nationality may no longer enter Brazil without first obtaining a Brazilian visa.

- SID C-185 holders will be able to enter Brazil without a visa for up to:
 - 90 days in a migratory year (starting from the date of their first entry) when working on non-Brazilian maritime support ships and/or platforms
 - 180 days in a migratory year (starting from the date of their first entry) when working on non-Brazilian long-trip ships and/or cruises

To be eligible for these visa exemptions, individuals must hold a SID C-185 issued by their country of citizenship or residence. Holders of SID C-185 issued by their vessel's flag state (i.e., the country where the vessel is registered), or who seek to remain in Brazil beyond the permitted 90- or 180-day period, will not be eligible for the exemption.

Foreign nationals who are working on a Brazilian vessel will be required to obtain a Temporary Visa, regardless of whether they hold a SID C-185 and the duration for which they remain in Brazil.

Impact on employers

Employers that hire impacted maritime professionals may ensure that these individuals hold the appropriate SID C-185 to mitigate potential issues with their entry into Brazil.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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