



Instructions for Processing Russian Visas



Home Office:
11780 Borman Drive,
St. Louis, MO 63146
Tel: (314) 890-0086 Fax: (314) 427-4288

Revised: December 1, 2007

NEW PROCEDURES FOR RUSSIA TRAVEL

On November 1st, 2007, Children's Hope International was notified the Ministry of Education will no longer prepare the "Invitation Letter for Adoption Visas".

Effective immediately:

When CHI is notified of the family's travel date, your CHI Adoption Consultant will contact you. You will be responsible to apply for your visas through the designated travel agency. The travel agency will process your visa and invitation letter. Instructions on how to complete the visa form will be emailed to you by the St. Louis Russia Travel Coordinator.

This brochure will help you in filing for the visas and flight process.

In order to provide a reasonable and fair solution to families already in process:

- CHI families now in process with an approved application on file, will be given a \$600 reduction in their final fee. This \$600 was reserved for the visa fee.
- CHI families that have traveled once to Russia, will receive a \$300 fee reduction in their final fee.
- CHI will provide to every family in process, a brochure with the visa application form, a sample on how to complete the form, a payment authorization form, and contact information.
- This information will be included in the Russia Travel Guide for new families and they will not receive a \$600 reduction in their final fee.

If you have any questions, please contact your CHI Adoption Consultant in the St. Louis Office.

FIRST TRIP OR REFERRAL TRIP

It is important that you do not leave the US until everything is approved and ready in Russia.

For married couples, at least one parent must travel to see their child and must have a signed, Notarized and Apostiled Parent Power of Attorney from the spouse who is NOT traveling. Again, ***Children's Hope International does not recommend only one spouse travel for the first trip*** unless absolutely necessary. (The Parent's Power of Attorney form can be found in the Appendix.)

A Travel email will be sent to you prior to your departure with our regional representative's names and the emergency numbers you will need during your stay.

HOW TO OBTAIN YOUR VISA

When we hear from our Coordinator in Russia that you are invited for your travel or a court date has been set, we will notify you immediately. *There is usually 1 or 2 weeks notice before your travel or confirmed court date.* The St. Louis/CHI Russian Travel Coordinator will immediately email the family all the necessary information to apply for their visa.

Make sure your passport is in order and the expiration date on the passport is at least 6 months beyond your visit and with two blank visa pages left.

The Agency that we recommend at this time is: **GO TO RUSSIA Travel**, located at 309 Peters Street, Unit A, Atlanta, GA 30313 Phone: 1-800-263-0023 or 404-827-0099 Fax: 404-827-0435 Website: <http://www.gotorussia.net> .

Families will be responsible to send the following items to GO TO RUSSIA Travel directly:

1. visa applications
2. visa photos
3. passports
4. form of payment or authorization for payment
5. and the instruction form from CHI (will be sent in an email)

If CHI had the family's passport and visa applications in our office, and you requested CHI to send them directly to GO TO RUSSIA Travel, you will be notified this has been completed, and you will only have to send your payment and instruction form to them.

For your convenience, GO TO RUSSIA Travel can assist you with the purchase of airline tickets to Russia.

From The GO TO RUSSIA WEBSITE

RUSSIAN VISA

- If you wish, you can fill out all necessary forms electronically and apply for your Russian visa ONLINE at: https://www.gotorussia.net/visa/russian_visa_online.htm (you will still need to mail your actual passport).

- If you wish to print necessary visa forms, fill them out and apply for your Russian visa by mail, please download the forms on line.

A sample visa application form is in the appendix of this booklet along with a copy of a visa application form. Please make as many copies as needed.

RUSSIAN VISA PROCESSING TIMES AND FEES
(official invitation included)

Please refer to Go TO Russia Website for current fees.

Visa type & Validity	TOTAL VISA PROCESSING TIME <u>(business days)</u>						
	19 days	14 days	8 days	5 days	4 days	3 days	2 days
BUSINESS VISAS (valid for 30 and 90 days)							
Single Entry (30 day)				-			*
Double Entry (30 day)				-			*
Single Entry (90 day)				-			*
Double Entry (90 day)				-			*

*It maybe possible for 2 day service, please contact GO TO RUSSIA directly, as soon as possible. The fee will be approximately \$100 higher than 3 days, respectively.

Please refer to the GO TO RUSSIA website for the cost of TOURISTS VISAS for travel companions.

All of the following documents must be received by GTR office before processing your visa to Russia. These requirements apply to citizens of all countries with the exception of immigrants from Russia and the Soviet Union. Former Russian and Soviet citizens should call our office for further details.

RUSSIAN VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- **Instruction form** from the CHI/St. Louis Russia Travel Coordinator
- **Your actual passport** with at least 2 blank visa-designated pages. Passport must be valid for at least 6 months after intended departure from Russia
- One passport-size **photograph**
- **US citizens:** One copy of the Russian visa application form, completed and signed
- **Non-US citizens:** Two copies of the Russian visa application form, completed and signed
- **Payment:** A company or personal check or money order made payable to "GO TO RUSSIA Travel" (see table for amounts). To pay for your Russian visa by credit card, please download the credit card authorization form. Include the form in the package that you mail to GO TO RUSSIA.

Children apply for separate visas if they travel on their own passports. Non-traveling parents must confirm in an affidavit their consent for their children's travel. If the child's surname differs from that of his (her) parents, a copy of the child's birth certificate must be enclosed.

SERVICE AND PRICE GUARANTEE

GO TO RUSSIA charges ONE ALL-INCLUSIVE RATE for your visa processing. No separate overnight mail fee or check-writing or any other fee will be added. We are the leader in processing visas to Russia and CIS countries and guarantee our services. **Our fees already include** official mandatory *invitation* from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Interior or a necessary *tourist voucher or invitation, consular fee, one overnight FedEx delivery to the Consulate or Consulate courier service* and *our service fee*. We let you choose your return shipping method, as it is **not included** in our fee.

Although we guarantee our services, there are circumstances which we cannot control. We are not responsible for stolen visas or those lost or damaged in the mail by FedEx or similar overnight service. We cannot guarantee that a visa will be issued as the Consulate may refuse to grant entry/exit visa for any reason. Your Consular fees are reimbursable only if you are denied an entry visa and the Consulate has offered to refund their fee. Otherwise, such fees are non-refundable and subject to change without notice.

Please note that we start processing on the day we receive your complete paperwork. Please note that return shipping cost and time is determined by you and needs to be added to your fee and you need to allow for the return delivery of your visa to your home by adding 1 or 2 days depending on your selection of shipping method.

Be aware that Consulates are closed for all U.S. and their National holidays. Please call us for information on specific country's National holidays.

VISA RETURN SHIPPING FEES (please refer to website for current express fees)

Second day Fedex - \$13
Standard Overnight - \$15
Priority Overnight - \$20
Saturday delivery - \$35

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS: Please mail your Russian visa paperwork:

1. visa applications
2. visa photos
3. passports
4. form of payment or authorization for payment
5. and the instruction form from CHI (will be sent in an email)

By overnight mail (recommended) to this address:

GTR TRAVEL

Visa Department
309 Peters St. Unit A,
Atlanta, Georgia 30313
Phone: (404) 827-0099

We accept and sign for all mail deliveries Monday-Saturday. Your package needs to get to our office by 3:30pm to be processed on the same day

Flights

Your CHI Adoption Consultant will contact the family about your travel dates (date you need to arrive and date you can depart from Russia). We encourage families to access our website at www.childrenshope.net/travel for specific guidelines on making your travel arrangements. There are 3 guidelines that must be adhered to:

- Tickets must be purchased for the specific travel dates that are given by CHI (**unless you have written approval from the St. Louis CHI office to alter these dates**). This is due to the fact that visas must be valid for the dates that you are in-country. Any deviation from this and you could be prevented from entering or leaving the country.
- Tickets must be changeable or refundable. If you do not purchase changeable or refundable tickets and then changes need to be made, many airlines will require that you purchase a whole new ticket.
- ***We estimate travel time based on past family experiences. If changes are made based on unforeseen circumstances or the family chooses to make flight changes, Children's Hope International cannot be held accountable for the cost of these changes. Typically, the penalty costs are minimal for changeable tickets, but are incurred every time a change is made in the reservation.***
- Send a complete copy of your itinerary to your St. Louis CHI consultant within 2-3 business days. We need a complete copy of your itinerary as soon as your travel is confirmed in order to relay this information to the Moscow office so they will know of your arrival and be able to make your hotel reservations.

*Because of current airline regulations, it is difficult for our staff to make changes to your international tickets. The airlines will only allow the purchaser to make changes. Therefore, we advise that you bring the phone number for your airline's contact office in Moscow in case you need to make any changes to your tickets.

If for any reason there are plane delays, it is necessary to work with the airlines to make the proper connections. Please notify the CHI staff once you have your new connection information.

VISA REGISTRATION IN RUSSIA

According to Russian immigration law (as of January 15, 2007), you must notify the Federal Migration Service (MFS) about your arrival to the Russian Federation within 3 business days upon your arrival to the country. If you are staying at a hotel, the hotel staff will handle this procedure for you.

A visa is only good for the period it is issued for and cannot be extended while in Russia. In case of an emergency, if you cannot leave by the visa expiration date, please call our Moscow office as soon as possible. Please make sure to fill out Migration Card which will be given to you by customs officials as you cross the Russian border, and carry it with you at all times.

If you are NOT staying at a hotel, in Moscow you need to bring your passport with the visa and Migration Card to **Go To Russia** Moscow office: 24/6 Bolshoy Sergievskiy Pereulok, 107045 Moscow, Russia; metro stop "Chistye Prudy" or "Sukharevskaya." Ph. 495-739-5681, 495-225-5012, Fax: 495-624-7637. M-F 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Our staff completes the required formalities for you in 24 hours; the cost of the service is \$40 for visas valid for 1-3 months and \$100 for longer-term visas. Business multiple-entry visas are registered for up to 6 months at a time, and it may take more than 24 hours to complete the requirements with business visas – please contact our local office for details.

FINAL TRAVEL DETAILS

Our Coordinators in Russia will arrange your ground travel details within the country. We will make all the arrangements for your travel from Moscow to the orphanage city and back to Moscow. We will notify the Russia staff of your arrival time. They will meet you upon arrival and help you with your travel details if needed. Your return flight date will be based on the **estimated** time within country. Be prepared that this may need to be altered if the paperwork, court proceedings, etc. change or take shorter/longer than expected.

Children's Hope International has no control over bureaucratic decisions or changes made by the adoption and government officials in Russia. We are committed to working efficiently to complete the work necessary for all families in Russia. Scheduling for return to the US is based on an approximation of time needed to complete all legalities. You should expect to spend some additional amount of time in Russia and arrange your affairs accordingly.

We will keep a complete copy of your flight itinerary so our representatives can meet you when you arrive in Moscow and in the region. **However, if arrangements change for any reason, (plane delays, etc.) we must be notified immediately to get word to our representatives.**

IF YOUR PASSPORT OR VISA IS LOST OR STOLEN

Please carry photocopies of your passport and visa. Put these in different places, for example, one in a suitcase, one in a carry-on and one left with your emergency contact person in the U.S.

We will also have a copy here in our office, if needed.

For a passport - Immediately apply for a replacement at a US Embassy or Consulate.

For a Visa - You must have a valid passport to apply for a new/replacement visa. If you lost only your visa, you will need a replacement visa. If you lost both your visa and passport, and you have to get a passport to replace the lost one, you will have to apply for a new visa.

See VISA REGISTRATION IN RUSSIA: According to Russian immigration law (as of January 15, 2007), you must notify the Federal Migration Service (MFS) about your arrival to the Russian Federation within 3 business days upon your arrival to the country. If you are staying at a hotel, the hotel staff will handle this procedure for you.

Please be advised that **each** time you check into a hotel in both the region and in Moscow, the hotel staff will request your Passport and Visa to keep at the desk, sometimes until the next day so that they can register your family in the region. This is requirement by Russian law and there is no need to worry about walking around without your passport and visa. The hotel concierge will return it to you promptly. **DO NOT FORGET TO GET YOUR VISA AND PASSPORT FROM THE HOTEL DESK BEFORE LEAVING!!**

Changes in Itinerary!!!

CHI has no control over bureaucratic decisions or changes made by the adoption and government officials in Russia. We are committed to working efficiently to complete the work necessary for all families in Russia. **Scheduling for return to the US is based on an approximation of time needed to complete all legalities. You should expect to spend the additional amount of time in Russia and arrange your affairs accordingly. CHI is not financially responsible for any schedule changes.**

SECOND TRIP OR OFFICIAL COURT DATE

All families are anxious to know when they will be returning for their next trip. Please be advised that if any information is given to you in Russia during your first trip, it is considered "unofficial" until you receive word from either your branch office or the St. Louis office after arriving back to the United States. Sometimes the person giving out the information is just giving their best guess and much paperwork needs to happen before a court date is officially set.

Typically, within 3 months of your first travel (depending on the Region), the court hearing is set and you are invited back to complete the adoption. The family will receive a **second travel e-mail** with information as well as the amount of their final fees. ***Please be advised that you will need to send the final fee at least two weeks prior to travel in order to complete the adoption process.*** Both parents must travel to receive their child and be present for the court date. After the adoption hearing, one parent can leave early, but we highly recommend both parents to remain in Russia to complete the visa processing at the American Embassy in Moscow.

HOW TO OBTAIN YOUR VISA and FLIGHTS

Please refer to the information previously discussed in this booklet.

If your visa from the first trip is no longer valid, you will need to apply for another visa.

As soon as we have the notification from Russia for the family to travel, your St. Louis CHI consultant will call the family with the necessary information. We will then email the required travel dates and the necessary information to apply for your visa and make flight arrangements.

ADOPTED CHILD'S TICKET BACK TO THE US

- You must purchase an international flight ticket for your child, even if you do not purchase a seat for the child. You will not be able to board the plane with your child, without a ticket for him/her.
- In order to purchase your child's ticket, it must be purchased either through a travel agency or directly from the airline because it is a one-way ticket. You are unable to purchase this ticket on-line. Some families choose to purchase their tickets online and then call directly to the airline to purchase the additional ticket for the child.
- If you are returning to the US with a layover in another country, you will not be able to leave that airport. Please be aware that your child is traveling on a Russian passport. You will have to apply for a visa from that particular country's Embassy in Russia to leave the airport or even on a longer layover.