

Ecuador Tourist Visa Renewal in Guayaquil

June 15, 2009 with additional notes from October 30, 2009

Background: Three different cruisers who have entered Ecuador on a normal yacht entry, and got stamped with the normal 90-day tourist visa (called a T-3 visa in the local lingo) were able to get a 3 or 6-month (12-X or 12-IX) extension to their stay in Guayaquil. Here's how they did it.

Start the process about 7-10 days before your initial entry visa expires. DO NOT wait til AFTER it expires—you will pay a \$200 fine, and MAY not be issued the extension. The visa process may take several days. If your existing visa expires *during* the process, you may still be assessed the \$200 per person fine, plus have to pay the visa fee.

If you have all the paperwork together, it takes one day to submit the paperwork, and then you leave your passport and return in 1-2 days to get the passport with the new visa in it.

Go to the government building in Guayaquil, called "Gobierno del Litoral" (government of the coast). The address is Cdla Kennedy Norte, Av Francisco de Orellana and Justino Cornejo. This is next to the Hotel Hilton Colon, which most taxi drivers should know. It is not far from the bus station in Guayaquil (about a \$2-\$3 taxi ride).

The paperwork you will need to take with you is:

- a) A completed Visa Request Form
- b) 2 passport-sized photos on white background
- c) A copy of your passport picture page, notarized as a certified copy
- d) A copy of your stamped passport Ecuadorian visa page, notarized as a certified copy.



- e) A financial statement showing that you have the funds to cover your expenses for the duration of the stay. (see notes below for acceptable form)
- f) A letter of request IN SPANISH for a visa renewal, explaining why you need / want to stay longer in Ecuador. (Travel and 'boat repairs' are both valid reasons). Do as good a job as possible with the translation (use translate.google.com, but try to get a native Spanish speaker to review your letter). Soggy Paws has put the text of their letter at the end of this document.

- g) An “official” sized manila folder with a two-hole binder clip to hold the pages that you submit.
- h) \$230 in cash (for the 12-IX 6 month) or \$90 (for the 12-X 3 month). See note 5 below about a ‘family discount’.

Notes on the Paperwork:

- 1) To get the photo page of your passport and your Ecuador visa stamp page ‘certified’, get 2 copies made (I used color, but not sure if that is required), and take them to a ‘notaria’. I used a notaria in Salinas. The notaria keeps one copy of each thing they certify for their files. The other copy is submitted with the application. **Oct 2009 from Soggy Paws:** There is a notary also in the Millenia Mall. However, he was out of the office the day we were there. And it ended up that it was NOT required that we have any of our copies notarized. We were in a rush, could not find a notary, and went in without it notarized.
- 2) Visa Request Form. “Formulario de Solicitud de Visa de No Imigrante”. This is available to download online as a PDF file. It is in Spanish and English and is not difficult to fill out.
http://www.mmrree.gov.ec/servicios/solicitud_visas.pdf
- 3) The ‘financial wherewithal’ requirement... one cruiser used a copy of a statement from a bank account that had \$5,000 in it. Another cruiser had a bank account with only \$1700, and a copy of the Social Security monthly statement showing income. An immigration lawyer in Quito told us that all they need is a copy of a credit card (with a few numbers blanked out for security). Soggy Paws used a copy of a retirement paycheck and a bank statement.
- 4) We got passport photos, manila folders with clips, and copies in the Millennium Gallery, which is a mall across the street from the government building. There IS a notary upstairs, but the notary was not in when we went there (best to try to do all this ahead of time).
- 5) The cost of the 12-IX visa is reduced for additional family members (\$200 first, \$50 each additional). For a wife to qualify, you have to have an ORIGINAL of your marriage license and get 2 copies made, with the copy certified by the notaria. We had a copy, not certified (and no original), and ended up paying the full \$200 for the spouse. For children, it is the same, but you need an ORIGINAL of the birth certificate.
- 6) Nobody in this process speaks English, so you need to be able to converse somewhat in Spanish to do this yourself. (one cruiser was moderately fluent in Spanish, the other took someone else with him who was).

The Process

The visa office opens at 8:30am, but it is best to get there earlier than that to get first in line. The internet page says they are open 5 days a week from 8:30 til 2 and 2:30 to 5pm. But the sign at Reception says Mon, Wed, Friday, from 8:30 til 1pm. Soggy Paws: The reduced hours SEEMS to be when they are ‘taking applications’, as we were able, with a note from the lady who took our application, to come back at 4:30 to pick up our completed visa.

When you get to the Gobierno del Litoral building, enter the small lobby through the far left side entrance and go to the Reception Desk in that small lobby. To get a visitor's pass, you will need to exchange a picture ID, which you will get back when you return your visitor pass (your US driver's license works well, we have also used our laminated copies of passports for this in the past).

At 8:30am they will allow you into the Main Lobby. Go up the stairs on the right, to "Subsecretaria de Relaciones Exteriores" At the end of that lobby is a reception desk. Take a number, and wait for your number to be called (Soggy Paws waited about 20-30 minutes). Then go thru the door, down the hall to the first door on your right (about 20 feet).

They will look over your paperwork and if everything is in order, they will give you a payment voucher and send you to a bank across town to make your payment (\$200 + 30 processing fee for the 12-IX visa). When you return, they will complete the process.

The Bank: Once they've finished accepting your paperwork, they will give you 2 receipts, one for the visa fee and one for the processing fee, and a written address for the bank. You will need to take a taxi to the bank. The bank is "Banco de Fomento" on Panama y Roga, near the Malecon in Guayaquil. (note there are other branches of Banco de Fomento where you can also make a payment, Soggy Paws' taxi took us to one that was much closer than the main bank downtown). Taxi should cost around \$2-3. We negotiated with our taxi to wait for us at the bank and take us back to the govt building for \$5.

You go in the door of the bank, show your receipts to the bank guard, and he will direct you to the proper place to pay them. The payment is in cash, but there IS an ATM machine in the bank lobby. They will stamp your two receipts with a 'paid' stamp. You take these back to the application office.

Finishing Up: Take your 'paid' receipts back to the Subsecretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, and give them your passport(s).

They will keep your passport and tell you to return 1-2 days later to retrieve your passport. They have never (yet) completed the process 'same day'. The paperwork must be reviewed and approved by a senior official, who only does this once a day in the late afternoon.

The final result will be a new visa stamp in your passport, and a copy of your original 'Formulario de Solicitud de Visa de No Inmigración' with your picture and a seal on it.

Registering Your Visa and Getting an ID Card

Whether you receive your visa outside the country, or inside the country, you MUST register it within 30 days of arrival (obtained outside Ecuador) or receipt (obtained inside Ecuador). Failure to do this last step can result in a \$200 fine. Each passport holder must appear in person

Here is what we needed to complete this process:

- One copy of the picture page of each passport
- One copy of the Extension stamp page of each passport
- One copy of the last Entrance stamp page of each passport

- One “sobre manilla” per applicant/family, which turned out to be an 8 ½ x 11 manila envelope
- \$4 per passport

We (Soggy Paws) actually tried to do this registration twice), and the first time the guy we talked to told us that we also needed copies of our financial documents. And he also mentioned ‘notaria’, but we weren’t sure what exactly it was he wanted notarized. When we tried again later, we didn’t need the notaria and didn’t need to give him the financial copies.

In Guayaquil, the place to do so is the Immigration building catty-cornered to the left of the end of the Guayaquil bus station where the taxis are. It is in walking distance of the taxi end of the bus station, but it would be MUCH SAFER to take a taxi for a dollar (or less). You have to cross about 8 lanes of traffic.

There is an imposing big gate at the entrance, but we just waved our manilla envelope at them and they let us in through the pedestrian entrance.

When you walk in the front door, note that immediately to the left of you there is a girl who is running a small office supply depot... here you could get the manilla envelope and copies, and ‘plastificado’ of your ID card. Where you are headed, though, is the ‘Censos’ desk, in the back. There didn’t seem to be a number system, just bug the guy(s) doing the registration and he points to who is last in line before you.

Here, they take your paperwork, enter some stuff in the computer, take your picture, take \$4 cash, and hand you a non-plasticized ID card. The process takes about 10 minutes per person, and we had about a 20 minute wait in line for our turn. They keep the original of your visa, along with the other copies, and your envelope, and you keep the copy of your visa, your passport, and get an ID card.

Getting your Visa Elsewhere Besides Guayaquil

According to the internet, it also seems possible to do this in Cuenca, and I am sure it is possible in Quito. I think the Quito address for the **MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES** is Av.10 de Agosto y Carrión. The Cuenca information can be found here: http://www.mmrree.gov.ec/mre/documentos/ministerio/dr_cuenca.htm. It may also be possible in Manta, but we have no confirmation of that.

Soggy Paws’ Request Letter

Estimado Señor,

Nos gustaría obtener un visa para permanecer 6 meses más en el Ecuador, porque estamos haciendo reparaciones a nuestro velero en Puerto Lucía Yacht Club en La Libertad. Nos gustaría tener más tiempo para visitar también el Ecuador y las Islas Galápagos cuando termine la reparación de nuestro velero.

Muchas gracias,

Capitán David P. McCampbell y Cheryl G. McCampbell
Velero Soggy Paws

A special thanks to David on Magic Carpet Ride, who first figured this out in Guayaquil, and Bill on Bruja del Mar, who documented the process, and Sherry on Soggy Paws who added additional information and typed it up so it could be circulated.

If anyone has updates or additions to this process, please feel free to email them to Sherry at: sherry@svsoggypaws.com , and I will try to incorporate them and post another update.

Soggy Paws is leaving for the Pacific in Feb 2009, if you'd like to volunteer to take over updating this document after that, for future cruisers, let me know, and I'll send you the 'doc' file!

*Sherry s/v Soggy Paws
November 2009*