



Abogados & Notarios

PERPETUAL TOURIST

THE PERMANENT TOURIST: A VIOLATION TO THE COSTA RICA IMMIGRATION LAW – COSTA RICA IMMIGRATION SERVICES – COSTA RICA IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS .-

Upon their arrival to Costa Rican soil, foreign citizens are granted a non-resident visa, which allows them to enter Costa Rica and stay as a tourist or business person. This permit is for certain time, which is never longer than 90 days, and is not a temporary residency nor a working permit. For said purposes, the corresponding status must be requested.

In the last few years, due to changes in immigration policies and the enactment of the new Immigration Law (law number 8764) and its by-laws, more controls have been established and implemented. For a long time already, many foreign nationals stay in Costa Rica for a shorter period than the time granted in their tourist visas, exit the country for a few days, and then come back, all as a way to “legalize” their stay in Costa Rica without actually initiating an application to obtain a legal status. Under that method, they live in Costa Rica, purchase properties and vehicles, and even start businesses, but still as tourists. This condition is known as the “*permanent tourist*” and is considered illegal under Costa Rican Immigration Law.

The “*permanent tourist*” assumes the risk of being denied access to Costa Rica if detected by our Immigration authorities when attempting to cross a border back into Costa Rica or at the airport. Our authorities may also decide to allow these individuals to enter Costa Rica, but for a shorter time than usual. Likewise, if it is detected that the “*permanent tourist*” is actually working in Costa Rica under this status, the risk of deportation by the Immigration Police is high.

Since controls have gotten stricter, we have assisted several clients facing deportation processes for not having initiated an application for their legal residency and staying in Costa Rica as “*permanent tourists*”. Said situation, besides being considerably serious due to the risk of being detained and deported, also poses the risk of not being allowed into Costa Rica for the next five to ten years, which may also jeopardize the investments and interests that these individuals have in Costa Rica. As a consequence of the above, it is very important for all foreign citizens who have the intention of residing in Costa Rica to initiate the immigration application that best suits their needs for a legal status to stay in the country. This way unwanted and unpleasant situations are avoided, and your patrimony and interests remain protected.

If you should need further information or assistance on these matters, do not hesitate to contact us at: info@costarica-law.com.