

United Kingdom Visa Information

This document is intended to provide travelers outside of the United Kingdom (UK) with information regarding the UK visa process to enable you and members of your district to effectively plan travel to the UK to attend the 2009 Rotary International Convention in Birmingham, England, UK.

Who Requires a Visa?

To determine if your country of residence requires a nonimmigrant visa for entry into the UK, please visit <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk>.

The visa process typically includes an application process in addition to a personal interview at the nearest UK embassy or consulate and may also include additional security clearance after the personal interview.

Citizens of countries that belong to the European Economic Area (EEA), and several other countries including (among others) Japan, the United States, Canada and Australia, do not require a visa for entry. Citizens of the aforementioned countries are permitted to travel to the UK for tourism or business for six months or less without obtaining a visa, provided the traveler has a valid, government-issued passport (or a National Identity Card if you are citizen of the EEA). Those travelers that do not have a valid government-issued passport or National Identity Card must obtain a nonimmigrant visa. For additional information on visiting the UK visit <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/visitingtheuk/>.

Advance Travel Planning

Advance travel planning is critical to ensure you have done everything possible to obtain a UK tourist visa to attend the 2009 RI Convention. Registrants need to consider *the entire process* that begins with registering for the convention with Rotary International through the visa interview. The entire process can take approximately four (4) months. By following the steps below, you will ensure that you have allotted a sufficient amount of time for a visa application to be processed for the 2009 RI Convention.

Step 1 – Register for the convention through RI Registration Services. After your registration is processed, RI Registration Services will e-mail a confirmation packet to the main registrant which will include the registration confirmation and letter of invitation for the visa interview. Depending on your method and date of registration, it will take 2-5 weeks for you to receive the e-mailed confirmation packet from the date we receive your registration. The confirmation packet will include your letter of invitation in Adobe Acrobat PDF format.

Step 2 – Research procedures for obtaining a visa by locating the nearest UK embassy to your country of residence. The following site, <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029395231>, provides links to all the UK embassies throughout the world. Submit your application in good time, but not normally more than three months before your date of travel.

Step 3 – Follow the UK embassy's instructions and apply for a visa. Many countries will require a personal interview as part of the visa application process.

Step 4 – Gather the required documentation for your personal interview with the visa consular, including registration confirmation, hotel confirmation, letter of invitation, and proof that you can support yourself during your stay in the UK and have "strong ties" to your country of residence.

Step 5 – Arrive on time to the visa interview with all required documentation. It is your responsibility to provide the UK with any and all documentation that may facilitate the visa process and you are responsible for all fees and expenses associated with obtaining a visa.

Visa Application Timeline

1 July – 30 November 2009 – Register for the 2009 RI Convention with Rotary International either through Member Access with credit card payment or by fax or post - download a form at www.rotary.org .	1 January 2009 – If you registered on or before 30 November, you should have received your e-mailed confirmation packet by this date. Contact RI Registration Services at ri.registration@rotary.org if you have not received your e-mailed confirmation packet.	15 February 2009 – Apply for UK visa on or after this date.	21 June 2009 – Deadline for RI Registration Services to receive written cancellation and refund request if the visa is denied. Contact RI Registration Services at ri.registration@rotary.org to submit your registration cancellation.
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What Should I Expect at the Interview with the Visa Consular?

Requirements for personal interviews vary by embassy/consulate. As a visa applicant, you must prove to the consular officer that you will not immigrate to the United Kingdom and that you do not intend to stay longer than six months. You must provide the necessary supporting documentation, including proof that you will be able to support yourself during your stay and pay for the trip, without any help from public funds. In addition, a finger scan, a full-face digital photo, and possibly additional security clearance may be required. Remember that the visa consular has sole discretion in determining who will receive a visa. You should be confident and honest in your answers, and you should also be prepared to answer questions about Rotary and the Convention.

IMPORTANT! Review the requirements that the UK embassy requires for your country of residence and bring any and all documentation that would support your request for a visa with you to the interview.

What Do Visa Denials Mean?

According to www.ukvisas.gov.uk, "Seven out of eight applicants worldwide receive the visa they apply for." If you are denied a visa, the UK embassy will send you a written notification explaining why you were denied. Most denials do not include the option to appeal. If your denial includes an option to appeal, you will be able to find information about the appeals process at: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1018721068442>.

If you are unable to obtain a visa, send your cancellation and refund request directly to RI Registration Services at ri.registration@rotary.org or fax: +1-847-866-3064 by the 21 June 2009 deadline date. Refer to the registration cancellation policy of the registration and event ticket order form for the complete cancellation policy.

To cancel your hotel reservations or host event tickets, follow the cancellation policies as indicated on the respective forms.

What Can Rotary International Do For Attendees That Require a Visa?

Encourage early registration!! Rotary International's involvement in the visa process is limited to providing the e-mailed registration confirmation packet that includes the registration confirmation and letter of invitation and providing the United Kingdom Embassies with a list of convention registrants on a monthly basis. The visa consular has sole discretion in reviewing and determining who receives a visa for entry into the UK.