

New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA) requirements

Information for cargo vessel owners, their representatives and shipping agents

From 1 April 2025, crew and passengers on cargo vessels that travel to New Zealand from overseas must hold a New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA).

WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORITY (NZeTA)?

An NZeTA is an authorisation that allows a person to travel to New Zealand without having to obtain a visa. NZeTAs allow Immigration New Zealand to conduct checks in advance to ensure people coming to New Zealand are eligible to travel to and enter the country. There are different types of NZeTA for passengers and crew members.

WHO NEEDS AN ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORITY (NZeTA) WHEN TRAVELLING ON A CARGO VESSEL?

From 1 April 2025, all crew members and passengers travelling to New Zealand on a cargo vessel will require an NZeTA unless:

- They hold a valid New Zealand or Australian passport; or
- They hold a valid New Zealand visa of any type

WHAT TYPE OF VESSELS ARE COVERED BY THESE REQUIREMENTS?

The requirements apply to crew and passengers on cargo vessels. Cargo vessels are considered to be commercial vessels that carry primarily cargo between a foreign port and New Zealand.

The requirements also apply to crew on any foreign vessel that is coming to New Zealand to carry coastal cargo (and has been authorised to do).

Vessel types that do not meet the definition of a cargo vessel include fishing vessels, research vessels, tugboats and recreational vessels. Crew and passengers on these vessels are subject to different immigration requirements.

For further advice on whether a vessel can be considered a cargo vessel and whether ETA requirements apply, please contact batcheta@mbie.govt.nz

WHAT DOES AN NZeTA ALLOW CREW MEMBERS OF CARGO VESSELS TO DO?

An NZeTA issued to a crew member of a cargo vessel allows them to:

- Travel to New Zealand as crew onboard the vessel; OR
- Travel to New Zealand on a commercial flight in order to:
 - Join a cargo vessel in New Zealand and leave as crew on the vessel; OR
 - Join a cargo vessel in New Zealand, remain on the vessel as crew and then leave New Zealand on a commercial flight.

HOW LONG CAN CARGO VESSEL CREW STAY IN NEW ZEALAND USING AN NZeTA?

An NZeTA is not a visa and itself does not grant a person the right to enter or stay in New Zealand. It is an authority to travel to New Zealand. A visa to stay in New Zealand is normally granted on arrival.

Crew that arrive in New Zealand with a valid crew NZeTA may be granted the following visas to stay:

- For crew that arrive in New Zealand onboard a cargo vessel
 - On arrival the crew are deemed to hold a visa allowing a stay in New Zealand for up to 28 days or until the vessel leaves (whichever occurs first).
- For crew that arrive in New Zealand from a commercial flight in order to join a cargo vessel
 - On arrival the crew may be granted a visa allowing a stay of up to 35 days.

WHO ARE CONSIDERED TO BE CREW FOR THE PURPOSE OF GETTING CREW NZeTAs?

People employed or engaged in working or providing a service on a cargo vessel will be considered crew and may be eligible to travel to New Zealand using a crew NZeTA. This may include superintendents who travel to New Zealand to work on the cargo vessel so could be issued a crew NZeTA.

HOW ARE NZeTAs FOR CREW MEMBERS OF CARGO VESSELS REQUESTED?

Cargo vessel owners and their representatives (such as manning agents) are responsible for requesting crew ETAs on behalf of their crew. Crew cannot request crew NZeTAs themselves.

Cargo vessel owners and their representatives request crew NZeTAs by uploading a batch file to Immigration New Zealand's online Batch ETA System. The file contains the details of crew members that require a crew ETAs. Each crew ETA request is then processed electronically.

To obtain access and use the online Batch ETA System, cargo vessel owners must first register with Immigration New Zealand.

HOW DOES REGISTRATION FOR THE BATCH ETA SYSTEM OCCUR?

Registration of cargo vessel owners involves the following steps:

- Registering 1 or more primary contact persons who hold overall responsibility for their company's use of the Batch ETA System;
- Nominating 1 or more users of the Batch ETA System;
- Nominating any representatives (e.g. ship management companies or crewing/manning agents) who the owner authorises to submit NZeTA requests under their name. If representatives are nominated, Immigration New Zealand will then contact these companies to provide them with their own registration forms.

IS THERE A COST TO OBTAIN NZeTAs FOR CREW MEMBERS?

Crew ETAs cost NZD\$17.00 each and cargo vessel owners will be asked to register a debtor contact so that these charges can be invoiced. Charges will not be routed to representatives such as ship management companies or crewing/manning agents. Invoices will be generated in the month after the request for the crew NZeTAs was made.

WHEN CAN NZeTAs FOR CREW MEMBERS BE REQUESTED?

Registration packs including application forms and Batch ETA System Terms of Use will be made available to New Zealand-based shipping agents for distribution to cargo vessel operators. Registration forms can be completed in advance and returned to Immigration New Zealand from this point. Immigration New Zealand will check registration forms and may request further information where required.	From Late 2024
Registration begins and logins for the Batch ETA System are sent out. Crew ETAs can be requested through the Batch ETA System from this point.	From 3 February 2025
NZeTAs become a mandatory requirement for crew and passengers on cargo vessels travelling to New Zealand.	From 1 April 2025

HOW QUICKLY ARE NZeTAs FOR CREW MEMBERS PROCESSED?

Once a batch file has been accepted by the Batch ETA System, processing begins electronically. Most NZeTAs are issued within minutes however a small number of NZeTAs can take up to 72 hours to process.

CAN CREW MEMBERS USE A CREW NZeTA FOR MULTIPLE VOYAGES TO NEW ZEALAND?

Crew NZeTAs are valid for 5 years and can be used on multiple voyages. NZeTAs are linked to a specific passport, so cargo vessel owners or their representatives must update the NZeTA information if a crew member obtains a new passport.

Crew NZeTAs are no longer valid if a crew member leaves their employment for any reason. The party who requested the Crew NZeTA must advise Immigration New Zealand if this occurs.

WHEN SHOULD CREW NZeTAs BE OBTAINED?

Crew NZeTAs should be obtained before crew board a cargo vessel to travel to New Zealand.

Immigration New Zealand also recommends crew NZeTAs are obtained in advance for any crew who may not be immediately travelling to New Zealand, but who may do so on a future voyage or at short notice.

In cases where vessels are re-routed to New Zealand mid-voyage, crew NZeTAs should be obtained as soon as possible before arrival.

CAN CREW NZeTAs BE REFUSED?

Although rare, crew NZeTAs can be refused. The Batch ETA System will notify the batch submitter if this occurs. In these cases, the cargo vessel owner or their representative should contact the Immigration New Zealand for further advice.

WHAT ABOUT PASSENGERS ON CARGO VESSELS?

Occasionally, cargo vessels also carry passengers, including family members of onboard crew. These people will need passenger NZeTAs (unless they hold a New Zealand/Australian passport or a New Zealand visa). Passengers must request their own NZeTAs via Immigration New Zealand's mobile app or website (www.immigration.govt.nz). The Batch ETA System cannot be used to obtain NZeTAs for passengers.

HOW CAN A CARGO VESSEL OPERATOR CHECK IF PEOPLE HOLD AN NZeTA?

The online Batch ETA System includes a functionality to check whether people travelling on a cargo vessel hold an NZeTA. This is done by uploading a batch file similar to when requesting crew NZeTAs.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PERSON WHO NEEDS AN NZeTA DOES NOT HAVE ONE?

Under New Zealand's Immigration Act 2009, carriers are responsible for ensuring all persons who need an NZeTA hold one before travelling to New Zealand.

Initially, Immigration New Zealand intends to take an educational approach in cases where a person travelling to New Zealand on a cargo vessel does not hold an NZeTA. Cargo vessel owners should note that in future, penalties such as infringement notices may apply in cases where NZeTA requirements are not complied with.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on NZeTA requirements, cargo vessel owners or their representatives should contact their New Zealand based shipping agents in the first instance.

Once registration forms are distributed in late 2024, cargo vessel owners and their representatives can contact BatchETA@mbie.govt.nz for further support.