

**[OPERATIONS ORDER NO. SBM-2015-037,
October 29, 2015]**

**PROCEDURES AND TIMELINES IN THE PROCESSING OF
APPLICATIONS FOR VISA CONVERSION, AMENDMENT AND
EXTENSION AND ACR I-CARD ISSUANCE AND RENEWAL**

*Adopted: 28 October 2015
Date Filed: 29 October 2015*

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) is responsible for the administration and enforcement of immigration and citizenship laws and the admission of foreigners in the Philippines^[1], including the enforcement of alien registration laws, exclusion, deportation and repatriation of foreigners, and supervision of their immigration into and emigration from the Philippines^[2];

WHEREAS, on 21 September 2015, the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued Memorandum Circular No. 052 providing the delineation of authority to act on visa applications filed before the BI;

WHEREFORE, pursuant to Section 3 of Commonwealth Act No. 613, as amended, otherwise known as the "Philippine Immigration Act of 1940", the following are hereby ordered:

SECTION 1. Purpose. - This Operations Order implements DOJ Memorandum Circular No. 052 issued on 21 September 2015 and aims to enhance the procedures and establish timelines in the processing of visa and ACRI-Card applications.

SECTION 2. Coverage. - Consistent with DOJ Memorandum Circular No. 052, this Operations Order shall apply to the processing of all applications for immigrant, non-immigrant (excluding temporary visitor's visa under Section 9(a) of C.A. No. 613, as amended) and special non-immigrant visa conversion, amendment and extension filed before the BI to be acted by the Commissioner, except application for pre-arranged employment visa issued by Philippine Embassies/Consulates pursuant to Section 20 of CA. No. 613, as amended, which shall be acted by the Board of Commissioners.

This further applies to the processing of applications for issuance and renewal of Alien Certificate of Registration Identity Cards (ACR I-Card) corresponding to the aforementioned visas.

SECTION 3. Duties and Functions of Each Concerned BI Office.

A. CENTRAL RECEIVING UNIT (CRU) [Same Day Transmittal]:

1. Upon determination that the Consolidated General Application Form (CGAF) is properly accomplished and all the supporting documents for the visa and ACR I-Card applications are complete and in order in accordance with the prescribed Checklist of Documentary Requirements, transmit all application folders received from all BI offices before the end of office hours of the same day when they were received to:

- a. Visa and Special Permits Task Force (VSPTF) - for visa application;
- b. Alien Registration Division (ARD) - for ACR I-Card application.

2. If the visa application does not require the personal appearance by the applicant in a hearing, advise him/her to directly proceed to the ACR I-Card Biometric Capturing Station for biometric capturing, if required, on the date indicated in the notice.

B. VSPTF:

B.1 APPLICATION WITH HEARING:

1. Endorse the visa application folder to the Visa Officer designated in the Notice of Hearing.

2. On the date indicated in the Notice of Hearing, the Visa Officer shall:

- a) Conduct the hearing on the application;
- b) Direct the applicant to immediately proceed to the ACR I-Card Biometrics Capturing Station for biometric capturing, if required; and
- c) Within two (2) working days after the actual hearing, prepare the Minutes of the Hearing and Certification with recommended action and transmit the same, together with the application folder, to the Supervising Visa Officer for review.

3. Within one (1) working day from receipt thereof, the Supervising Visa Officer shall complete the review of the application and submit to VSPTF Head for appropriate recommendation. In case of diverse finding from Visa Officer, prepare a Report of Review and likewise submit to VSPTF Head for appropriate recommendation.

4. Within one (1) working day from receipt of Supervising Visa Officer's submission, the VSPTF Head shall recommend either the approval or disapproval of the visa application to the Commissioner. If for approval, the VSPTF Head shall indicate the recommended validity of the visa.

B.2 APPLICATION WITHOUT HEARING:

1. Endorse the visa application folder to the Supervising Visa Officer for evaluation and review.