



# Common Questions Regarding A-3 Visas/SOFA Stamps



The following questions and answers are provided to assist you in understanding the A-3 Visa/SOFA Stamp process:

## *Who is required to get an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp?*

- Dependent family members (except Korean citizens) accompanying active duty service members assigned to Korea.
- Department of Defense civilian employees assigned (or temporary duty in excess of 30 days) to Korea.
- Dependent family members (except Korean citizens) accompanying Department of Defense civilian employees assigned to Korea.
- Invited Contractors/Technical Representatives assigned (or temporary duty in excess of 30 days) in Korea, but must have approved SOFA designation prior to arrival in Korea.
- Dependent family members (except Korean citizens) accompanying Invited Contractors assigned to Korea, but must have approved SOFA designation prior to arrival in Korea.

## *Who is not required to get an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp?*

- Active duty service members.
- Korean (including dual national) citizen dependent family members.

## *Do I need an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea?*

- If you are a US citizen, you do not need an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea.
- If you are a third-country national, and a citizen of a country that signed a Visa Waiver Agreement with the Republic of Korea, you do not need an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea.
- If you are a third-country national, and a citizen of a country that did not sign a Visa Waiver Agreement with the Republic of Korea, you do not need an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea, but then must obtain a Tourist Visa prior to coming to Korea.

## *Do I need a SOFA Stamp prior to coming to Korea?*

- You cannot obtain a SOFA Stamp prior to coming to Korea.

## *Can I apply for an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea?*

- If you are command sponsored, you may apply for an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea.
- If you are non-command sponsored, you may not apply for an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea.

## *How do I apply for an A-3 Visa prior to coming to Korea?*

- You must apply for an A-3 Visa through a Military Passport Agent at your current installation.

## *My passport was stamped by Korean Immigration when I arrived at the airport. Do I still need to get an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp?*

- Korean Immigration does not issue an A-3 Visa or SOFA Stamp when you arrive at the airport, but rather only provide an entry stamp in your passport documenting your entry into Korea. You must still apply for an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp after your arrival in Korea.

***I already received an A-3 Visa before coming to Korea. Do I still need to get a SOFA Stamp?***

- Yes, you must apply for and receive a SOFA Stamp in addition to having an A-3 Visa.

***How long do I have after arriving in Korea to obtain an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp?***

- You must have both a valid A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp within 30 days of arriving in Korea.

***How do I apply for an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp after arriving in Korea?***

- The same forms and procedures apply to both an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp.
- The forms and instructions for applying for an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp are available on our website at <http://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/sja/ClientLegalSvc/index.htm>.
- Depending on your location in Korea, your nearest Legal office or Army Community Services office may be able to assist you with the process, otherwise, you will need to apply directly at a local Korean Immigration Office.

***How long is an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp valid for?***

- If you apply for and received an A-3 Visa through a Korean Consulate prior to coming to Korea, it is normally valid for five (5) years.
- If you apply for and received an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp through Korean Immigration after arriving in Korea, they will be valid for a maximum period of two (3) years, but not beyond the earlier of: 1) the sponsor's DEROS date, 2) the expiration date of the passport, 3) the expiration date of the dependent's military ID card (for dependents age 10 and older), or 4) the expiration date of the sponsor's military ID card (for sponsor, and dependent age 9 and under).

***I have both an Official Passport and Tourist Passport. Can I apply for an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp in both passports, and if not, which passport do I apply for?***

- You can only be issued one valid A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp, and therefore then can only be issued in the same passport containing your entry stamp from Korean Immigration when you arrived at the airport.

***How can I get my A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp transferred from my Tourist Passport to my Official Passport?***

- You can transfer your A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp to your Official Passport only within 30 days of the expiration date of your Tourist Passport.
- You can take both your Tourist Passport and Official Passport with you the next time you depart Korea, showing only your Tourist Passport (containing your A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp) upon your departure. Upon your return to Korea, show only your Official Passport (after which you will receive an entry stamp), and you will then have 90 days to apply for a new A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp. Upon application, submit both passports, and the A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp in the Tourist Passport will be cancelled.

***I've been in Korea more than 30 days, and I forgot to get my A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp. What do I do?***

- You need to immediately apply for an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp through a Korean Immigration Office.

***I got an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp when I arrived in Korea, but I just noticed that they expired. What do I do?***

- You need to immediately apply for renewal of an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp through a Korean Immigration Office.

**How soon before the expiration of an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp can I renew them?**

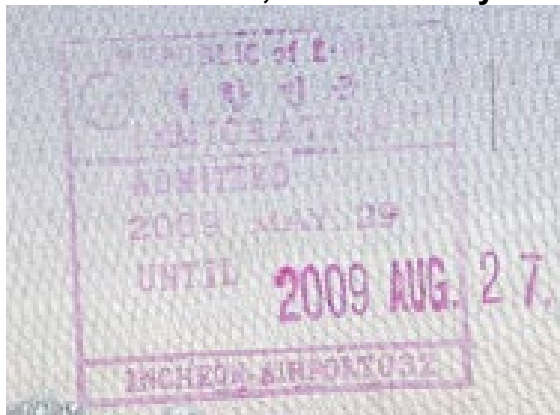
- If the passport containing the A-3 Visa/SOFA Stamp is still valid, you must be within 30 days of the expiration date of the A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp to renew them.
- If the passport containing the A-3 Visa/SOFA Stamp was replaced, you can renew your A-3 Visa/SOFA Stamp immediately upon receipt of the new passport. However, you must present both passports with your application.

**How much is the fine for not having a current A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp?**

- The amounts can vary depending on the seriousness of the violation. Although we routinely encounter individuals who are in violation of Korean immigration laws and referred them to the Korean Immigration Office, we've received some feedback from individuals who's fines were waived, we have yet to receive any feedback suggesting that anyone has been required to pay a fine.

**What does a Korean Immigration Entry Stamp look like?**

- Entry Stamps issued by Korean Immigration upon arriving in Korea are shown below. They are maroon pre-inking stamps, reflecting the date admitted into Korea, along with either an expiration "until" date, or will identify the visas status (if visa has been issued).



Note the "Until" date, which is 90 days from the entry date, and which is used when no visa has been previously issued in the passport.



Note the "Until" date reflects "A3", which is used when an A-3 Visa has been previously issued in the passport.

**What does a Korean A-3 Visa look like?**

- An A-3 Visa issued by a Korean Consulate before arriving in Korea is shown below. It is a single full page visa sticker, valid for up to five (5) years, and has "A-3" annotated on it.





- An A-3 Visa issued by Korean Immigration after arriving in Korea is shown below. It consists of two green stickers, a “Grant for Status of Sojourn” and a “Re-Entry Permit”, has an “A3” and/ or “협정” annotated on it, and is issued along with a SOFA Stamp.



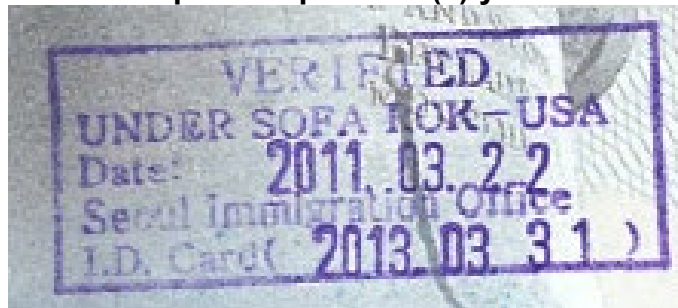
Note the “Period of Sojourn” is “During Mission”, and therefore does not require renewal. This stamp is only issued once, and is valid as long as you are assigned here in support of the mission.



Note the ‘Until’ date reflects an ending date. This sticker is reissued along with a SOFA Stamp upon reapplication for an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp.

**What does a SOFA Stamp look like?**

- A SOFA Stamp issued by Korean Immigration after arriving in Korea is shown below. It is a rubber blue ink stamp issued for a period up to two (2) years



Note the “I.D. Card” date reflects an ending date. This stamp is reissued along with a Re-Entry Permit upon reapplication for an A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp.

*The A-3 Visa application (MOJ Form 34) asks for an address in Korea, and your instructions ask for a physical address in Korea, but I just arrived and am currently staying in the hotel on base. What address do I enter on the application?*

- Your current physical address at the time you are applying for an A-3 Visa and/or SOFA Stamp would be:
  - Camp Humphreys Lodge, Room ###, Pyeongtaek-si, Korea 17709.
  - Dragon Hill Lodge, Room ###, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, Korea 04386.

*I’m currently at the airport departing Korea, and after having my passport reviewed by the Korean Immigration Officer, I discovered that my A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp were expired. What do I do?*

- Do not get upset or engage in a hostile conversation. Stay calm, and keep your conversation with the Korean Immigration Officer in a polite and respectful manner. Depending on how long your A-3 Visa/SOFA Stamp has been expired, and the manner in which you present yourself, they may just let you through with a warning, or direct you to the Immigration Office inside the terminal to correct the situation. Worse case, you may have to postpone your travel until you satisfactorily comply with their requirements.