# Accredited Employer Work Visa

### Background

* The Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) is a temporary work visa in New Zealand and was introduced in 2022.
* The AEWV replaced six visas and has simplified the visa application process by giving migrant workers much more certainty about the job they are coming to New Zealand for.
* The AEWV brings migrant workers into the country to support industries that really need them following the reopening of the borders after COVID-19.
* The policy is designed to ensure New Zealanders are first in line for jobs, but enables accredited employers to hire skilled migrants where genuine skill or labour shortages exist.
* The vast majority of employers are doing the right thing and looking after their migrant workers. But there are penalties for those employers who do not meet their obligations.
* When employers submit an application, they are required to declare that the information they provide is true and is accurate. They also acknowledge that they understand the consequences of providing false or misleading information, or of failing to comply with the conditions of their accreditation. Further details are on our website: [www.immigration.govt.nz/employ-migrants/new-employer-accreditation-and-work-visa/non-compliance-stand-down-bans](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/employ-migrants/new-employer-accreditation-and-work-visa/non-compliance-stand-down-bans)

**Risk settings**

* Immigration New Zealand consider a range of factors to assess risk when processing workers’ visas. These checks broadly fall under four themes: identity, character, bona fides, and health.
* Our risk settings are regularly reviewed to responding to emerging threats and trends and we work closely with other agencies to manage risks posed by individual applicants.
* Risk checks vary across visa types to be proportionate to the type of visa being issued (e.g. we ask for more information such as overseas police certificates if people are here for a prolonged stay than if they are just visiting).
* We perform a number of checks to assess the risk to particular visa applicants for instance in the AEWV where exploitation, migrant need and bad practice are considered.

### Facts and figures

### Policy Settings

* We constantly review and adjust our risk settings to ensure they are fit for purpose and strike the right balance between bringing in the migrants that New Zealand needs and protecting the integrity of the immigration system.
* Suspending an employer’s accreditation minimises immigration harm where there are reasonable concerns that an employer is not complying with the relevant immigration, employment or business standards.
* Employers do not need to get accredited to hire migrants on other work visa types, such as post-study work or working holiday visas, or migrants who do work covered by the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme.
* We are making more requests for further information from employers to confirm:
	+ Job vacancies are current
	+ Vacancies are genuine
	+ Whether employers can support the migrants they plan to hire.
* As a result of the extra checks processing times have been taking a bit longer. Current processing times are on our website
[www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/waiting-for-a-visa/how-long-it-takes-to-process-your-visa-application](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/waiting-for-a-visa/how-long-it-takes-to-process-your-visa-application)

Further information about the AEWV is available on the INZ website
[www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/common-topics/accredited-employer-work-visa-aewv](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/common-topics/accredited-employer-work-visa-aewv)

* As at 16 February 2024 Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has approved 108,938 AEWV applications, and 32,797 employers have become accredited.
* We have undertaken 2,712 post-accreditation checks and an additional 596 remain to be completed.
* The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has received 2,107 complaints against accredited employers.
* There are currently 174 active investigations on Accredited Employers underway.
* To date 145 employers have had their accreditation revoked and 53 have had their accreditation suspended.
* Immigration New Zealand has 1172 people working directly on visa processing. Of this, 131 people work on AEWV processing (11%).

#### AEWV Three Gate Process Overview

Accredited Employer Risk Management and Review (AERMR)

**AERMR**

Post Decision Verification

16% of all Accredited Employers will be audited (incl 100% of all triangular and franchisee employers) within 12 months of accreditation.

**Audit Type**

* Desk Based
* Site Visits

AERMR insight feed back into the pre decision verification risk rules.

**Checks**

* Were the declarations made in the applications for Gates 1,2 and 3 truthful?
* Are migrants being treated according to the standards expected?

**Gate 3**

Work Visa (WV)

A migrant, who has been offered a role with an Accredited Employer who has a valid token, applies for a work visa under the AEWV scheme.

**Checks**

* Migrant identity, character, and health checks.
* Job Validation (E.g., Do the details about the job provided by the migrant match the details on the job check approval letter)
* Worker eligibility (E.g., Does the migrant have the necessary skills and/or experience to fill the role).

**Gate 2**

Job Check (JC)

An Accredited Employer requests job tokens for current needs, for roles that no New Zealander is available to fill. Tokens expire if not used within six months.

**Checks**

* Employer has advertised.
* Labour Market Test (E.g. was advertised for 14 days, that advertisement contained necessary information such as salary).
* Employment is acceptable. (E.g. pay, hours, location, agreement, employer who holds accreditation is that named on agreement).

**Gate 1**

Employer
Accreditation (EA)

An employer applies for accreditation to be able to hire migrants for temporary employment.

**Accreditation Types**

* Standard: up to
5 tokens
* High Volume:
6+ tokens
* High Risk
(can be high volume):
	+ Triangular (labour hire)
	+ Franchisee

**Checks**

* Genuine business
* Employer compliance:

Organisation and/or key persons checked against, for example stand down list and insolvency register.

* Reduce risk of exploitation: Has employer committed to, for example, ensuring migrants have time off to complete NZ’s online employment rights modules?

**DEMAND FOR AEWV WORKERS**

Construction workers, cleaners and truck drivers are some of the most common occupations for the AEWV. The following two charts show the demand for these three occupations. The second chart shows the three regions with the highest number of workers in these three occupations.

**Addressing Migrant Exploitation**

* Addressing the exploitation of temporary migrant workers is a priority. Exploitation is an issue that affects all of us.
* The exploitation of temporary migrant workers, such as paying less than the minimum wage or making people work excessive hours, is unacceptable and breaches New Zealand law.
* The three sectors with the highest number of investigations are the areas of: Construction, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade.
* In July 2021 the Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa (MEPV) and new reporting tools came in.
* The MEPV is a 6-month visa that lets migrants quickly leave an employer who is exploiting them and remain lawfully in New Zealand while there is an investigation into the exploitation.
* The Government introduced a six-month support package in September 2023 to help eligible Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa (MEPV) holders find accommodation and work in New Zealand.

**Migrant Exploitation Protection Visas (MEPV) granted, by sector (1 July 2021 to 31 December 2023)**

BORDER CLOSED