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Global Immigration alert

July 2026

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South Africa

South Africa introduces mandatory online traveler declaration requirement for all travelers

Executive summary

Effective 1 July 2026, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) has introduced a mandatory online traveler declaration requirement for all individuals entering or leaving the country through air, land, sea and rail ports of entry and departure. Travelers are required to submit their declaration electronically before travel and declare any goods, currency or other items that are subject to customs reporting requirements.

The measure applies broadly to South African citizens, permanent residents and foreign nationals. While travelers who do not complete the declaration in advance will not automatically be denied entry or departure, SARS strongly encourages pre-travel submission to facilitate a smoother travel experience.

Key developments

The declaration may be submitted through the SARS Customs Online Traveller Declaration [portal](#), the SATMS mobile application and other approved SARS digital channels.

Key traveler actions

- Complete the online traveler declaration within 24 hours before entry and departure to avoid delays.
- Declare all goods, currency and other items requiring customs disclosure.
- Submit the declaration through an approved SARS digital platform.
- Retain proof of submission and present it to customs officials if requested.

The requirement forms part of the South African Traveler Management System (SATMS), a digital platform designed to streamline customs declarations and improve border management. It supports SARS' broader digital customs strategy and aims to strengthen data integration, customs compliance and risk management at South African ports of entry and exit.

Impact on employers

Employers with internationally mobile employees should review their existing travel compliance processes and ensure that travelers are aware of the new declaration requirement before traveling to or from South Africa.

Organizations should consider updating their travel policies, pre-travel communications and traveler checklists to include the online declaration process. Failure to complete the declaration in advance may result in delays or additional processing formalities at ports of entry or departure, potentially impacting the overall travel experience.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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ey.com

Michelle Kotze
Partner/Principal, People Advisory Services
Tel: +27 11 82 870 4870
Email: michelle.kotze1@ey.com

Chantelle Mulligan
Senior Manager, People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +27 71 200 9022
Email: chantelle.mulligan@za.ey.com