

Temporary Residence Cards for Foreign Nationals in Vietnam: Practical Updates in 2026 for Application Processing

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[29 July 2026]

Temporary Residence Cards (TRC) Issuance in Vietnam in 2026

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For many employers, obtaining a Temporary Residence Card for a foreign employee may look like a routine immigration procedure, including preparing the statutory forms, attaching the Work Permit or Work Permit Exemption Confirmation, submitting the dossier, and waiting for the result. In practice, however, recent applications in Ho Chi Minh City suggest that the process has become more demanding than what appears on paper.

Against the backdrop of Vietnam's continuously refined legal framework on foreign employees, including Decree No. 219/2025/ND-CP on foreign employees working in Vietnam (effective from 7 August 2025) and Circular No. 70/2026/TT-BCA, which amends and supplements certain prescribed forms relating to the entry, exit and residence of foreigners in Vietnam (effective from 1 July 2026), the practical handling of Temporary Residence Card applications by Immigration Authorities has also evolved significantly. This raises an important question for employers: is compliance with the statutory checklist still enough?

This article unpacks the latest practical requirements observed from recent Temporary Residence Card application procedures for foreign nationals working in Vietnam under the LD1 and LD2 categories, with a focus on Ho Chi Minh City. More importantly, it explains what employers should prepare in advance to reduce avoidable delays, anticipate authority queries, and approach the application process with greater certainty.

1. Overview of Temporary Residence Card ("TRC")

A TRC is an official immigration document issued by the Immigration Authority under the Ministry of Public Security or an authority under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, allowing eligible foreign nationals to lawfully reside in Vietnam for a specified period.

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Under the current regulations, TRCs are issued under different categories depending on the holder's purpose of stay and immigration status. Among these categories, the LD1 and LD2 are specifically intended for foreign nationals residing in Vietnam for employment purposes on the basis of a Work Permit Exemption Confirmation or a Work Permit, respectively. An LD1 TRC is granted to foreign nationals who are exempt from the work permit requirement (unless otherwise provided under an international treaty to which Vietnam is a party), while an LD2 TRC is granted to foreign nationals who are required to obtain a work permit before commencing employment in Vietnam.

For both LD1 and LD2 categories, the validity of the TRC must not exceed two years and is generally aligned with the validity period of the underlying Work Permit or Work Permit Exemption Confirmation, as applicable.

Compared to a standard visa, a TRC enables foreign nationals to reside in Vietnam on a long-term basis without the need for frequent visa renewals, facilitates multiple entries and exits during its validity period, and provides greater convenience for long-term employment and day-to-day living in Vietnam.

2. Statutory procedure vs. Current administrative practice

On paper, the statutory procedure for obtaining an LD1 or LD2 TRC appears relatively straightforward. In practice, however, employers should be prepared for additional documentary requirements and procedural steps that are not expressly prescribed by law. This is where many applications face unexpected delays: the dossier may satisfy the written rules but still fall short of the authority's current administrative expectations.

2.1 Statutory procedure

Pursuant to the administrative procedures promulgated under Decision No. 5568/QĐ-BCA, a TRC application dossier generally consists of the following documents:

- Request for the issuance of a TRC;
- TRC application form;
- Original passport;
- One of the documents evidencing the applicant's eligibility for a TRC, including: Work Permit, Confirmation of Work Permit Exemption or other supporting documents; and
- Two passport-sized photographs (2×3cm), including one affixed to the application form and one submitted separately.

The administrative procedures currently provide for the following methods of submitting a TRC application:

- Online submission through either the National Public Service Portal or the Ministry of Public Security's Public Service Portal;
- In-person submission to the local Immigration Authority;
- Submission via the public postal service, where additional documents are requested by the Immigration Authority during the application review process.

Employers should not simply seek to apply the statutory checklist though, as recent application processes demonstrate that the manner in which applications are reviewed in practice is just as important as the documents expressly listed under the regulations.

2.2 Current administrative practice

The following reflects the current administrative practices of the Ho Chi Minh City Immigration Authority (i.e., Immigration Department) as of July 2026.

In addition to the statutory requirements outlined above, applicants may encounter practical requirements during the Immigration Department's review and processing of TRC applications. In Ho Chi Minh City, these requirements mainly relate to two areas: additional supporting documents, and the actual manner in which the application is submitted and verified.

a. Additional supporting documents

Based on the recent administrative practice, applicants may be requested to provide the following additional documents in support of their TRC applications:

- Notarized copy of Enterprise Registration Certificate of the sponsoring company;
- Notarized copy of Confirmation of Residence Information in Vietnam issued by the local Police Department in respect of the foreign employee;

- Notarized copy of Citizen Identity Card of a Vietnamese employee of the sponsoring company who is currently enrolled in the compulsory social insurance scheme; and
- One copy of the immigration documents (e.g. valid e-visa or Entry Approval Letter).

b. Submission process

• Step 1 – Online submission

TRC applications in Ho Chi Minh City are currently processed in practice through the Ministry of Public Security's Public Service Portal. In addition, effective from 1 July 2025, organizations submitting applications online are required to authenticate their submissions using a corporate VNeID account. Accordingly, before commencing the online application, the sponsoring company should ensure that it has:

- A valid digital signature (Token); and
- A corporate VNeID account linked to the Legal Representative's Level 2 personal VNeID account.

Under the current administrative practice in Ho Chi Minh City, the online submission stage may, in certain circumstances, be bypassed, allowing the Legal Representative to submit the application dossier directly to the Immigration Department. However, where the sole foreign Legal Representative is a foreigner and also the applicant for the TRC, such applications may be subject to closer scrutiny and, in some cases, may be rejected.

• Step 2: In-person submission

Following approval of the online submission, the original application dossier is required to be submitted in person to the Ho Chi Minh City Immigration Department.

Under the current administrative practice in Ho Chi Minh City, the individual attending the in-person submission must be an employee of the sponsoring company who is enrolled in Vietnam's compulsory social insurance scheme. As part of the verification process, immigration officers will request the attending employee to present his/her VSSID application – an application from Vietnam Social Insurance is used to look up information on social insurance, health insurance, and unemployment insurance for individuals, to verify the current social insurance status.

The current administrative practice suggests that the Immigration Department places particular emphasis on verifying the sponsoring company's actual business operations. In this regard, the presence of Vietnamese employees enrolled in the compulsory social insurance scheme appears to be an important practical consideration during the authority's assessment. Accordingly, companies that have not yet established a local workforce may encounter additional challenges when applying for a TRC for their foreign Legal Representative.

A particularly sensitive scenario arises where the sponsoring company has only one foreign Legal Representative without a VNeID Level 2 account and VSSID registration. In such cases, the TRC process may become more complex than expected.

3. Practical recommendations for companies

For employers, the main takeaway is that: Successful TRC preparation now requires both legal compliance and practical readiness. In particular, employers should consider ensuring that they have at least one Vietnamese employee engaged under an official labour contract and enrolled in the compulsory social insurance scheme before commencing the TRC application process. Based on the current administrative practice in Ho Chi Minh City, this has become an important practical consideration during the in-person submission and verification process.

In addition, employers should ensure that their corporate VNeID account has been successfully activated and linked to the Legal Representative's Level 2 personal VNeID account, and that a valid digital signature token is available before initiating the online submission. As these authentication tools are required for the online filing process, early preparation may help avoid unnecessary delays arising from technical or administrative issues.

Company action points

To reduce the risk of delay or additional authority queries, companies should consider the following actions before initiating a TRC application:

- Review the statutory dossier and prepare additional supporting documents that may be requested in practice, including the Enterprise Registration Certificate, confirmation of residence information, immigration entry documents and identity document of the attending Vietnamese employee.

- Confirm that the corporate VNeID account has been activated and properly linked to the Legal Representative's Level 2 personal VNeID account and test the digital signature token before the online submission date.
- Identify an internal employee who can attend the in-person submission, ensure that the employee is enrolled in compulsory social insurance, and confirm that the employee can access the VSSID application during submission.
- Build the TRC timeline into the company's onboarding, work permit and visa management process so that practical issues can be resolved before the filing deadline becomes urgent.

Although the statutory framework provides the legal basis for obtaining a TRC, the current administrative practice has become an equally important factor in the application process. Employers and companies should therefore look beyond the statutory requirements and take into account the practical expectations that may arise during review. Adequate preparation from both a legal and operational perspective will place businesses in a stronger position to complete the procedure efficiently and with greater certainty. If your company is preparing to sponsor a foreign employee for a TRC, an early review of the intended dossier, corporate VNeID readiness, social insurance status of the attending employee, and supporting documents can make a meaningful difference before the application reaches the Immigration Authority.

For any further questions or support that you may have, please reach out to us at vietnam@alitim.com

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