



## INTERNATIONAL CLEARANCE OVERVIEW

### INTERNATIONAL CLEARANCE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Per FIFA's Regulations, the international clearance process is required when any foreign-born player over the age of 10 is attempting to register with an affiliated club/team/league in the United States, regardless of that player's soccer ability or citizenship and one or both of the below instances apply:

- Player was born outside of the United States, including U.S. citizens born abroad.
- Player previously registered with a club/team/league outside of the United States.

The home association, U.S. Soccer, is responsible for obtaining the clearance on behalf of these players prior to their registration and participation with any U.S. Soccer affiliated club/team/ league. Clearance is required for ALL players who meet one or both of the above instances regardless of past practices, age, nationality, club affiliation, or member organization with which the player is registering/participating. Failure to adhere to the requirements can result in fines and/or sanctioning from both FIFA and U.S. Soccer.

### DEFINITIONS

- Minors - players 17 years of age and younger
- Adult - players 18 years of age and older
- Amateur status - no payment involved regardless of age

### ACRONYMS

- TMS – Transfer Matching System
- MA – Member Association (foreign federation)
- ITC – International Transfer Certificate
- FR – First Registration

### REGISTRATION FORMS and REQUIREMENTS

The table below is displayed for the applicant's reference. To submit a complete international clearance form:

- Applicants should review the forms and corresponding requirements.
- Choose only one form that represents their current individual status.

Applicants are expected to meet all application requirements specified on the form to have the application reviewed and processed.



MINORS	
FORM	APPLICANT REQUIREMENT
<a href="#">P10 Registration</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International clearances and first registrations for any player nine (9) years of age and younger at the time of registration regardless of citizenship.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">First Registration - U.S. Citizen</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> <li>Holds physical proof of citizenship.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">First Registration - U.S. Citizen – Awaiting Physical Proof</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> <li>Does not currently hold physical proof of citizenship but according to the United States government, is a U.S. citizen.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">5 Year Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Player is registering for the first time and has lived continuously in the United States for the last five years.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">50km/31mi Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the player and club are within 50km/31mi of their common national border.</li> <li>The distance between the two is less than 100km/62mi.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Parents Move Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The parents of the player moved to the United States for reasons not linked to soccer.</li> <li>Includes United States citizens returning home to their family after studying abroad.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Exchange Student Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The player is an exchange student undertaking an academic program in the United States.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Accompanied Refugee Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The player is moving for humanitarian reasons with their parents.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Unaccompanied Refugee Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The player is moving for humanitarian reasons without their parents.</li> </ul>

ADULT	
FORM	APPLICANT REQUIREMENT
<a href="#">First Registration 18+</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any player born outside of the United States</li> <li>Never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">International Transfer Certificate (ITC)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any player 18+ who has been previously registered to a club in another country and wishes to play for club/team/league in the United States.</li> </ul>

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### BEST PRACTICES

Each application has specific submission requirements. Failure to follow these requirements will lead to the withdrawal of the application from the review process. To ensure the timely processing of all applications the following instructions must be adhered to:

- Criteria is provided for each clearance type to assist the applicant in selecting the appropriate form based on the players' CURRENT status, i.e. age, first registration, international clearance, minor applications.
- Applicants are responsible to submit all required information as outlined on each form.
- Information submitted is required to be accurate and complete
- Submit completed forms and all required document(s) in **ONE (1)** email to – [player\\_registration@ussoccer.org](mailto:player_registration@ussoccer.org) and copy local League/State Association.
  - Subject line should indicate form type and player name.
  - Form and documents must be in PDF format.
  - Each loaded separately and up to 5MB or less.
- Partially completed forms and/or applications missing documents **will not be processed.**
- Applications must be submitted at least 30 days\* prior to start of club/team/league play.

The Player Status Department will contact applicants to provide updates on applications when available and/or required. Due to the high volume of applications received, kindly refrain from submitting emails requesting status updates as those specific requests will not receive a response.

*\*Please note submitting at least 30 days prior to the start of club/team/league play does not guarantee the player will be eligible as some processes require both FIFA and U.S. Soccer approval.*



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For additional questions not listed below please send to [player\\_registration@ussoccer.org](mailto:player_registration@ussoccer.org) and in the subject line indicate – QUESTION.

**Q: What happens if a player participates without being cleared by U.S. Soccer or FIFA?**

*A: If a player is caught participating without proper clearance, U.S. Soccer and FIFA have the ability to impose fines on the Federation, Member Organization, League, as well as the Club.*

**Q: Why won't U.S. Soccer respond to requests for status updates?**

*A: U.S. Soccer is unable to respond to status updates as this takes time away from being able to clear players. If there has not been an update sent by U.S. Soccer, that simply means there is not yet one to share. Once there is an update available, we notify all relevant parties.*

**Q: The player previously received confirmation of international clearance from U.S. Soccer, is anything needed to register in a subsequent season or for a subsequent club?**

*A: International clearance is valid for subsequent seasons and subsequent clubs unless or until the player registers with a team outside the United States.*

**Q: The player previously played for a high school or college team, was international clearance obtained at that time?**

*A: High school and college soccer are not affiliated with U.S. Soccer, but are instead organized under governing bodies related specifically to high school and collegiate sports. FIFA's Regulations require international clearance and U.S. Soccer is a Member Association of FIFA.*

**Q: I am attempting to register to play soccer outside of the United States, but my foreign club says that I need documentation of a release from U.S. Soccer. Whom can I contact?**

*A: FIFA requires that international clearance go through its Member Associations. Please have your new club work with their federation in order for the federation to contact U.S. Soccer to request the player's clearance. The new federation is entirely responsible for satisfying the registration and international clearance requirements for both FIFA and their federation. There is nothing that we can do to assist until we receive a direct request from the player's new federation. Accordingly, please direct any questions to the new federation.*

**Q: I have a question regarding international clearance and FIFA's requirements. Whom can I contact?**

*A: Please contact the Member Organization with whom your club is registering.*

**Q: The player has United States citizenship, why is international clearance required?**

*A: FIFA requires international clearance regardless of the player's citizenship.*

**Q: The player is registering as an amateur for a youth soccer team, why is international clearance required?**

*A: FIFA requires international clearance based on where the player was born or previously registered, regardless of the player's status as either an amateur or professional.*

**Q: The player has never played for a foreign national team or professional team, does that mean that the player is a first registrant who has never registered to play elsewhere?**

*A: Registering to play elsewhere refers to registration for a club team outside the United States. If the player has played in a match with a club team at any level outside of the United States (including youth, adult, amateur, professional, etc.) then the player has registered for the team. Please note that trials and friendly matches likely do not count as registrations. Additionally, international clearance does not apply to national teams; this process only applies to club soccer.*

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**Q: If a club does not otherwise have a professional affiliation, but does have teams in pro affiliated leagues, do we need to enforce ITC requirements for all registered players from that club**

*A: Yes, the player must apply for the appropriate clearance based on their current situation. FIFA views pro affiliation in a broad term to include but not limited to – clubs participating in pro affiliated leagues, joint fundraising efforts with pro clubs, use of pro club facilities etc. Per the FIFA guidelines ALL players, both nationals and foreign born, regardless of club's pro or non-pro affiliation are required to register with the home association in this instance, U.S. Soccer. Foreign born players are also required to comply with the FIFA International Transfer Standards for Minors (ages 10-17) as outlined in the FIFA RTSP Article 19 and 19bis.*

**Q: What if some of the documents required for the Minors Process are not available?**

*A: FIFA generally requires ALL documents listed on the applicable page of U.S. Soccer's website. Effort has been made to highlight common alternative documents, where available.*