

Korean-American Dual Citizenship Fact Sheet

Automatic Korean Nationality by Birth

If your father or mother was a Korean National when you were born in the United States, you have been automatically assigned Korean citizenship. This means that you are a dual citizen of the United States and Korea at birth, which many Korean Americans remain unaware of throughout their childhood and into their adult life. This can cause numerous issues with obtaining certain jobs and traveling between the United States and Korea. The process for renouncing Korean citizenship is complicated and adheres to a strict timeline that, if not met, can bar individuals from ever renouncing their citizenship.

Applicability of the Automatic Dual Citizenship

Under the Korean nationality law, individuals will be subject to dual citizenship by birth under the following conditions:

Korean Father & Korean or Non-Korean Mother: Automatic

	Male Born	Female Born
DOB	On 05/25/1983 or later: Opt-Out by March 31 st of the year you turn 18	On 05/05/1988 or later: Opt-Out by age 22
DOB	Before 05/25/1983: If you don't renounce your Korean citizenship, automatically revoked	Before 05/05/1988: If you don't renounce your Korean citizenship, automatically revoked

Korean Mother & Non-Korean Father

	Male Born	Female Born
DOB	On 06/14/1998 or later: Opt-Out by March 31 st of the year you turn 18	On 06/14/1998 or later: Opt-Out by age 22
DOB	Before 06/14/1998: No Korean citizenship was granted	Before 06/14/1998: No Korean citizenship was granted

Nationality Renunciation Process (Males)

If you want to renounce your citizenship before March 31st of the year you turn 18 years-old, you must first register your birth with the Korean government. Once registered, you may then begin the renunciation process. This may take over one year and requires more than fifteen (15) pieces of documentation, which is unduly burdensome.

If you miss the deadline (March 31st of the year you turn 18), your Korean military duty will be imposed on you. If that occurs, you cannot renounce your citizenship until you turn 38 years old, unless you complete your military duties before then.

Exceptional Nationality Revocation Permit: As of 2022, if you miss the due date (March 31st of the year you turn 18), you may apply for an exceptional nationality revocation permit through the Ministry of Justice. To do so, you must first register your birth with the Korean government and submit the required documentation for renunciation. In addition, you must also show:

- (1) proof of justifiable reasons for missing the due date;
- (2) significant restrictions or disadvantages in obtaining employment due to your dual citizenship; and
- (3) the military duty performance would be unfair in light of your circumstances.

This is an even more complicated process and if you are not able to show sufficient damage/harm, you will likely be denied. The new system is not a remedy but remains a restriction on Korean Americans. This is why the Korean government should return to the automatic revocation system they had in previously had in place.

Dual Citizenship FAQs

- In the United States, you must disclose your dual citizenship status during security clearance processes (federal government, judicial positions, military school, elective offices, etc.)
 - Failure to disclose such information puts you at risk of denial for misrepresentation
- When visiting Korea, you are required to use a Korean passport
- You are not eligible for an international visa if you apply for a job/internship or wish to study in Korea (you must use a Korean passport)
- Many scholarships offered to international students are not available for dual citizens (e.g., Fulbright)