The Bahamas High Commission
London

Fact Sheet #12

THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS
CITIZENSHIP

The constitution and The Bahamas Nationality Act 1973 contain the detailed provisions affecting the acquisition or loss of citizenship.

The Constitution includes those who became or were eligible to become citizens on 10 July 1973; the date The Bahamas became independent.

(i) A person who was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies on 9 July 1973, who was born in The Bahamas.

(ii) A person born outside The Bahamas who was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies on 9 July 1973, whose father became or would have become, before his death, a citizen of The Bahamas.

(iii) A person registered as a citizen under the British Nationality Act 1948 except:

(a) A person registered under the British Nationality Act who was not a resident of The Bahamas on 31 December 1972;

(b) or who was registered on or after 1 January 1973;

(c) or who on 9 July 1973 was a national of another country.

The Constitution also provides for persons born since 10 July 1973:

(i) A person legitimately born in The Bahamas after 10 July 1973 shall be a citizen if either of his parents is a citizen of The Bahamas. A person born out of wedlock in The Bahamas after 10 July 1973 shall be a citizen if his **mother** is a citizen of The Bahamas.

(ii) Where a person is born in The Bahamas and neither of his parents is a citizen thereof:

- He or she will be entitled to be registered as a citizen of The Bahamas unless subject to specific exceptions or qualifications prescribed in the national interest or by public policy;

- He or she should apply within 12 months after his or her 18th birthday;

- If the person is a citizen of another country he or she will be required to renounce that citizenship, make a declaration of intent as regards to residence and take an oath of allegiance.

(iii) A person who is legitimate, born outside The Bahamas after 9 July 1973 whose mother is a citizen of The Bahamas and who is between the ages of 18 and 21 years can make an application to be registered as a citizen. This is subject to considerations of national security and public policy. Such persons must renounce any other citizenship, take an oath of allegiance and make a declaration of intent as to residence. If his mother registers him as a minor prior to his 18th birthday and it is approved, renunciation would not be necessary and dual nationality would result.

(iv) A person who is legitimate, born outside The Bahamas after 9 July 1973 whose Father is Bahamian by birth, regardless of the Mother's nationality, is entitled to citizenship by descent. If the child is illegitimate and the Mother is not Bahamian, citizenship is not accessible; or if legitimate and the Father was also born outside The Bahamas to Bahamian Parents, citizenship is not accessible.

(v) A woman who marries a person who is or becomes a citizen of The Bahamas is entitled, to apply to be registered as a citizen, provided that she is still married. This is subject to public policy and national security considerations. Once approved she does not have to renounce her other nationality.

Please note that any reference to the father of a person who is born out of wedlock (other than a person legitimated before 10th July 1973), shall be construed as a reference to the mother of that person. (See Article 14 (1) of *The Bahamas Constitution*)

One should also note that in all cases registration as a citizen is subject to those limitations prescribed in the interests of national security or public policy (except in cases of persons eligible to become citizens on 10 July 1973).

Persons not entitled to be registered or naturalised by virtue of an existing status are able to apply for citizenship of The Bahamas under The Nationality Act. Qualifications include:

1. Seven years lawful residence of the ten years immediately preceding and inclusive of date of application, i.e. work permit, residency permit or permanent residence certificate.

2. Knowledge of the English language.

3. Intent to continue residing in and making The Bahamas their permanent home.