Human Resources

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Travel

Documentation Required for Travel and Re-entry

If you plan to travel outside of the U.S., you will need the following documents to re-enter:

J-1 Exchange Visitor

- A valid passport valid at least six months beyond entry date (unless exempt from passport and visa requirements)
- A valid visa
- A valid Form DS-2019 endorsed for re-entry by the Exchange Visitor Responsible/Alternate Responsible Officer

H-1B and O-1 Visa Holders

- The original I-797 Approval Notice from USCIS
- Valid H-1B or O-1 visa
- A current letter from the employer verifying employment (not required, but may help to facilitate re-entry)

TN Visa Holder

Canadian TNs may be readmitted to the U.S. by presenting the original I-94 card and valid Canadian passport. Canadian citizens may also be eligible to participate in the NEXUS program, which is designed to expedite the entry into the U.S. of frequent business travelers. More information about NEXUS is available at: http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/trusted_traveler/nexus_prog/

Mexican TNs may be readmitted to the U.S. by presenting the original I-94 and a Mexican passport with a valid TN visa. Mexican TNs are not eligible for the NEXUS program.

Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)

The ESTA is an electronic system that all citizens of Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries must use to obtain travel authorization prior to travel to the U.S. by air or sea. Once approved, travel authorization is generally valid for up to two years or until the applicant's passport expires. The Department of Homeland Security recommends that ESTA applications be submitted as soon as an applicant begins to make travel plans.

ESTA applications may be completed online, free of charge at: https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/

Passports

Most aliens seeking admission to the U.S. in nonimmigrant status must have a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of their anticipated stay in the U.S. Certain countries have agreements extending the passport for six months beyond the expiration date. A list of countries with passport agreements can be found at: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222004

Effective January 23, 2007, all persons including citizens of the United States, are required to present a passport, or other accepted secure document that establishes the bearer’s identity and nationality, to enter the United States when arriving by air, land or sea from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

Citizens of Ireland and Nationals of British Commonwealth Countries

Effective March 17, 2003, citizens of Ireland and nationals of British Commonwealth countries will be required to present a valid passport for entry to the U.S. A valid nonimmigrant visa is also required unless they are a national of a designated Visa Waiver Program country.

If You Need a New Visa to Return

- In the past, a nonimmigrant could travel to Canada or Mexico, or in the case of F, J or Q nonimmigrant's only, to Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands, except Cuba, on an expired visa, and could re-enter and be considered extended, or in the case of a nonimmigrant who had a change of status, be considered converted to the proper visa category as long as the stay was for less than 30 days. This was referred to as "Automatic Revalidation".

  Automatic Revalidation is no longer available for citizens of "state sponsors of terrorism", as designated by the Department of State. For a list of current countries see: http://www.state.gov/s/ct/c14151.htm

  In addition, any nonimmigrant that chooses to apply for a new visa while in contiguous territory is no longer eligible for automatic revalidation, but will have to wait until a new visa is granted in order to re-enter the U.S. If for any reason, the new visa is denied, the foreign national will have to return to their home country to obtain a visa to re-enter the U.S. Individuals whose visas have ever been cancelled under the visa cancellation provision are not eligible for automatic revalidation and must apply for a visa in their home country. Refer to the Automatic Revalidation Fact Sheet for more information: http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/travel/id_visa/revalidation.ctt/revalidation.pdf
- Individuals who are not a resident in the consular district are known as a "third country national" (TCN). While most consular offices do accept applications for TCNs, be aware that it may be more difficult or take longer to obtain the visa mainly because the consular officer must evaluate proof of the applicant's ties to a residence abroad.
- Individuals who have ever been out of status because they have overstayed their visa or the period authorized on the I-94 are not eligible to apply at a border post and must apply in the country of home nationality.

  Consult the Foreign National Office prior to travel if you have a file pending with USCIS and are unsure of travel regulations.

Changes since September 11, 2001

Prior to issuing a visa, the consular officer must determine if there are any grounds for inadmissibility or visa ineligibility. There are several different kinds of consular clearances, some predate September 11, 2001. A number of new security measures, since September 11, 2001, have resulted in increased scrutiny and review of visa applications resulting in delays in processing times.

- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement subjects foreign nationals from certain countries to additional security clearances. Special registrants are required to be processed under National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) also known as Special Registration Program. More information can be found at: http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm.
- The Department of State requires all nonimmigrant males between the ages of 16 and 46, regardless of nationality and all applicants from state sponsors of terrorism 16 years of age and older, regardless of gender to complete Form DS-157, Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application. Further, U.S. embassies and consulates may subject any nonimmigrant visa applicant to this requirement at their discretion.
- The Department of State is required to conduct a security clearance prior to issuing a visa to Individuals involved in research in fields on the Technology Alert List (TAL).

What You May Encounter When Traveling

- Delays in flights due to heightened security measures at airports and along the Canadian border.
- Inquiries and increased review of documents at all ports-of-entry
- Inspection of personal belongings, luggage, pockets or other searches.

Last updated: February 21, 2010

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