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# Visa Waiver Program

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**Important Notice** 

## Overview

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables most citizens or nationals of participating countries\* to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without first obtaining a visa, when they meet all requirements explained below. Travelers must have a valid Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) approval prior to travel. If you prefer to have a visa in your passport, you may still apply for a visitor (B) visa.

## Requirements for Using the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)

You must meet all of the following requirements to travel to the United States on the VWP:

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Travel Purpose Must be Permitted on a Visitor (B) Visa

**Business:** 

**Tourism:** 

Travel Purposes Not Permitted on Visa Waiver Program -

# Citizen or National of VWP Designated Country\*

Citizens or nationals of the following countries\* are currently eligible to travel to the United States under the VWP, unless citizens of one of these countries are also a national of Iraq, Iran, Syria, or Sudan.

Andorra Hungary Norway Austral Iceland Portugal Austria Ireland San Marino Belgium Italy Singapore Brunei Japan Slovakia Chile Latvia Slovenia Czech Republic Liechtenstein South Korea Denmark Lithuania Spain

Estonia Luxembourg Sweden

Finland Malta Switzerland

France Monaco Taiwan\*

Germany Netherlands United Kingdom\*\*

Greece New Zealand

#### **Each Traveler Must Have Authorization Under ESTA**

In order to travel without a visa on the VWP, you must have authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to boarding a U.S. bound air or sea carrier. ESTA is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) automated web-based system to determine eligibility to travel without a visa to the United States for tourism or business. Visit the ESTA webpage on the CBP website for more information.

#### Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015

Under the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015, travelers in the following categories are no longer eligible to travel or be admitted to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP):

- Nationals of VWP countries who have traveled to or been present in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, or Yemen on or after March 1, 2011 (with limited exceptions for travel for diplomatic or military purposes in the service of a VWP country).
- Nationals of VWP countries who are also nationals of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, or Yemen.

These individuals will still be able to apply for a visa using the regular appointment process at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. For those who require a U.S. visa for urgent business, medical, or humanitarian travel to the United States, U.S. Embassies and Consulates stand ready to handle applications on an expedited basis.

If an individual who is exempt from the Act because of his or her diplomatic or military presence in one of the four countries has his or her ESTA denied, he or she may go to the CBP website , or contact the CBP information Center . The traveler may also apply for a nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate

Certain other travelers who fall under this restriction may qualify for a waiver of the requirements. More information about possible waivers is forthcoming.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection strongly recommends that any traveler to the United States check his or her ESTA status prior to making any travel reservations or travelling to the United States. More information is available on the DHS website .

#### **Have the Correct Type of Passport**

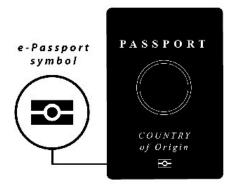
You must have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months after your planned departure from the United States (unless exempted by country-specific agreements ). For families, each member of your family, including infants and children, must have his/her own passport.



In addition, as of April 1, 2016, you must have an e-passport to use the VWP. An e-Passport is an enhanced secure passport with an embedded electronic chip. The chip can be scanned to match the identity of the traveler to the passport. E-Passports are issued by the proper passport issuing authority and must be in compliance with standards set by the International Civil Aviation

<sup>\*\*</sup>To be eligible to travel under the VWP, British citizens must have the unrestricted right of permanent abode in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man.

Organization (ICAO). You can readily identify an e-Passport, because it has a unique international symbol on the cover. More about <u>e-Passports</u> is available on the DHS website . See the example below:



## **Emergency and Temporary Passports**

If you use an emergency or temporary passport to enter the United States on the VWP, the passport must be an e-Passport. This includes VWP travelers who are transiting the United States.

More information on frequently asked questions about VWP can be found at the following websites:

DHS Visa Waiver Program Requirements

CBP Visa Waiver Program

CBP ESTA

May I apply for a visa instead of using the VWP?

I was denied a visa under section 214(b). May I use the VWP?

- DHS Visa Waiver Program Requirements
- CBP Visa Waiver Program
- CBP ESTA

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How can a country\* join the VWP?

**Entering the United States** 

**Extending Your Stay** 

**Change of Status** 

## Reference

\* With respect to all references to "country" or "countries" on this page, it should be noted that the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, Pub. L. No. 96-8, Section 4(b)(1), provides that "[w]henever the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan." 22 U.S.C. § 3303(b)(1). Accordingly, all references to "country" or "countries" in the Visa Waiver Program authorizing legislation, Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1187, are read to include Taiwan. This is consistent with the United States' one-China policy, under which the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979.

