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San Diego CBP Reminds Travelers to Obtain I-94 Permit Early During Holiday Season

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San Diego, Calif. – U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials in San Diego are anticipating an increase in applications by Mexican travelers for the required I-94 permit during the holiday season. Mexican border crossing card (or "laser visa") holders who plan to make an extended visit to the United States during the upcoming holiday season are urged to obtain the essential document early instead of waiting until the day of travel.

"We urge travelers to obtain the required document as much as a week or two early to avoid congestion and potential delays, if they apply now they will obtain the essential document faster and more conveniently," said David Murphy, port director of the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa passenger border stations. "Travelers may obtain the permit 24 hours a day at both the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa ports."

All traveling family members need to be present during the I-94 application process. Those requesting the permits also must be able to establish financial solvency and proof of residency outside the U.S.

CBP is also offering a number of tips to travelers to expedite the border crossing experience and ensure that they enter the country safely and without incident.

- **Tip #1 –** Travelers should prepare for the inspection process before arriving at the inspection booth. Individuals should have their crossing documents available for the inspection and they should be prepared to declare all items acquired abroad. In addition, individuals should end cellular phone conversations before arriving at the inspection booth.
- **Tip #2 –** Travelers should plan to build extra time into their trips in the event they cross during periods of exceptionally heavy traffic. This includes SENTRI/Dedicated Commuter Lane (DCL) users.
- **Tip #3 –** Travelers should familiarize themselves with the "Know Before You Go" section of the CBP Web site at to avoid fines and penalties associated with the importation of prohibited items. "Know Before You Go" brochures are also available at border ports.
  (Know Before You Go)
- **Tip #4 –** Members of the traveling public should consult the CBP Web site at to monitor border wait times. Information is updated hourly and is useful in planning trips and identifying periods of light usage and or shorter waits. Travelers may also monitor wait time information hourly for the San Ysidro border station by calling **(619) 690-8999** and for the Otay Mesa border station by calling **(619) 671-8999**. (CBP Border Wait Times)
- **Tip #5 –** During periods of heavy travel, border crossers may wish to consider alternative entry routes. For example, border crossers may want to use the nearby and less heavily traveled Otay Mesa or the Tecate ports of entry instead of the San Ysidro port.
- **Tip #6 –** Drivers should insure that the vehicles they use to cross the border are properly maintained and mechanically sound and that occupants avoid riding in areas of vehicles not specifically designed to carry passengers. Failure to follow these steps can expose vehicle occupants to carbon monoxide.

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As the busiest land border port in the nation with 35,000 - 40,000 vehicles and 20,000 pedestrians daily entering the U.S. through its gates, the San Ysidro facility is also one of the Southwest border stations most affected by heavy holiday I-94 processing.

CBP officials continually monitor traffic and border crossing times and will employ various traffic management operations to maintain the flow of traffic during periods of exceptionally heavy usage.

The principal mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection is anti-terrorism. CBP officers at border ports of entry are committed to identifying and stopping terrorists and the tools of terror. As a result, border crossers should continue to expect a thorough inspection process when they enter the U.S. from Mexico.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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