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What's New in Newsroom

CBP Reminds U.S.-Bound Travelers from Visa Waiver Program Countries to Complete Online Travel Authorization

print

(Tuesday, January 19, 2010)

contacts for this news release

Washington – On the one-year anniversary of implementing the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Customs and Border Protection reminds U.S.-bound travelers from Visa Waiver Program countries of the ESTA requirement. Beginning January 20, CBP will initiate a 60-day transition to enforced ESTA compliance for air carriers; VWP travelers without an approved ESTA may not be allowed to board a U.S.-bound plane.

ESTA is an electronic travel authorization that all citizens of VWP countries must obtain prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea to the United States under the VWP. ESTA has been mandatory since Jan. 12, 2009 for all nationals of VWP countries traveling to the U.S under the VWP. The requirement does not affect U.S. citizens returning from overseas or citizens of VWP countries traveling on a valid U.S. visa.

ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel, and once approved, generally will be valid for up to two years or until the applicant's passport expires, whichever comes first. Authorizations are valid for multiple entries into the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security recommends that ESTA applications be submitted as soon as an applicant begins making travel plans.

VWP travelers are required to log onto the ESTA Web site and complete an online application. The web-based system prompts applicants to answer basic biographic and eligibility questions typically requested on a paper I-94W form; ESTA is expected to completely replace the paper I-94W in the coming months. A third party, such as a relative, a friend, or a travel agent, may submit an application on behalf of a VWP traveler. (ESTA Web Site)

The ESTA Web site is available in 21 languages: Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

For more information about ESTA, please visit www.cbp.gov/ESTA.

(Frequently Asked Questions About ESTA (pdf - 127 KB.))

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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CBP Officers Intercept Live Beetle Worn as Jewelry at Brownsville Port of Entry

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Frequently Asked Questions About ESTA (pdf - 127 KB.)

ESTA Web Site

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