



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Special Update: Relief for Foreign Nationals Stranded due to the Icelandic Volcano Eruption

Foreign nationals stranded in the U.S. because of the airport closures in Europe due to the Icelandic volcano eruption and who are about to exceed their authorized stay in the U.S. have two avenues for relief. If at an airport and traveling under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), they should contact the U.S. Customs and Border Protection office at the airport. They may also contact the local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office. Both Department of Homeland Security agencies have provided their staff and offices with guidance on the applicable legal authorities under the VWP in circumstances such as this.

Persons traveling under a visa should contact the nearest USCIS office and follow the instructions below. While these instructions recommend initiating the process 45 days in advance, USCIS is providing reminder guidance on how to handle such cases until normal flights are scheduled between the U.S. and foreign countries affected by the Icelandic volcanic activity.

Extend My Stay

If you want to extend your stay in the United States, you must file a request with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on the Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status before your authorized stay expires. If you remain in the United States longer than authorized, you may be barred from returning and/or you may be removed (deported) from the United States. Check the date in the lower right-hand corner of your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record, to determine the date your authorized stay expires. We recommend that you apply to extend your stay at least 45 days before your authorized stay expires.

You may apply to extend your stay if:

- You were lawfully admitted into the United States with a nonimmigrant visa
- Your nonimmigrant visa status remains valid
- You have not committed any crimes that make you ineligible for a visa
- You have not violated the conditions of your admission
- Your passport is valid and will remain valid for the duration of your stay

You may not apply to extend your stay if you were admitted to the United States in the following categories:

- Visa Waiver Program
- Crew member (D nonimmigrant visa)
- In transit through the United States (C nonimmigrant visa)
- In transit through the United States without a visa (TWOV)
- Fiancé of a U.S. citizen or dependent of a fiancé (K nonimmigrant visa)
- Informant (and accompanying family) on terrorism or organized crime (S nonimmigrant visa)

For information on how to apply, see the “How Do I: Guides for Nonimmigrants” link to the right.

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