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Frequently Asked Questions about the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)

(10/06/2010)

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General Information on the Visa Waiver Program

Q: What is the Visa Waiver Program?

A: The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) is administered by DHS and enables eligible citizens or nationals of designated countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without first obtaining a visa.

Q: Which countries participate in the Visa Waiver Program?

A: Citizens or nationals of the following countries are currently eligible to travel to the United States under the VWP:

Andorra	Iceland	Norway
Australia	Ireland	Portugal
Austria	Italy	San Marino
Belgium	Japan	Singapore
Brunei	Republic of Korea	Slovakia
Czech Republic	Latvia	Slovenia
Denmark	Liechtenstein	Spain
Estonia	Lithuania	Sweden
Finland	Luxembourg	Switzerland
France	Malta	United Kingdom
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Q: What are the passport requirements to travel under the Visa Waiver Program?

A: Travel under the VWP is restricted to travelers possessing passports with specified security features. All VWP travelers must have a machine-readable passport. In addition, depending on when VWP travelers' passports were issued, other passport requirements apply:

- Nationals of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Slovakia require passports with an integrated chip containing the information from the data page. ([e-Passport](#))
- Nationals of other VWP countries:
 - Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended on or after 10/26/06: Passports must also have integrated chips with information from the data page.
 - Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended between 10/26/05 and 10/25/06: passports must have digital photographs printed on the data page or integrated chips with information from the data page.
 - Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended before 10/26/05: no further requirements.

Please refer to the Visa Waiver Program traveler guide on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) web site for additional details on passport requirements. ([Visa Waiver Program traveler guide](#)) ([Help](#))

Q: Do you have a communicable disease?

A: The ESTA web site has been updated and HIV has been removed from the list of communicable diseases. Therefore, an individual who is HIV-positive should not indicate that he or she has a communicable disease of public health significance when applying for an ESTA, based on his or her HIV status alone.

Q: Why was there a travel and immigration ban for HIV-positive people?

A: The Immigration and Nationality Act provides that individuals who are determined to have a communicable disease of public health significance are inadmissible to the United States and are prohibited from receiving visas to visit the United States without a waiver. Congress removed this statutory language specifically requiring that HIV be considered a "communicable disease of public health significance," a list that is established by regulations published by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through a provision in the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, which the President signed on July 30, 2008. On November 2, 2009, HHS published its final rule deleting HIV from the definition of "communicable disease of public health significance."

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General Information on ESTA

Q: What is the Electronic System for Travel Authorization?

A: The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is an automated system that assists in determining eligibility to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and whether such travel poses any law enforcement or security risk. Upon completion of an ESTA application, a traveler is notified of his or her eligibility to travel to the United States under the VWP.

Q: Why is authorization under ESTA required for U.S.-bound travel under the Visa Waiver Program?

A: The "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007" (9/11 Act) amended Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), requiring that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implement an electronic travel authorization system and other measures to enhance the security of the VWP. ESTA adds another layer of security that allows DHS to determine, in advance of travel, whether an individual is eligible to travel to the United States under the VWP and whether such travel poses a law enforcement or security risk.

Q: Is an ESTA a visa?

A: No. An approved ESTA is not a visa. It does not meet the legal or regulatory requirements to serve in lieu of a U.S. visa when a visa is required under U.S. law. Individuals who possess a valid visa will still be able to travel to the United States on that visa for the purpose for which it was issued. Individuals traveling on valid visas are not required to apply for ESTA.

Q: What laws govern ESTA?

A: ESTA is required pursuant to Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended by Section 711 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007. This legislation required DHS to develop and implement an automated system to determine, in advance of travel, the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States and whether such travel poses a law enforcement or security risk.

Q: How does ESTA mitigate VWP security risks?

A: ESTA enables DHS to evaluate whether individuals are eligible to travel to the United States under the VWP prior to their boarding a U.S.-bound carrier, and whether such travel poses any law enforcement or security risks. ESTA counterbalances vulnerabilities inherent in visa-free travel by adding a layer of advance scrutiny that enables DHS frontline personnel to focus even more on the small population of potentially dangerous travelers.

Q: Are there any countries that have a similar system in place for in-bound travelers?

A: The Government of Australia has a program that is similar to ESTA, called the Electronic Travel Authority, in which travelers planning to visit Australia may submit an application electronically through the Electronic Travel Authority website.

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ESTA and Data Privacy

Q: How does the U.S. government protect the privacy of ESTA data and who has access to it?

A: Information submitted by applicants through the ESTA website is subject to the same strict privacy provisions and controls that have been established for similar traveler screening programs. Access to such information is limited to those with a professional need to know. The website is operated by the U.S. government and employs technology to prevent unauthorized access to the information entered and viewed. Information is protected and governed by U.S. laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Federal Information Security Management Act.

Q: How long is ESTA application data stored?

A: ESTA application data remains active for the period that ESTA is valid, which is generally two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first. DHS will then maintain this information for an additional year after which it will be archived for 12 years to allow retrieval for law enforcement, national security or investigatory purposes. Once the information is archived, the number of officials with access to it is further limited. This retention is consistent both with CBP's border search authority and with the border security mission mandated for CBP by Congress. Data linked to active law enforcement lookout records, CBP matches to enforcement activities, and/or investigations or cases, including applications for ESTA that are denied, will remain accessible for the life of the law enforcement activities to which they are related.

ESTA has allowed for the automation of the paper I-94W form in the air and sea environment. In those instances where a VWP traveler is admitted using the automated process, the corresponding admission record will be maintained in accordance with the retention schedule for I-94W, which is 75 years. I-94W and I-94 data are maintained for this period of time in order to ensure that the information related to a particular admission to the United States is available for providing any applicable benefits related to immigration or other enforcement purposes.

Q: Does DHS share ESTA data with others?

A: The information collected by and maintained in ESTA may be used by other components of DHS on a need-to-know basis consistent with the component's mission.

Under current agreements between DHS and the Department of State (DOS), information submitted during an ESTA application may be shared with DOS consular officers to help them determine whether a visa should be issued to an applicant after an ESTA application has been denied.

Information may be shared with appropriate federal, state, local, tribal and foreign governmental agencies or multilateral governmental organizations responsible for investigating or prosecuting the violations of, or for enforcing or implementing, a statute, rule, regulation, order or license, or where DHS believes information would assist enforcement of civil or criminal laws. Additionally, information may be shared when DHS reasonably believes such use is to assist in anti-terrorism efforts or intelligence gathering related to national or international security or transnational crime. All sharing will remain consistent with the Privacy Act System of Records Notice, which was published in the Federal Register on June 10, 2008, and is available on the DHS website.

While carriers will not receive the ESTA application information that travelers provide to DHS, they will receive confirmation of a passenger's ESTA status via the Advance Passenger Information System, indicating whether ESTA is required and whether authorization has been granted.

Q: Does DHS use application data for any purpose other than determining eligibility for an ESTA?

A: DHS uses the application data to screen the individual before granting authorization to travel to the United States under the VWP. As part of this screening process, information that identifies suspected or known violators of the law and other persons of concern will be provided to the appropriate law enforcement, national security and/or counterterrorism agency.

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Who Needs to Apply for ESTA

Q: Who is required to apply for ESTA?

A: All eligible nationals or citizens of VWP countries who plan to travel to the United States for temporary business or pleasure under the VWP are required to receive an authorization through ESTA prior to boarding a U.S.-bound airplane or vessel. Accompanied and unaccompanied children, regardless of age, are also required to obtain an independent ESTA approval. A third party, such as a relative or travel agent, is permitted to submit an ESTA application on behalf of a VWP traveler.

Q: Do nationals or citizens of countries that participate in the VWP require an ESTA if they are only transiting the United States en route to another country?

A: Yes. Eligible nationals or citizens of countries that participate in the VWP require either an ESTA or a visa to transit the United States. If a traveler is only planning to transit through the United States en route to another country, when he or she completes the ESTA application, the traveler should enter the words "In Transit" and his or her final destination in the address lines under the heading "Address While In The United States."

Q: Do citizens of Bermuda, Canada, the Marshall Islands, or Micronesia need to apply for an ESTA?

A: No. ESTA is required only for citizens or nationals of VWP countries.

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ESTA Implementation Timeline

Q: When will travelers be required to obtain an ESTA?

A: As of January 12, 2009, all VWP travelers are required to obtain a travel authorization via ESTA prior to traveling to the United States under the VWP.

Q: When can a traveler apply for travel authorization via ESTA?

A: Any time, but preferably as soon as a VWP traveler begins to plan a trip to visit the United States. Travelers may file ESTA applications through the ESTA web site.

Q: What happens if a VWP participant travels to the United States after ESTA is mandatory, but somehow does not have an ESTA?

A: VWP travelers who have not received an ESTA approval may be denied boarding, experience delayed processing, or be denied admission at a U.S. port of entry.

Q: Do VWP travelers arriving in the United States from a non-VWP country need an ESTA?

A: All VWP travelers arriving by U.S.-bound airplane or vessel, regardless of their country of origination or port of embarkation, require an approved ESTA.

Q: It is less than 72 hours before my flight to the United States. I just found out about the ESTA application, what can I do?

A: While CBP recommends that you apply at least 72 hours before travel, you may apply anytime prior to boarding. In most cases, a response is received within seconds of submitting an application.

Q: What happens to VWP travelers without an ESTA? Will they be denied boarding? Will CBP have discretion at the ports of entry to allow admission to the United States for emergencies?

A: VWP travelers, who travel without an approved ESTA, may be denied boarding. CBP will handle emergencies on a case-by-case basis.

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How to Apply for an ESTA

Q: How does a traveler apply for an ESTA to travel to the United States?

A: ESTA is a Web-based system. In order to apply for an ESTA, go to the ESTA web site, follow the instructions to answer all of the required questions and submit an application for travel authorization. Travelers will not be able to submit ESTA applications at a U.S. port of entry or a U.S. embassy or consulate.

Q: Is this website secure and private?

A: Yes. The website is operated by the U.S. government and employs technology to prevent unauthorized access to the information entered and viewed. Information submitted by applicants through the ESTA website is subject to the same strict controls that have been established for similar traveler screening programs as governed by U.S. laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Federal Information Security Management Act. Access to such information is limited to those with a professional need to know.

Q: If a traveler has received approval through ESTA to travel to the United States, does that mean that the traveler can enter the country?

A: Not necessarily. An ESTA approval only authorizes a traveler to board a carrier for travel to the United States under the VWP. In the same way that a valid visa does not constitute a determination of admissibility, an approved ESTA is not a guarantee of admissibility to the United States at a port of entry. In all cases, CBP officers make admissibility determinations at U.S. ports of entry or pre-clearance facilities.

Q: Can a VWP traveler with more than one passport travel to the United States on the passport that was not used when applying for an ESTA?

A: No. Each VWP traveler must have an approved ESTA for the passport he or she plans to use for travel to the United States. If travelers acquire a new passport, they must submit a new ESTA application for their new passport.

Q: My passport was issued overseas. How should I answer the question "Passport Issuing Country"?

A: The applicant should choose the country of their nationality, not the physical location where the passport was issued. For example, if you have a Japanese passport issued in the United States, choose Japan.

Q: How far in advance of a trip is it necessary to apply for travel authorization through ESTA?

A: ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to traveling to the United States under the VWP, and in most cases, ESTA provides an almost immediate determination of eligibility for travel under the VWP. However, DHS recommends and encourages VWP travelers to submit ESTA applications through the ESTA website as soon as the traveler begins to plan a visit to the U.S. VWP travelers are not required to have specific plans to travel to the United States before they apply for an ESTA, but if the information is available applicants are encouraged to provide their destination addresses and itineraries. Each approved ESTA application generally is valid for two years or until the applicant's passport expires, whichever comes first. A new travel authorization is required if: (1) the traveler is issued a new passport; (2) the traveler changes his or her name; (3) the traveler changes his or her gender; (4) the traveler's country of citizenship changes; or (5) the circumstances underlying the traveler's previous responses to any of the ESTA application questions requiring a "yes" or "no" response have changed. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

Q: What happens when a traveler submits an application and how long does it take for ESTA to process an application?

A: In most cases, ESTA provides an almost immediate determination of eligibility for travel under the VWP. There are three types of responses to an ESTA application: Authorization Approved, Authorization Pending and Travel Not Authorized. Applicants who receive an approval are authorized to travel to the United States under the VWP. Applicants who receive an Authorization Pending response will need to check the website for updates within 72 hours to receive a final response. Applicants whose ESTA applications are denied will be referred to the Travel Information web site for information on how to apply for a visa to travel to the United States.

Q: How long is a travel authorization via ESTA valid?

A: Each approved ESTA application generally is valid for two years and allows for multiple visits to the United States within that period without having to apply for another ESTA approval. Travelers whose passports will expire in less than two years will receive an ESTA valid until the passport's expiration date.

A new travel authorization is required if: (1) the traveler is issued a new passport; (2) the traveler changes his or her name; (3) the traveler changes his or her gender; (4) the traveler's country of citizenship changes; or (5) the circumstances underlying the traveler's previous responses to any of the ESTA application questions requiring a "yes" or "no" response have changed. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

Q: I have seen other websites that are assisting travelers in applying for their ESTA application. Is there a benefit to using one of these other sites?

A: No. Use of a private service to apply for travel authorization via ESTA will not expedite approval. Third party websites that provide information about ESTA submit ESTA applications for VWP travelers are not endorsed by, associated with, or affiliated in any way with DHS or the U.S. government.

Q: Can prospective travelers apply for an ESTA without specific travel plans if they want to be able to travel to the United States later on short notice?

A: Yes. VWP travelers are not required to have specific plans to travel to the United States before they apply for an ESTA. If a traveler's destination in the United States is unknown when he or she completes the ESTA application, the traveler should enter "Unknown." Travelers may update this information when their plans are finalized, but they will not be required to update their destination addresses or itineraries should they change after their ESTA application has been approved. DHS recommends that ESTA applications be submitted as early as possible, as soon as, or even before travel is planned. ESTA will accept applications from last-minute and emergency travelers – those VWP travelers who arrive at the airport without an approved ESTA.

Q: How can a traveler apply for an ESTA without access to the Internet?

A: A third party, such as a relative or travel agent, may submit an ESTA application on behalf of the traveler. A third party may also pay the associated fees on behalf of the traveler. The traveler is still responsible under the law for the answers submitted on his or her behalf.

Q: What information is needed in order to complete the ESTA application?

A: The traveler must provide, in English, biographical data including name, birth date and passport information. The traveler also must answer VWP eligibility questions regarding communicable diseases, arrests and convictions for certain crimes, past history of visa revocation or deportation and other questions. The traveler will also need their credit card information to pay the associated fees in order to complete the ESTA application.

Q: Are answers required in English? What if the traveler's keyboard does not type in English?

A: Information for the ESTA application must be entered in **English**. The computer used to submit the ESTA application should be configured for the U.S. English language with a suitable English font for keyboard input.

If the computer's operating system is Microsoft Windows 95 or higher, please refer to the Conversation Exchange website for computer configuration.

If the computer is using a non-Windows operating system, refer to the documentation or help information provided by the operating system vendor.

Q: Do VWP travelers need to bring a paper printout of their ESTA approval to the airport?

A: No. DHS communicates a traveler's ESTA status to the carriers. However, DHS recommends that travelers print out the ESTA application response as a record of their ESTA application number to confirm their ESTA status.

Q: Can I contact somebody for assistance regarding ESTA?

A: You may call the CBP Customer Service Center at **(703) 526-4200** or **1-877-227-5511**. You may also visit www.help.cbp.gov and click on "Find an Answer, Ask a Question." The CBP Customer Service Center will only be able to answer general questions regarding ESTA. If you need to know why an ESTA application has been denied or you have specific questions regarding your ESTA application, you must file a request with the DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program. ([Traveler Redress Inquiry Program](#))

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ESTA Fee and the Travel Promotion Act of 2009

Q: Is there a fee for a travel authorization?

A: Yes, beginning September 8, 2010, there is a fee required by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (Section 9 of the United States Capitol Police Administrative Technical Corrections Act of 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-145). The fee is comprised of two parts:

- **Processing Charge** -- All applicants requesting an electronic travel authorization are charged for the processing of the application. The fee is \$4.00.
- **Authorization charge** -- If your application is approved and you receive authorization to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program, an additional \$10.00 will be charged to your credit card. If your electronic travel authorization is denied, you are only charged for the processing of your application.

CBP is not responsible for any additional fees that may be charged by your credit card company for the transaction.

Q: How do I pay for my travel authorization?

A: All payment for electronic travel authorization applications must be made by credit card or debit card. The ESTA system currently accepts only the following credit/debit cards: MasterCard, VISA, American Express, and Discover. You may also have a third party, such as a relative or travel agent, pay the associated fees for each application. Your application will not be submitted for processing until all payment information is received.

Q: Is there another way to pay other than with a credit card?

A: At this time, payment is required through the following credit cards: MasterCard, VISA, American Express, and Discover. Payments can also be made with a debit card that holds the VISA or MasterCard symbol. Please check with your bank on compatibility of your debit card. We are continuing to explore other payment measures for the future.

Q: If I'm already registered in ESTA, will I need to re-register and pay a fee after September 8, 2010?

A: No. The fee will only be required for new registrations on or after September 8, 2010. Travelers who renew their ESTA after September 8, 2010 will need to pay the same fees for a renewal.

Q: Is the credit card information I use for payment secure on pay.gov?

A: Yes. Pay.gov uses 128-bit SSL encryption to protect your transaction information while you're logged in to Pay.gov. In addition, any account numbers you set up in your profile are encrypted before being stored in our database. When you access your profile, any account numbers you have entered will be masked on-screen; each account number in your profile will be displayed as a group of asterisks followed by the last four digits of the account number.

Q: What is the purpose of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009?

A: According to the Senate Report of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (Senate Report 111-025), the purpose of the Travel Promotion Act is to increase international travel to all areas of the United States, communicate United States travel policies overseas, and make entry procedures into the United States more efficient and welcoming.

Q: Who were the primary sponsors of the Travel Promotion Act?

A: The Travel Promotion Act was sponsored by Senators Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) John Ensign (R-Nev.) and Reps. William Delahunt (D-Mass.) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) in the 111th Congress and signed into law by the President on March 4, 2010.

Q: Do any other countries collect entry/exit fees?

A: Fifty-six countries charge entry and/or exit fees. These fees range from \$14 to \$100, with an average of \$26.77. However, these fees are largely unseen because they are included in the taxes and fees attached to airline tickets.

Q: There are third-party entities already working in VWP countries that charge a processing fee to assist travelers in completing the ESTA online form. The implementation of a government-based fee for ESTA is likely going to result in additional confusion to international travelers. How can this be mitigated?

A: The Department of Homeland Security worked with the travel and tourism industry to inform international travelers that the original ESTA program online application form was free. DHS and industry will continue to promote the official U.S. government ESTA website and discourage travelers from using the third-party organizations to complete the easy ESTA application. This will increase the likelihood that VWP travelers will know where to find the correct internet address for the official U.S. government ESTA website and that the only ESTA fees required will be those collected during the online application process.

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Updating Your ESTA

Q: Does a traveler ever need to reapply for travel authorization through ESTA?

A: Yes, a new travel authorization via ESTA is required when: (1) the traveler is issued a new passport; (2) the traveler changes his or her name; (3) the traveler changes his or her gender; (4) the traveler's country of citizenship changes; or (5) the circumstances underlying the traveler's previous responses to any of the ESTA application questions requiring a "yes" or "no" response have changed.

ESTA approvals are typically granted for a two-year period or until the applicant's passport expires, whichever is sooner. ESTA provides validity dates upon approval of the application. Therefore, a traveler must apply for a new ESTA when the prior ESTA approval or passport expires. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

Q: What should a traveler do if the information in his or her passport has changed?

A: If a traveler's passport information changes, the individual is required to apply for a new travel authorization through ESTA. A new travel authorization is required if (1) the traveler is issued a new passport; (2) the traveler changes his or her name; (3) the traveler changes his or her gender; (4) the traveler's country of citizenship changes; or (5) the circumstances underlying the traveler's previous responses to any of the ESTA application questions requiring a "yes" or "no" response have changed. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

Q: How can applicants correct a mistake when completing their ESTA applications?

A: The ESTA website prompts applicants to review the data submitted for the overall application prior to submission. In addition, the ESTA website requires the applicant to reaffirm the passport number, family name and country of citizenship prior to submission. If an applicant makes a mistake when filling out the passport or biographic information, and he or she realizes the mistake only after having submitted the ESTA application, he or she needs to submit a new ESTA application. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted. Mistakes made in answering the VWP eligibility questions may be corrected by contacting the CBP Customer Service Center at **1-877-227-5511** depending on what question the mistake was made. Mistakes on e-mail address, telephone number, carrier, flight number, city of embarkation, and address while in the United States may be corrected or updated by using the ESTA update function. There are no associated fees for updating an ESTA application.

Q: How does a traveler get help with filling out the ESTA application?

A: The ESTA website has extensive guidance available through the online "Help" function. Additionally, a third party, such as a relative or travel agent, may submit an ESTA application on behalf of a VWP traveler.

Q: Do travelers need to update their ESTA if it will expire before they depart the United States?

A: If an ESTA expires before the traveler leaves the United States, the traveler is not required to apply for another ESTA. However, the traveler will need to apply for a new ESTA for future travel.

Q: I forgot my ESTA application number. How can I log back into the system to update my information or check my application status?

A: If a traveler loses, forgets, or does not have access to his or her application number or travel status, he or she may retrieve the application number, beginning September 8, 2010, through the ESTA website by entering the applicants name, date of birth, passport number and passport issuing country.

Q: How can applicants correct a mistake on Passport Issuance Date or Passport Expiration Date after completing their ESTA application?

A: If applicants enter the wrong Passport Issuance Date or Passport Expiration Date and they realize the mistake only after having submitted the ESTA application they will need to re-apply for a new travel authorization. The old application will be automatically cancelled. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

Q: How can I see the data I entered? Can I print out the information I entered?

A: The ESTA website will prompt applicants to review the data submitted for the overall application prior to submission. The applicant will be able to print out the entire application and their ESTA status upon completion of the application. Once the browser is closed, the applicant will only be able to print out their ESTA status by retrieving their application. It will not be possible to print the entire application once the browser is closed. DHS recommends that travelers print out the ESTA application response to record their ESTA application number and to confirm their ESTA status.

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ESTA and the I-94W

Q: If a VWP traveler has received ESTA approval, does he or she also need to fill out an I-94W?

A: The implementation of the ESTA program allows DHS to eliminate the requirement that VWP travelers complete an I-94W prior to being admitted to the United States. CBP has transitioned to paperless processing for VWP travelers arriving by air or sea who have obtained an ESTA authorization. Most travelers entering the United States under the Visa Waiver Program who have an approved ESTA will no longer need to fill out the I-94W form, nor will a green I-94W departure card be placed in their passport. The I-94W form will still be required at the land border.

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ESTA and U.S. VISAS

Q: What if a traveler has a current, valid visa?

A: Individuals who possess a valid visa will still be able to travel to the United States on that visa for the purpose for which it was issued. Individuals traveling on valid visas are not required to apply for an ESTA authorization.

Q: I have a B1/B2 visa. Do I need to apply for an ESTA?

A: If you already have a B1/B2 or any other valid visa and you are traveling for the purpose in which it was issued, you do not need to apply for an ESTA authorization.

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ESTA Denials

Q: Does the U.S. anticipate that a large number of travelers who previously traveled under the VWP will now be refused an ESTA authorization?

A: The ESTA is designed to screen each traveler for law enforcement or security risks. The vast majority of travelers will receive an approved ESTA authorization.

Q: What should a traveler do if he or she is not approved for travel through ESTA?

A: If an ESTA application is denied and the traveler wishes to continue with the trip, the traveler will be required to apply for a nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. For more about visa application procedures. ([Travel Information](#))

Q: Should a traveler not approved for travel through ESTA reapply?

A: Unless the circumstances have changed, the traveler will not qualify for an ESTA and will need to apply for a nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Mistakes made in answering the VWP eligibility questions MAY be corrected by contacting the CBP Customer Service Center at **1-877-227-5511** depending on what question the mistake was made. In addition, reapplying with false information for the purposes of qualifying for an ESTA could make the traveler permanently ineligible for U.S. travel.

Q: How can a traveler find out the reason an ESTA application was denied?

A: DHS has carefully developed the ESTA program to ensure that only those individuals who are ineligible to travel to the United States under the VWP or those whose travel would pose a law enforcement or security risk are refused an ESTA. While the ESTA website provides a link to the DHS Travel Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP) website, there are no guarantees that a request for redress through DHS TRIP will resolve the VWP ineligibility that caused an applicant's ESTA application to be denied.

U.S. Embassies and Consulates are not able to provide details about ESTA denials or resolve the issue that caused the ESTA denial. Embassies and Consulates will process an application for a non-immigrant visa, which, if approved, will be the only way that a traveler whose ESTA application has been denied would be authorized to travel to the U.S.

Q: If a traveler was denied ESTA approval and needs to travel immediately, is it possible to get an emergency visa appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate?

A: Unfortunately, the Department of State is unable to guarantee next-day appointments because of varying demand for visas. As a result, we encourage travelers to apply for an ESTA far in advance of the proposed travel. Information about the appointment process is available at the nearest consular section or at the Travel Information website ([Travel Information](#))

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