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# National Interest Exception for Certain H-2 travelers from South Africa

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H-2A and certain H-2B travelers covered by the [Presidential Proclamation of January 25, 2021](#) titled *Proclamation on the Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Nonimmigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting Coronavirus Disease*, which relates to travelers who have been present in South Africa, may qualify for national interest exceptions. The H-2 program is essential to the economy and food security of the United States and is a national security priority. Therefore, we intend to continue processing H-2 applications for individuals who provide temporary labor or services essential to the United States food supply chain, as permitted by post resources and local government restrictions.

H-2A and H-2B applicants covered by the January 25, 2021, Presidential Proclamation who are necessary to ensure food supply chains, such as seafood processors, fish cutters, salmon roe technicians, farm equipment mechanics, agriculture equipment operators etc., may be considered for a national interest exception to travel. Applicants who are applying for a visa will be considered for an exception at the time of interview. Travelers who already hold valid H-2A or food-supply-chain related H-2B visas and believe they meet the exception criteria should follow the procedures set forth on the Embassy/Consulate website where their visa was processed for consideration for an exception. This exception criteria only applies to those H-2 travelers and applicants who are subject to the January 25, 2021 Proclamation due to physical presence in South Africa.

Additional information on H-2 interview waiver provisions for returning and first-time applicants can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/important-announcement-on-h2-visas.html>