

# Crossing Borders With Confidence: Summer Travel Tips For A Smooth Journey



Below we provide our recommendations for best practices for travel to the U.S. given the current immigration climate to help travelers avoid complications related to their temporary admission and stay in the U.S. this summer.

## **Prior to Travel**

### **Verify your immigration and related documents:**

Well in advance of traveling to the U.S., passport and/or work permits and visa validity should be verified, as applicable. In general, your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the expiration of your period of admission to the United States. While the six-month requirement does not apply to Canadians, it is still recommended. Citizens of the countries listed in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) document entitled [Exemption of the Six-Month Passport Validity Rule](#) are exempt from the six-month rule and need only have a passport valid for their intended period of stay.

If you are travelling to the U.S. under the [Visa Waiver Program](#), ensure that you have a valid Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) registration. The VWP allows citizens from participating countries to seek admission to the U.S. as a business visitor or tourist for up to 90 days without needing a visa. Travelers must hold an approved ESTA before traveling to the U.S.

See: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>.

If you are a national of China and have a ten year U.S. visa in either B-1, B-2 or B-1/B-2 classification, you must enroll to the USCBP's [Electronic Visa Update System](#) (EVUS) prior to travel to the U.S. EVUS is an automated system that determines eligibility to travel to the United States for temporary business or pleasure.

### **Alien registration requirement:**

As of April 11, 2025, all foreign nationals who intend to stay in the U.S. for 30 consecutive days or longer are required to be registered with the government before the 30 days are up and carry evidence of their registration.

If you will stay in the U.S. 30 days or longer, prior to your travel to the U.S. you

should determine how you will register/what registration documents you will rely on i.e., Form I-94, *Arrival and Departure Record*, or self-registration via [Form G-325R](#) available on the USCIS website. If you are traveling via land-border crossing and intend to request a Form I-94, it is recommended you download the USCBP Home Mobile Application on your mobile device prior to travel and pay the required \$6 fee and then request issuance of the Form I-94 at the port of entry. Certain exceptions apply, as described on the USCIS website.

### **Search yourself on the worldwide web and vet your online public profile(s), social media and professional accounts:**

Any public content on social media is accessible and viewable to a U.S. Consular officer or USCBP officer. As such, when applying for a U.S. visa or requesting admission to the U.S., you should be prepared to answer any questions an officer might ask you in relation to what you may have communicated or interacted with on public platforms.

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) announced on June 18, 2025, that it will conduct a comprehensive and thorough vetting, including online presence, of all student and exchange visitor applicants in the F, M, and J nonimmigrant classifications. To facilitate this vetting, all applicants for F, M, and J nonimmigrant visas will be instructed to adjust the privacy settings on all their social media profiles to “public”<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **Review contents of the electronic devices you intend to travel with:**

The content on the electronic devices you will be traveling with is subject to search by USCBP.

The content can be used by a USCBP officer to assess and determine whether you are admissible to the U.S. and can be used to bar entry to the U.S. if a USCBP officer deems you and/or the content on your electronic devices as a concern or threat to national security. You must be aware of the content of your electronic devices and be prepared to answer questions in relation to it.

The following are a few examples of precautions that can be taken:

- If traveling with a device owned by your employer, the device can be both electronically and physically labelled as belonging to the employer;
- Place the device in airplane mode during border crossings so that information cannot be downloaded to the device during an inspection by USCBP;
- Log out of cloud-based apps prior to inspection at the port of entry;
- Back up confidential files or data onto a server or into a secure cloud-based account and remove the information from the local storage of the device;
- Files that contain confidential or propriety information can be marked as such both within the document and in the file name of the document and can be appropriately encrypted;
- Travel with an empty device (i.e., a device with nothing downloaded).

### **Be aware of how criminality issues and illegal activity can impact your entry to the U.S.; Assess your previous immigration history.**

#### ***Criminality and Illegal Activity:***

While most people are aware, criminal activity, including violations of federal, state as well as non-U.S. law can have a significant negative impact on your U.S. immigration status. An immigration attorney should be contacted in advance to discuss

potential implications. This includes criminal convictions (even if there was no court conviction). There may be immigration consequences even if a charge or conviction has been dismissed, expunged, or sealed, or pardoned.

It is important to remember while legalized in some U.S. states, **U.S. federal law still classifies cannabis as an illegal controlled substance**<sup>[2]</sup>. Because immigration is governed by federal law, foreign nationals may not travel with cannabis to the U.S. and the sale, possession, production and distribution of cannabis or the facilitation of the aforementioned remain illegal under U.S. federal law. Consequently, crossing the border or arriving at a U.S. port of entry in violation of this law may result in denied admission, seizure, fines, and apprehension.

### ***Previous U.S. Immigration History:***

A negative immigration history with the U.S. can lead to additional questioning. Under the current immigration climate, prior infractions, or noncompliance with U.S. immigration requirements, even if previously overlooked, can result lead to intensive questioning and/or result in the denial of entry to the U.S.

### **Travel Ban**

On June 4, 2025, U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed a [Proclamation](#) restricting entry to the U.S. by foreign nationals from certain countries which took effect at 12:01 am EDT on June 9, 2025.

The Proclamation is a travel ban which suspends the immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States of nationals from 12 countries (with limited exceptions):

- Afghanistan
- Burma
- Chad
- Republic of the Congo
- Equatorial
- Guinea
- Eritrea
- Haiti
- Iran
- Libya
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Yemen

It also partially restricts and limits entry into the U.S. of nationals from 7 other countries. Nationals from these countries cannot enter the U.S. as immigrants or as nonimmigrants on B-1, B-2, B-1/B-2, F, M, and J visas (with limited exceptions):

- Burundi
- Cuba
- Laos
- Sierra Leone
- Togo
- Turkmenistan
- Venezuela

One notable exception to the travel ban is for a dual national of a country listed in the Proclamation who is traveling on a passport issued by a country that is not listed in the Proclamation. Exceptions also include U.S. lawful permanent residents

("Green Card holders"), existing U.S. visa holders, and adoptions by U.S. citizens. The U.S. DOS issued a news release confirming that:

*Foreign nationals, even those outside the United States, who hold valid visas as of the effective date are not subject to the Proclamation. No visas issued before June 9, 2025, have been or will be revoked pursuant to the Proclamation.*

*Visa applicants who are subject to this Presidential Proclamation may still submit visa applications and schedule interviews, but they may be ineligible for visa issuance or admission to the United States<sup>[3]</sup>.*

### **Consider Applying for Membership to a Trusted Traveler Program**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security offers membership to several [Trusted Traveler Programs](#) which grant members the use of expedited lanes at certain U.S. airports, and when crossing international borders. All applicants undergo a rigorous background check and in-person interview before enrollment.

The [NEXUS](#) program is designed to speed up crossings into Canada and the United States for low-risk, pre-approved travellers who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada or the U.S. and for Mexican nationals who are members of the *Viajero Confiable* program. It allows expedited processing for pre-screened travelers when entering the United States and Canada, by using dedicated NEXUS processing lanes at certain land border crossings, and NEXUS kiosks when entering the United States via Canadian Preclearance airports.

Similarly, [Global Entry](#) is a program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States at [select airports](#). U.S. citizens, U.S. lawful permanent residents, citizens of Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Argentina, India, Colombia, Panama, Singapore, South Korea, and Mexican nationals are eligible for Global Entry membership.

Global Entry or NEXUS membership also entitles members to use the [TSA Pre✓®](#) lanes at airport security checks in the United States, providing expedited passenger screening.

While not guaranteed, traveling with a valid NEXUS or Global Entry card may help expedite entry to the U.S. and/or reduce the amount of time a traveler spends being inspected by USCBP.

### **Seeking Admission to the U.S.**

#### **Procedures:**

All individuals entering the U.S. should expect to be subject to thorough screenings and inspection at U.S. borders, especially foreign nationals, and permanent residents. This could include a search of your electronic devices.

#### **Questioning by USCBP:**

Non-U.S. Citizens should be prepared for questioning by USCBP when seeking entry into the U.S. and should allow sufficient time for inspection.

#### **Types of Questions to Expect**

- Your country of residence;
- Your immigration status in the U.S.;
- Prior U.S. and other worldwide travel history;

- The purpose of travel to the U.S.;
- Expected duration of stay in the U.S.;
- Your personal and professional background and history;
- Employment;
- Whether you have immediate family in the U.S.;
- Other issues an officer may deem relevant to assess whether you are a threat to national security or interest.

### **What To Do if Interrogated, Searched and/or Held for Additional Questioning:**

During questioning, inspection and/or if you are held by USCBP when seeking admission to the U.S., you must remain calm, patient, and answer all questions clearly, concisely, and truthfully.

If you do not understand a question, ask for clarification before answering. Omitting or misrepresenting information can result in denial of entry, removal from the United States and/or even possible criminal penalties so always be truthful in your responses to USCBP.

If detained at the port of entry, you are generally not entitled to have a lawyer present, but you can ask for permission to contact your attorney and should do so if the opportunity arises.

### **Once in the U.S.**

#### **Change of Address**

Persons subject to the alien registration requirement are also required to notify the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) of a change of address within 10 days of address change, unless they are subject to the rare exemptions, such as foreign diplomats, representatives of international organizations and non-immigrants who are not required to possess a visa and are in the United States for fewer than 30 days<sup>[4]</sup>.

You can notify USCIS of the change by filing a change of address request online through a [USCIS online account](#) or by mailing [Form AR-11](#) to them.

Failure to comply with the address change notification requirements may affect your ability to remain in the U.S. and to re-enter the U.S. after travel abroad and can be subject to a fine.

In conclusion, traveling to the U.S. during the summer of 2025 requires careful consideration of immigration regulations to ensure a smooth entry into the country. Following these best practices will help you navigate the complexities of travel and hopefully enjoy a successful and stress-free trip.

#### **Footnotes**

1. <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/06/announcement-of-expanded-screening-and-vetting-for-visa-applicants/>

2. 21 United States Code [Title 21 United States Code \(USC\) Controlled Substances Act](#)

3. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/suspension-of-visa-issuance-to-foreign-nationals-to-protect-the-united-states-from-foreign-terrorists-and-other-national-security-and-public-safety-threats.html>

4. 8 U.S.C. 1305

To view the original article click [here](#)

*The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.*

Authors: [Heather Michelin](#), [Saleha Hasham](#), [Rayan Ghantous](#)

McCarthy Tétrault LLP