

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html

Visa Waiver Program (VWP)

- [Print](#)
- [Email](#)

Important Notice:

[Glossary](#)

Taiwan: On October 2, 2012, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Napolitano announced the designation of Taiwan into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Eligible Taiwan passport holders can travel on the VWP beginning November 1, 2012, but may apply for travel authorization approval through the [Electronic System for Travel Authorization](#) beginning immediately.

- [Overview – What is the Visa Waiver Program?](#)
- [Which countries* participate in the Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)?](#)
- [How does a country* qualify to participate in the VWP?](#)
- [Which travelers may use the VWP to enter the United States?](#)
- [When does a national of a VWP country* need to apply for a visa instead of using the VWP?](#)
- [I was denied a visa on a recent visa application, may I use the VWP?](#)
- [What do I need to enter the United States under the VWP?](#)
- [What do I need to know about VWP MRP and e-Passport requirements?](#)
- [What is a machine-readable passport \(MRP\)?](#)
- [What is an e-Passport \(or biometric passport\)?](#)
- [What should I know about machine-readable passports \(MRPs\) and family travel?](#)
- [Entering the United States under VWP – What happens at the port of entry?](#)
- [Can a VWP traveler arrive from Mexico and Canada at a land port of entry? \(CBP website\)](#)
- [Re-admission to the United States after Short Trip to an Adjacent Island, Canada, or Mexico? \(CBP website\)](#)
- [Is there a fee to use the Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)?](#)
- [What about Canadian, Mexican or Bermudian citizens and VWP?](#)
- [How can I get additional information?](#)
- [Reference](#)

Overview – What is the Visa Waiver Program?

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables nationals of 37 participating countries* to travel to the United States for tourism or business (visitor [B] visa purposes only) for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. The program was established to eliminate unnecessary barriers to travel, stimulating the tourism industry, and permitting the Department of State to focus consular resources in other areas. VWP eligible travelers may apply for a visa, if they prefer to do so. Nationals of VWP countries* must meet eligibility requirements to travel without a visa on VWP, and therefore, some travelers from VWP countries* are not eligible to use the program. VWP travelers are required to have a valid authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to travel, are screened at the port of entry into the United States, and are enrolled in the Department of Homeland Security's [US-VISIT](#) program.

Which countries* participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)?

Currently, 37 countries* participate in the Visa Waiver Program, as shown below:

Andorra	Hungary	New Zealand
Australia	Iceland	Norway
Austria	Ireland	Portugal
Belgium	Italy	San Marino
Brunei	Japan	Singapore
Czech Republic	Latvia	Slovakia
Denmark	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	South Korea
Finland	Luxembourg	Spain
France	Malta	Sweden
Germany	Monaco	Switzerland
Greece	the Netherlands	Taiwan (see note below)
		United Kingdom

Note: Eligible Taiwan passport holders may begin traveling to the United States without visas under the Visa Waiver Program beginning on November 1, 2012.

How does a country* qualify to participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)?

To be admitted to the Visa Waiver Program, a country* must meet various security and other requirements, such as enhanced law enforcement and security-related data sharing with the United

States and timely reporting of both blank and issued lost and stolen passports. VWP members are also required to maintain high counterterrorism, law enforcement, border control, and document security standards.

In addition, designation as a VWP country* is at the discretion of the United States government. Meeting the objective requirements of the VWP does not guarantee a successful candidacy for VWP membership.

Which travelers may use the Visa Waiver Program to enter the United States?

Review this [VWP Quick Reference Guide](#) (for new member countries*) and make sure you review this webpage for detailed information. Nationals of the 37 countries* participating in the Visa Waiver Program may use VWP if:

- They have received an authorization to travel under the VWP through the [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#)
- They present the appropriate type of passport valid for six months past their expected stay in the United States (unless [country-specific agreements](#) provide exemptions). This is a requirement in addition to other [passport requirements](#) for all categories of passports -- regular, diplomatic, and official - when the traveler is seeking to enter the United States for business or tourist purposes, for a maximum of 90 days;
- The purpose of their stay in the United States is 90 days or less for tourism or business ([Visitor \(B\) visa](#)) purpose of travel. (If in doubt, travelers should check with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to verify that what they plan to do is considered tourism or business.) Transit through the United States is generally permitted.
Important Notice: Foreign media representatives planning to engage in that vocation in the United States are not eligible for VWP travel, as the purpose of their stay does not qualify as "business". These professionals must obtain a nonimmigrant [media \(I\) visa](#). Note also that travelers planning to work or study cannot travel on VWP, and they must obtain the appropriate visa to travel to the United States [Learn More](#).
- If arriving by air or sea, they are traveling on an approved carrier (See the [approved carriers list](#)) and have a return trip ticket to any foreign destination;
- They can demonstrate the intent to stay 90 days or less in the United States and demonstrate sufficient funds to support themselves while in the United States. [Learn more](#) on the CBP website.

VWP travelers who have been admitted under the Visa Waiver Program and who make a short trip to Canada, Mexico or an adjacent island generally can be readmitted to the United States under the VWP for the balance of their original admission period. See the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) website for additional details. Also VWP nationals resident in

Mexico, Canada or adjacent islands are generally exempted from requirements to show onward travel to other foreign destinations. [Learn more](#) at the CBP website.

When does a national of a VWP country* need to apply for a visa instead of using the VWP?

Nationals of VWP countries* must meet the guidelines listed in the section above in order to seek admission to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. Travelers who do not meet these guidelines must apply for a visa.

A visa must be requested if the traveler:

- Wants to remain in the United States for longer than 90 days, or envisions that they may wish to change their status (from tourism to student, etc.) once in the United States;
- Wants to work or study in the United States, travel as a working foreign media representative, come to the United States for other purposes not allowed on a visitor visa, or intends to immigrate to the United States;
- Is a national of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Republic of Korea, or the Slovak Republic **AND DOES NOT HAVE** an [electronic passport](#) with an integrated chip;
- Is a national of one of the VWP countries* not listed above **AND DOES NOT** have a [machine-readable passport](#) (MRP)(depending on the date the MRP was issued, renewed, or extended, it may also need to contain a digital photograph or an integrated electronic chip);
- Intends to travel by private aircraft or other non-VWP approved air or sea carriers to the United States. Click here to see the [approved carriers list](#);
- Has a criminal record or other condition making them ineligible for a visa (see [Classes of Aliens Ineligible for Visas](#)).
- Has been refused admission to the United States before, or did not comply with the conditions of previous VWP admissions (90 days or less stay for tourism or business, etc.).

I was denied a visa on a recent visa application, may I use the VWP?

A recent visa denial for any reason could result in denial of an authorization via ESTA, additional questioning at the port of entry, or denial of admission to the United States. Applicants who are uncertain of whether they qualify for VWP travel may choose to apply for a visa.

What do I need to enter the United States under the VWP?

To request entry into the United States under the Visa Waiver Program, travelers must meet the requirements listed in [Which travelers may enter the United States using the Visa Waiver Program?](#). Each VWP traveler must present his/her own valid passport of the appropriate type. See [What do I](#)

need to know about [VWP machine-readable passport \(MRP\) and e-Passport?](#), [What is a machine-readable passport \(MRP\)?](#) and [What is an e-Passport?](#) for additional details. VWP travelers must also have an authorization through the [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) and may be required to present a completed and signed I-94W Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival-Departure Record to U.S. officials at the port of entry depending on the airline (DHS is in the process of eliminating the paper form). I-94W forms are free and often provided by travel agents, airlines or cruise ships prior to arrival, but may be picked up and completed on arrival at the U.S. port of entry. Travelers may also be asked to provide evidence of onward travel or other documentation on the purpose of their stay in the United States. Travelers entering through land ports of entry must pay a small land border fee as prescribed in 8 CFR 103.7(b)(1).

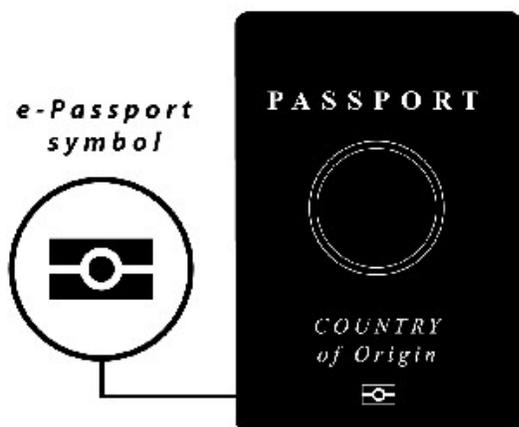
What do I need to know about VWP machine-readable passport (MRP) and e-Passport requirements?

All VWP travelers, regardless of age or type of passport used, must present 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, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Republic of Korea, and the Slovak Republic require passports with an integrated chip containing the information from the data page ([e-Passport](#)).
- Nationals of Taiwan require passports with an integrated chip containing the information from the data page ([e-Passport](#)) and a national ID number.
- Nationals of other VWP countries*:
 - Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended on or after 10/26/06: passports must 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.

Notice: Effective July 1, 2009 all Visa Waiver Program (VWP) emergency or temporary passports must be electronic passports (e-Passports) to be eligible for travel to the United States without a visa under the VWP. This includes VWP applicants who present emergency or temporary passports to transit the United States. U.S. Customs and Border Protection may exercise discretion at the ports of entry for cases in which VWP applicants are traveling for medical or other emergency reasons. A VWP national arriving in the United States with a non-compliant passport, for other than emergency travel reasons, may be detained for further processing and/or denied admission".

Please refer to the [Visa Waiver Program Passport Requirements](#) on the United States CBP website for additional details on passport requirements.



What should I know about machine-readable passports and family travel?

Families seeking to enter the United States under the VWP need to obtain an individual machine-readable passport for each traveler, including infants. A machine-readable passport has biographic data for only one traveler in the machine-readable zone. Because of the requirement that passport data be presented in machine-readable format, children included in family or parents' passports may be denied visa-free entry into the United States since only the primary traveler's biographic data is included in the machine-readable zone of the passport.

Entering the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) – What happens at the port of entry?

Detailed information about admissions and entry to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program can be found on the DHS Customs Border Protection website at [Visa Waiver Program](#) and [Admission to the United States](#). VWP travelers are enrolled in the [DHS US-VISIT](#) program when they arrive at U.S. ports of entry. Travelers should be aware that by requesting admission under the Visa Waiver Program, they are generally waiving their right to review or appeal a CBP officer's decision as to their application for admission at the port of entry. Likewise, if the traveler is later found to have violated the conditions of admission under the Visa Waiver Program, they do not have the right to contest a removal order (See the [CBP website](#) for additional details.)

Is there a fee to use the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)?

There is a small land border fee for VWP travelers arriving at land ports of entry. See the [CBP website](#) for additional details.

What about Canadian, Mexican or Bermudian citizens and VWP?

Canada, Mexico and Bermuda are not participants in the Visa Waiver Program. The Immigration and Nationality Act includes other provisions for visa-free travel for nationals of Canada and Bermuda under certain circumstances. See [Citizens of Canada and Bermuda](#). Since they are not part of the Visa Waiver Program, VWP requirements for machine-readable or biometric passports do not apply to nationals of Canada, Mexico or Bermuda. Also, it should be noted that some nationals of Canada and Bermuda traveling to the United States require nonimmigrant visas.

How can I get additional information?

Additional information on the Visa Waiver Program is available from the Department of Homeland Security [Customs and Border Protection](#) website.

Reference

* With respect to all references to "country" or "countries" on this page, it should be noted that the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, Pub. L. No. 96-8, Section 4(b)(1), provides that "[w]henver the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan." 22 U.S.C. § 3303(b)(1). Accordingly, all references to "country" or "countries" in the Visa Waiver Program authorizing legislation, Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1187, are read to include Taiwan. This is consistent with the United States' one-China policy, under which the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979.

We Want You to Know

[Visa News](#)

[Adoption Alerts](#)

[Diversity Visa](#)

[Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)](#)

Iraqis & Afghans-SIV

Business Visa Center

Customer Service Statement to Visa Applicants

Fraud Warning



- [Privacy](#)
- [Copyright & Disclaimer](#)
- [FOIA](#)
- [Office of the Inspector General](#)
- [No Fear Act Data](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#)
- [Other U.S. Government Information](#)
- 

This site is managed by the Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views