

Statement by Secretary Johnson on Security Enhancements to the Visa Waiver Program

Release Date:

November 3, 2014

For Immediate Release

DHS Press Office

Contact: 202-282-8010

Effective today, those seeking to travel to the United States from countries in our Visa Waiver Program (VWP) will be required to provide additional data fields of information in the travel application submitted via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). The new information sought includes additional passport data, contact information, and other potential names or aliases. We are taking this step to enhance the security of the Visa Waiver Program, to learn more about travelers from countries from whom we do not require a visa. We are also confident these changes will not hinder lawful trade and travel between our Nation and our trusted foreign allies in the Visa Waiver Program.

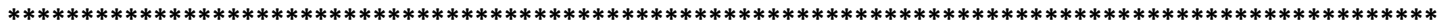
Review Date:

November 3, 2014



APRIL 2016 Proposal in a snapshot:

To whom would a visa requirement apply and for how long? The visa requirement which could be introduced as a result of the temporary suspension of the visa waiver would concern travel for short stays to the 26 European countries of the Schengen area and Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania for a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period, irrespective of the purpose of the visit (tourism, business, visiting family members, etc.). Any suspension of the visa waiver – once it enters into force – should be implemented by the EU Member States and Schengen associated countries that issue short-stay Schengen visas as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania who do not issue Schengen visas yet, but apply the Regulation (all EU Member States, except for Ireland and the UK, as well as the four Schengen associated countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).



What is ESTA? Electronic System for Travel Authorization.

Since 2008, visitors to the U.S. from VWP countries have been required to go through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) process. ESTA is an automated system that determines the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the VWP. The ESTA application collects biographic information and answers to VWP eligibility questions. ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel, though it is recommended that travelers apply as soon as they begin preparing travel plans or prior to purchasing airline tickets. The ESTA fee is \$14, which covers the traveler for two years. (This fee will remain unchanged.)

According to DHS, “we are taking this step to enhance the security of the Visa Waiver Program, to learn more about travelers from countries from whom we do not require a visa.” At the same time, DHS is “confident these changes will not hinder lawful trade and travel between our Nation and our trusted foreign allies in the Visa Waiver Program.”

NEW DATA ELEMENTS

1. Other Names or Alias - Yes/No question - If Yes - space for Name
2. City of Birth
3. Parents' Names
4. Other Citizenship - Yes/No question - If Yes - What country
 - o Passport number or 2nd country - optional
5. National ID Number (only if country has mandatory number)
6. Email Address - mandatory now
7. Telephone number - mandatory now

- 8. Home Address
- 9. Emergency Contact - does not have to be in the U.S.
- 10. In Transit through the U.S. - Yes/No question - If no then
 - o U.S. Point of Contact
 - o U.S. Address
- 11. Current or Previous Employer

THIS IS COMICAL ISN'T IT? See below.....

UPDATED QUESTIONS

1) Do you have a physical or mental disorder; or are you a drug abuser or addict; or do you currently have any of the following diseases: *

- Chancroid
- Gonorrhea
- Granuloma Inguinale
- Leprosy, infectious
- Lymphogranuloma venereum
- Syphilis, infectious
- Active Tuberculosis

Yes No

2) Have you ever been arrested or convicted for a crime that resulted in serious damage to property, or serious harm to another person or government authority? *

Yes No

3) Have you ever violated any law related to possessing, using, or distributing illegal drugs? *

Yes No

4) Do you seek to engage in or have you ever engaged in terrorist activities, espionage, sabotage, or genocide? *

Yes No

5) Have you ever committed fraud or misrepresented yourself or others to obtain, or assist others to obtain, a visa or entry into the United States? *

Yes No

6) Are you currently seeking employment in the United States or were you previously employed in the United States without prior permission from the U.S. government? *

Yes No

7) Have you ever been denied a U.S. visa you applied for with your current or previous passport, or have you ever been refused admission to the United States or withdrawn your application for admission at a U.S. port of entry? *

Yes No

If yes:

when

where

8) Have you ever stayed in the United States longer than the admission period granted to you by the U.S. government? *

Yes No

Very recent news:

Big Announcement made in March 2016 Argentina has suspended the reciprocity fee for US citizens as of March 24, 2016:
Chile announced in 2014 to end their \$131 pp reciprocity – Ron and I HAD to do it on one trip!!!!!!