



FACT SHEET

All Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers are required to obtain a travel authorization via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to traveling to the U.S. under the VWP. ESTA is accessible online at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> for citizens and eligible nationals of VWP countries. The VWP allows visitors from participating countries to travel to the U.S. for business or pleasure for 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. ESTA enhances the security of the VWP and has allowed the U.S. government to expand membership in the program.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON ESTA

What is the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)?

ESTA is an automated system used to determine the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the VWP.

Why is a travel authorization via ESTA required for VWP travelers?

U.S. legislation required the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to implement an electronic travel authorization system and other measures to enhance the security of the VWP. ESTA adds a 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.

Who needs to submit an ESTA application?

All nationals or citizens of VWP countries who plan to travel to the U.S. on a plane or cruise ship for temporary business or pleasure for 90 days or less under the VWP will need authorization via ESTA. There should be a reasonable amount of time between visits to confirm you are not living in the United States. If a traveler is planning to transit through the United States en route to another country, an authorization via ESTA is still required.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ESTA

How do I apply for authorization to travel to the U.S.?

To apply for ESTA authorization, please visit the official government website at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Answer all required questions and submit your application for travel authorization.

Can I apply for a group of applicants at one time?

Yes. You can submit applications for a group of up to 50 individuals at one time. To submit a group application, submit the initial application and prior to paying choose one of the following options: **“Add New Application”** or **“Add Unpaid Application.”** Then complete each group member’s application by entering biographic information and answering all the required questions. Once you submit the entire group, a group identification number is created and sent by email to the address provided. You will need the group identification number to access the group applications, check status, view the receipt and/or make payment.

Do I need to apply for an ESTA on behalf of my minor child?

Yes, accompanied and unaccompanied children (regardless of age) require their own independent ESTA prior to their travels to the U.S. being a citizen of a visa waiver country.

What information does a traveler need to complete the travel authorization form?

Each application must contain, in English, biographical data including name, birth date and passport information. The applicant must also answer VWP eligibility questions regarding communicable diseases, arrests and convictions for certain crimes, past history of visa revocation or deportation and other questions. In a group application, each traveler is responsible for the truthfulness and accuracy of his or her own application. The traveler or applicant will also need credit card information to pay the associated application fees in order to complete the ESTA application.

Can someone else apply for me if I don’t have access to the Internet?

Yes, a friend, relative, travel industry professional or another third party may file an application on your behalf. A third party may also pay the application fees on behalf of the traveler or a group of travelers. However, the traveler is responsible for the truthfulness and accuracy of all information submitted on his or her behalf.

How far in advance of my trip do I need to apply for travel authorization?

We recommend that travel authorization applications be submitted at the time travel plans are made or as early as possible, not later than 72 hours prior to travel. VWP travelers are not required to have specific plans to travel to the United States before they apply for an ESTA.

Will I be notified after I submit my application?

Once an individual or group application has been successfully submitted, an email including the application number or group number will be provided. Application status must be verified on the website.

What are the possible responses I may receive?

Authorization Approved: Travel authorized.

Travel Not Authorized: Traveler must obtain a nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before traveling to the U.S.

Authorization Pending: Traveler will need to check the ESTA website for updates. It may take up to 72 hours to receive a final response.

What if an application in a group submission receives a “Pending” status? Will it delay the processing of the other applications in a group?

No. If there is a “Pending” response for any application in a group, it will not delay the processing of the remaining applications. However, status for the other applicants in the group will not be visible on the website until all pending applications in the group are adjudicated. The receipt will not indicate the total fee amount until all applications return a status of approved or denied.

How long is my travel authorization valid?

Travel authorizations are generally valid for two years or until your passport expires, whichever comes first. ESTA provides validity dates upon application approval. A visitor may travel to the U.S. multiple times within the validity period without having to apply for another ESTA authorization.

When do I need to reapply for a new ESTA?

A new travel authorization via ESTA is required when:

- The traveler is issued a new passport;
- The traveler changes his or her name;

