

B-1 Permissible Activities

These questions are not all-inclusive.

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) Section 101(a)(15)(B) provides the following definition for B-1 visa holders:

An alien (other than one coming for the purpose of study or of performing skilled or unskilled labor or as a representative of foreign press, radio, film, or other foreign information media coming to engage in such vocation) having a residence in a foreign country which he or she has no intention of abandoning and who is visiting the United States temporarily for business or temporarily for pleasure.

Examples of B-1 Permissible Activities

- 1. I need to perform commercial or industrial services. Is this permissible?**
 - a. As long as you are not receiving compensation from a U.S. employer or business it is generally permissible. For instance, you may negotiate contracts, consult with business associates, including attending meetings of the Board of Directors of a U.S. corporation, litigate, participate in scientific, educational, professional, or business conventions, conferences, or seminars, and undertake independent research.

- 2. I need to come to the U.S. to install, service, or repair equipment/machinery purchased from a foreign company. I also need to train U.S. workers to perform these services. Is this permissible?**
 - a. If the contract of sale specifically requires the seller to provide these services or training, and you possess specialized knowledge essential to the seller's contractual obligation to perform the services or training it may be permissible for you to perform these services. In addition, the machinery or equipment must have been manufactured at a location outside of the United States and you may not receive compensation from a U.S. source.

- 3. I am a professional athlete. May I receive compensation?**
 - a. Maybe. An individual may be able to enter for a particular event receives prize money for participation in tournaments or sporting events. However, it is not permissible to, in effect, live and work in the United States, including where prize money are the primary source of income.

- 4. May I still come to the U.S. if I am an athlete or a player on a foreign-based sports team, to compete with another sports team?**
 - a. In general, you and your team's principal place of business or activity must be located in a foreign country, your team's income and the team player's salary must be primarily earned in a foreign country, and your team is a member of an international sports league or the sporting activities have an international aspect.

- 5. I am a member of an amateur sports team. May I participate in try-outs for a professional U.S. sports team during their regular season or playoffs?**
 - a. Yes, but the team you try out for may only provide the direct expenses for the try-outs, such as round-trip fare, hotel room, and meals. However you may not remain in the United States to live and work for that U.S. sports team.

- 6. I am a professional entertainer. What type of activities may I participate in with a B visitor classification?**
 - a. You may (1) participate in a cultural exchange program performed before a nonpaying audience and funded by your country; or (2) participate in a competition for which there is no compensation other than a expenses, or in certain limited instances, prize (monetary or otherwise).

- 7. I am a crewmember of a private yacht. Does it matter which country the yacht is registered under?**
 - a. No, as long as the yacht will be sailing out of a foreign home port, cruising in U.S. waters and your duties are directly related to your foreign employment on the yacht.

- 8. I am seeking investments in the U.S. Am I eligible to do this as a B-1 visa holder?**
 - a. Yes, as long as you are not performing productive labor or actively participating in the management of a business. You may only engage in these activities under an E-2 visa holder. But, you may engage in activities such as consult with business associates, including attending meetings of the Board of Directors of a U.S. corporation, litigate, participate in scientific, educational, professional, or business conventions, conferences, or seminars, and undertake independent research

- 9. I was accepted for employment to drill for oil on the Outer Continental Shelf. May I enter under a B-1 visa?**
 - a. Yes, pursuant to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978.

- 10. May I perform services on behalf of a foreign-based employer as a jockey, sulky driver, trainer, or groom, while working for another employer?**
 - a. No.

- 11. May I be admitted to the United States to start or be employed in a new branch, subsidiary, or affiliate of my foreign employer under a B visa?**
 - a. No, but you may acquire an L-1 visa for such activities.

- 12. May I just observe a business operation under a B visa?**
 - a. You may only observe how the business or other professional activities are conducted.

- 13. Are there any special requirements to participate in a program that provides technical information and assistance?**
 - a. You must meet the criteria under section 635(f) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (75 Stat. 424).

- 14. Are there any restrictions for participating in Peace Corps training as a volunteer or coming under contract according to sections 9 and 10 (a)(4) of the Peace Corps Act?**
- a. If you do not qualify for an “A” visa, you may be eligible for a “B” visa. For more information, see the provisions of the Peace Corps Act.
- 15. I am coming to participate in the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) internship program. Is this permissible under a B visa?**
- a. Yes, as long as a foreign government does not employ you, thus placing you in a separate visa category.
- 16. Are there any restrictions to work in connection with exhibits at international fairs or expositions?**
- a. In certain circumstances, where you are an employee of a foreign exhibitor whose employment responsibilities are primarily abroad, this may be permissible.
- 17. May I volunteer with a religious or non-profit charitable organization?**
- a. You may provide some volunteer services, such as attending meetings, speaking at a conference or assisting with a religious event. However, you may not come to live in the United States or provide labor for a religious or non-profit charitable organization. In addition, certain types of volunteer services such as construction are not permissible on a B visa.
 - b. otherwise
- 18. I only have a B-2 visa for pleasure. May I engage in B-1 activities?**
- a. You may engage in B-2 visa activities while admitted under a B-1 visa. However, you may not engage in business activities while admitted under a B-2 visa.
- 19. I have further questions regarding B-1 permissible activities. Where can I find additional information?**
- a. You may contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest to you.
- 20. I am an outside director of a major American corporation and the corporation compensates me for my time and travel expenses to attend Board of Director Meetings. May I enter the U.S. as a B-1 visa holder?**
- a. Yes. This is a permissible activity as a B-1 visa holder.
- 21. My company has been contracted to fight forest fires in the western United States. I am a crew leader. Am I admissible under a B-1 visa?**
- a. No. Emergency responders are not admissible as visitors for business. CBP has established other entry procedures regarding emergency responders for federally declared natural disasters. If you have questions about entering the United States, please reach out to [insert the best POC—the person arranging their trip or the port of entry]