



ESTA website: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

What is ESTA?

ESTA is short for *Electronic System for Travel Authorization*. ESTA is an online application system for all travelers from Visa Waiver Countries. The Visa Waiver Program has made traveling to the United States a relatively easy process for the millions of visitors from visa waiver countries. However, new regulations now require all visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program to apply for a Travel Authorization in addition to fulfilling specific passport and Visa Waiver Program requirements. The application process is online and operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The purpose of ESTA is to let DHS pre-screen all Visa Waiver Travelers before they leave their respective countries. U.S. bound travelers are recommended to apply for the Travel Authorization at least 72 hours prior to departure. The Travel Authorization is not a visa, it is a travel authorization. ESTA simply pre-screens Visa Waiver Travelers in order to allow him or her to travel to the United States and apply for admission. An approved Travel Authorization is not a guaranteed entry, but a prerequisite to travel to the United States by air or sea carrier. The concept is similar to the Australian ETA requirement for visitors.

The green form (Form I-94W) will soon be replaced completely by the new ESTA requirement. However, visa waiver visitors should expect to complete both the ESTA application and Form I-94W for the time being. The Customs Form 6059B is separate and mandatory.

Why apply for ESTA (Travel Authorization)?

- Know that you are approved to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program
- The Travel Authorization is valid for two years and can easily be updated for future visits
- If denied, you will have ample time to apply for a B-1 Visitor Visa or B-2 Tourist Visa

Who needs to apply for ESTA (Travel Authorization)?

- Any traveler that intends to visit the United States under the Visa Waiver Program via air or vessel
- Any traveler transiting through the United States
- Any traveler also includes children and infants

Important

- Guests who have stayed in Cuba after January 2021 require a visa.
Dual nationals who also hold citizenship of Iraq, Iran, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, or Sudan, as well as travelers who have been in Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, or Syria since March 1, 2011, require a visa.

When should you apply for ESTA (Travel Authorization)?

- It is mandatory for all visa waiver travelers to be approved for ESTA
- If your application for a Travel Authorization is denied, you must apply for a B-1 Visitor Visa or B-2 Tourist Visa which can take weeks or even months

What does the ESTA cost?

- **Processing Charge** -- All applicants requesting an electronic travel authorization are charged for the processing of the application. The fee is \$ 40.
The fee is only payable once every two years and not upon each entry into the United States.

How do I pay for my travel authorization?

- All payments for electronic travel authorization applications must be made by credit card.
The ESTA system currently accepts only the following credit cards: MasterCard, VISA, American

Express, and Discover (JCB, Diners Club). Your application will not be submitted for processing until all payment information is received.