

SPECIAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

[Text Version]

The United States has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants and visitors. This tradition is renewed and enriched by each and every law-abiding immigrant and visitor. This same tradition is reflected in the United States government's duty to serve and protect its citizens, residents and foreign visitors.

Terrorist attacks have claimed the lives of thousands of Americans, as well as nationals from many other countries. As a result, new regulations have gone into effect to help ensure the safety of all persons in the United States. These regulations require the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to register certain individuals in the interest of national security or law enforcement.

We understand that in many cases these procedures may cause inconvenience. However, your cooperation is requested so that our vision in which citizens, immigrants and visitors can live without fear of terrorist threats will become a reality.

Special Registration Procedures require:

- Being registered upon arrival to and departure from the United States;
- Being interviewed at an INS office if remaining in the United States for more than 30 days and/or for more than one year;
- Notifying the INS within ten days of any changes regarding place of residence, employment or education institution.

Who has to follow the special registration procedures?

As part of the nonimmigrant visa application process, consular officers at U.S. Embassies and Consulates are required to identify individuals who will have to follow the special registration requirements in the United States. Likewise, INS officers at ports of entry may identify nonimmigrants who will have to follow the special registration requirements.

The above will apply only to persons who want to enter the United States for a temporary period of time (such as a tourist or a student, etc.). Persons who have been approved to stay permanently in the United States do not have to follow special registration procedures at this time.

ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

What will happen when I come to the United States?

An INS officer will inform you if you will need to follow the special registration procedures. You will be instructed to go to an area where you will be fingerprinted, photographed, asked to show documents, and interviewed as to the length and purpose of your stay in the United States.

Additional information on how to follow the special registration procedures will be provided to you when you are registered.

If I'm traveling with family members, what will happen to them when we enter the United States?

You may be temporarily separated from your family for the length of time required to carry out the described special registration procedural steps. Depending on individual circumstances, some or all of your family members may also be required to follow the special registration procedures, in which case they too will be fingerprinted and photographed.

What if I decide that I do not want to complete the special registration procedures?

If you decide that you do not want to or can not follow the special registration procedures, you may be allowed to withdraw your application for admission into the United States. Such a decision on your part will result in not being granted permission to enter the United States. You may still be fingerprinted, photographed, and interviewed by an INS inspecting officer as part of the withdrawal process.

WHILE YOU ARE IN THE U.S.

Am I required to do anything while I am in the United States?

Yes. If you are subject to the special registration procedures and you remain in the United States for 30 or more days, you need to go to the nearest INS district or sub-office that has responsibility for the area where you are staying. You can do this any time beginning on the 30th calendar day from the day that you entered the United States and up to the 40th calendar day. You will not need an appointment.

If you remain in the United States for one year or more, you must report again in person to an INS district or sub-office, each and every year. You must do this in person no later than 10 calendar days from the anniversary of the date when you last entered the United States. No appointment is necessary.

What will happen to me at the INS district or sub-office?

Your identity will be verified by fingerprint and the information that you provided to the INS at the time that you were initially registered will be reviewed.

Additionally, you will need to prove that you are complying with the terms of your admission to the United States. When you are registered upon entry into United States, you will be given instructions as to what to bring with you to the INS district or sub-office.

How will I know where the INS district offices are located?

A list of INS Offices will be given to you when you are registered. Additionally, you can find the location of the INS district offices by calling the INS National Customer Service Center at 800 375-5283, or by using the Internet (www.ins.usdoj.gov).

What if I'm traveling to different places in the United States during my visit?

You can be interviewed at the INS district or sub-office closest to where you are travelling. You will need to bring documents to show who and where you are visiting.

What if the information I gave changes because I change my address, my school or where I am working?

You must notify the INS of any changes of address, employment, or school that you are attending, within 10 calendar days from the time the change occurs. Submitting a Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, following the Special Registration Instructions, does this.

What will happen to me if I stay more than 30 days in the country and I do not report to the district office as required?

Depending on the circumstances, you may be subject to arrest and detention, fines, and/or removal from the United States. You could also be denied re-entry into the United States for many years.

Once I am in the United States, are there steps I can take so that I do not have to comply with the registration procedures?

You will need to provide a written explanation as to why you should be excused from the special registration procedures. Your request should be sent to the INS district office that has responsibility for the area where you are staying. You must follow all special registration procedures until the INS notifies you in writing that your request has been approved.

LEAVING THE UNITED STATES

What do the special registration procedures mean for me when I leave or travel outside of the United States?

If you leave the United States on or after October 1, 2002, it is your responsibility to make certain that your departure is known and documented by an INS inspecting officer, each and every time you leave.

On or after October 1, 2002, you are required to report your departure from the United States by appearing before an INS inspecting officer on the same day that you leave.

These new regulations include restrictions as to which airports, seaports or land entry/exit points that you can use to depart from the United States. When you are initially registered, you will be given a list of those airports, seaports or overland exit ports you can use to leave the United States.

What will happen to me if I cannot or if I choose not to report my departure from the United States?

Depending on your personal circumstances, you might not be permitted to return to the United States. A consular officer or an INS inspecting officer will decide if the reasons you give for failing to report your departure satisfy the conditions set by the Attorney General and the Secretary of State that would allow you to re-enter the country.

If I have already registered at an immigration office and then I leave the United States, do I have to register again when I return?

Yes. You will have to begin this process again each time you enter the United States.

*Please contact an INS immigration office
for more information and answers to your
personal immigration questions.*

You can also telephone the
INS National Customer Service Center
(1-800) 375-5283
TTY Telephone Service
(1-800) 767-1833