

GENERAL
INFORMATION

Travel Information for Nonimmigrants in H-1B or O-1 Status

BEFORE TRAVELING

Verify whether you need a new visa. Refer to our H-1B/O-1 Visa Renewal guidance if you plan to renew your visa.

If your trip is longer than 5 weeks for personal travel or 2 weeks for professional travel, you will need to request Extended Absence Abroad approval from DIS before you leave.

If you are not traveling to your home country, you may need a visa for the country you plan to visit. Please contact the appropriate Embassy of that country before leaving the United States.

Consult with DIS if you have:

1. An open or pending case with a DIS Immigration Specialist
2. A pending petition or application at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

When traveling abroad, bring the following documents as evidence of your eligibility to enter the U.S. in H-1B/O-1 status:

- Valid Passport
- Valid Visa*
- Current Form I-797A H-1B or O-1 approval notice
- Current Form I-94 (located online or on bottom of most recent Form I-797A)
- Travel letter from your Institute/Center
- If H-1B:
 - Copy of your most recent Labor Condition Application (LCA)
 - Original Form I-797 Approval Notice to Waive the Foreign Residence Requirement (I-612 Waiver Approval), if applicable
- If not traveling to home country: authorization to enter the destination country
- Other recommended documents:
 - NIH Identification (ID) Badge
 - Copy of two most recent Leave and Earnings Statements

*Note:

1. A valid, unexpired U.S. entry visa may not be required if you only plan to travel to Canada or Mexico for less than 30 days, provided:
 - You are not a citizen of Iran, Syria, Sudan, North Korea, or another ineligible country
 - You have maintained your H-1B or O-1 status and intend to resume your activity upon re-entry
 - You re-enter the United States before the end date listed on your most recent Form I-94
 - Your visa was not cancelled or revoked
 - You do not apply for a new U.S. visa while traveling
 - You do not travel to another country besides Canada or Mexico on your trip
2. If you are a citizen of Canada or Bermuda, you do not need a valid visa stamp in most cases. Bermudians require a visa if they will be staying in the U.S. longer than 180 days.
3. Refer to the Department of State website for more information on Automatic Visa Revalidation. Note that when travelling on a cruise ship, you should check with the carrier for any immigration restrictions before booking your trip. Contact DIS if you have additional questions.

Keep copies of everything you send to DIS

Send above documents via Secure Method to DIS:

Building 31, Room B2B07
31 Center Drive MSC 2028
Bethesda, MD 20892-2028
Telephone: (301) 496-6166
FAX: (301) 496-0847
ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis

*Using hand-carry ensures delivery to DIS.
DIS is not responsible for lost packages. Lost or misdelivered*

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WHILE TRAVELING

Store your documents in a safe and secure location.

Notify DIS and your lab if your travel plans change significantly, such as extending your stay outside of the United States beyond 5 weeks.

RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES

Keep your original immigration documents in your carry-on luggage so you can easily present them to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for re-entry to the United States in H-1B or O-1 status.

After you pass through the CBP, verify that the information on your passport entry stamp is correct. Your immigration status should be H-1B or O-1 and your "Admit-Until Date" should reflect the end date of your immigration status as reflected on the most recent I-797 Approval Notice. If there is a mistake, politely request that the CBP officer review your documents again and correct the entry stamp. If you are unable to resolve the issue with CBP at the port of entry, contact DIS as soon as possible.

Once you are able to access a computer, check your I-94. Verify that all information on the I-94 is correct. The I-94 is sometimes issued for a period of time shorter than is reflected on the H-1B approval, usually when your passport expires before the H-1B approval. If this occurs, immediate review is required by DIS to ensure continued lawful stay and employment authorization.

PROVIDE UPDATED DOCUMENTS TO DIS

Upon your re-entry to the United States, send DIS a copy of any updated immigration documents, such as your Form I-94 and passport or visa. Immigration documents contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII), so they must be sent via a secure delivery method such as fax (301-496-0847), mail, hand delivery, or SEFT. Please do not e-mail documents containing PII to DIS.

Useful Links

Request for Extended Absence Abroad Form:

ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/AdministrativeStaff/Documents/RequestforExtendedAbsenceAbroad.pdf

Download Most Recent I-94:

i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94

Template for IC Travel Letter:

ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/SampleLetterTravel.doc

List of countries ineligible for Automatic Visa Revalidation:

state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm

Information on Automatic Visa Revalidation:

travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-expiration-date/automatic-revalidate.html

Secure Email and File Transfer (SEFT):

secureemail.nih.gov/bds/Login.do

Contact DIS:

ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/AboutDIS/Pages/ContactUs.aspx

H-1B/O-1 Visa Renewal Information:

ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/h1bo1visaprocess.pdf