

# Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) Online Help

## Section 1: Travel Authorization

### Q1. What is a travel authorization?

**A1.** To strengthen the security of travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program, requirements to travel visa-free have been enhanced. Nationals of Visa Waiver Program countries are eligible to travel without a visa with an approved electronic system travel authorization (ESTA) prior to their travel to the United States.

Here is how the travel authorization process works:

The Department of Homeland Security and the United States Customs and Border Protection have provided a secure public website with an automated form for you, or a third party, to complete in order to apply for a travel authorization. Once you enter the required biographic, travel, and credit card information on the secure website, your application is processed by the system to determine if you are eligible to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program without a visa. The system will provide you with an automated response, and prior to boarding, a carrier will electronically verify with the United States Customs and Border Protection that you have an approved travel authorization on file.

### Q2. Why is it necessary to expand the amount of ESTA information being collected from VWP travelers?

**A2.** Since 9/11, the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) has evolved from a travel facilitation program concerned about the threat of economic migration, to one with more robust security standards designed to prevent terrorists and other criminal actors from exploiting the Program. The requirement for all VWP travelers to complete an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to traveling to the United States was introduced by *The Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Act of 2007* (part of the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007*, also known as the "9/11 Act" (Pub. L. No. 110-53) to improve the screening of individual travelers from VWP countries.

DHS must be agile and vigilant in continually adapting to evolving threats and hazards. With information available on the significant evolution in the terrorist and criminal threats to the United States, DHS has determined that the additional data fields to the ESTA application will enhance DHS's ability to screen and more accurately and effectively identify travelers who pose a potential security risk to the homeland or are otherwise not eligible to travel using the Visa Waiver Program.

**Q3. Who is required to have travel authorization?**

**A3.** All passengers traveling under the Visa Waiver Program are required to have an approved travel authorization prior to traveling to the United States by air or sea. Even non-ticketed infants are required to have an approved travel authorization, if they do not have a visa for travel to the United States. An application may be submitted by a third party on behalf of a Visa Waiver Program traveler.

**Q4. Does a travel authorization guarantee me admission into the United States?**

**A4.** If your electronic travel authorization is approved, this approval establishes that you are eligible to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program, but does not guarantee that you are admissible to the United States. Upon arrival in the United States you will be inspected by a Customs and Border Protection officer at a port of entry who may determine that you are inadmissible to the United States.

**Q5. Is a travel authorization a visa?**

**A5.** No, an approved travel authorization is not a visa. It does not meet the legal or regulatory requirements to serve in lieu of a United States visa when a visa is required under United States law. Individuals who possess a valid visa will still be able to travel to the United States on that visa for the purpose for which it was issued. Individuals traveling on valid visas are not required to apply for a travel authorization.

**Q6. How long is my travel authorization valid?**

**A6.** Unless revoked, travel authorizations are valid for two years from the date of authorization, or until your passport expires, whichever comes first. The Authorization Approved screen displays your travel authorization expiration date.

**Q7. When do I need to apply for a travel authorization?**

**A7.** Applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel to the United States. The Department of Homeland Security recommends that travel authorization applications be submitted at least 72 hours prior to travel. Unless revoked, travel authorizations are valid for two years from the date of authorization, or until your passport expires, whichever comes first.

**Q8. Can prospective travelers apply to ESTA for a travel authorization without specific travel plans if they want to be able to travel to the United States on short notice?**

**A8.** Yes. Specific travel plans are not mandatory at the time of applying for travel authorization.

**Q9. Do nationals or citizens of countries that participate in the Visa Waiver Program require travel authorization if they are only transiting the United States en route to another country?**

**A9.** Yes, unless the traveler is in possession of a valid nonimmigrant visa in a visa class that permits transit through the United States. Eligible nationals or citizens of countries that participate in the Visa Waiver Program require either a travel authorization or a visa to transit the United States. If a traveler is only planning to transit through the United States en route to another country, when he or she completes the travel authorization application in ESTA, the traveler should select 'Yes' to the question: "Is your travel to the US occurring in transit to another country?"

**Q10. Can a Visa Waiver Program traveler with more than one passport travel to the United States on the passport that he or she did not use when applying for a travel authorization?**

**A10.** No. Each Visa Waiver Program traveler must have an approved travel authorization for the passport they plan to use before they travel to the United States. If a traveler obtains a new passport, they must submit a new travel authorization application in ESTA using the new passport. A processing fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

**Q11. If a Visa Waiver Program traveler has received a travel authorization approval through ESTA, does he or she need to fill out an I-94W?**

**A11.** The implementation of the ESTA program allowed DHS to eliminate the requirement that Visa Waiver Program travelers complete an I-94W prior to being admitted to the United States. CBP has transitioned to paperless processing for Visa Waiver Program travelers arriving by air or sea who have obtained a travel authorization. Travelers entering the United States under the Visa Waiver Program who have an approved travel authorization will no longer be given a green I-94W departure coupon in their passport.

**Q12. Why is authorization under ESTA required for United States-bound travel under the Visa Waiver Program?**

**A12.** The "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007" (9/11 Act) amended Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), requiring that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implement an electronic travel authorization system and other measures to enhance the security of the Visa Waiver Program. ESTA adds another 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 Visa Waiver Program and whether such travel poses a law enforcement or security risk.

## Section 2: Visa Waiver Program

### Q1. What is the Visa Waiver Program?

**A1.** The Visa Waiver Program allows foreign nationals from certain countries to travel to the United States for business or pleasure, for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. Travelers admitted under the Visa Waiver Program must agree to waive their rights to review or appeal, as explained in the Waiver of Rights section of the Application screen. See ‘Who is eligible to apply for admission under the Visa Waiver Program?’ (Website hyperlinks to respective question in Section 2, Q3 for further information.)

For further information refer to § 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1187, and 8 C.F.R. § 217.

### Q2. Which countries participate in the Visa Waiver Program?

Andorra	Denmark	Iceland	Luxembourg	San Marino	Switzerland
Australia	Estonia	Ireland	Monaco	Singapore	Taiwan <sup>1</sup>
Austria	Finland	Italy	Netherlands	Slovakia	United Kingdom
Belgium	France	Japan	New Zealand	Slovenia	
Brunei	Germany	Latvia	Norway	S. Korea	
Chile	Greece	Liechtenstein	Portugal	Spain	
Czech Republic	Hungary	Lithuania	Rep. of Malta	Sweden	

### Q3. Who is eligible to apply for admission under the Visa Waiver Program?

**A3.** You are eligible to apply for admission under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) if you:

- Intend to enter the United States for 90 days or less for business, pleasure or transit;
- Have a valid passport lawfully issued to you by a Visa Waiver Program country;
- Have authorization to travel via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization;
- Arrive via a Visa Waiver Program signatory carrier;
- Have a return or onward ticket;
- Travel may not terminate in contiguous territory or adjacent islands unless the traveler is a resident of one of those areas;
- Are a citizen or national of one of the Visa Waiver Program countries listed below:

Andorra	Denmark	Iceland	Luxembourg	San Marino	Switzerland
Australia	Estonia	Ireland	Monaco	Singapore	Taiwan <sup>1</sup>
Austria	Finland	Italy	Netherlands	Slovakia	United Kingdom
Belgium	France	Japan	New Zealand	Slovenia	
Brunei	Germany	Latvia	Norway	S. Korea	
Chile	Greece	Liechtenstein	Portugal	Spain	
Czech Republic	Hungary	Lithuania	Rep. of Malta	Sweden	

- Establish to the satisfaction of the inspecting United States Customs and Border Protection officer that you are entitled to be admitted under the Visa Waiver Program and that you are not inadmissible under the Immigration and Nationality Act;
- Waive any rights to review or appeal of the admissibility determination of the United States Customs and Border Protection officer, or contest, other than on the basis of an application for asylum, any removal action arising from an application for admission under the Visa Waiver Program;
- Reaffirm, through the submission of biometric identifiers (including fingerprints and photographs) during processing upon arrival in the United States, your waiver of any rights to review or appeal of the admissibility determination of the United States Customs and Border Protection officer, or contest, other than on the basis of an application for asylum, any removal action arising from an application for admission under the Visa Waiver Program;
- Obtain an Authorization Approved determination following a travel authorization application;
- Not pose a threat to the welfare, health, safety, or security of the United States; and,
- Have complied with all conditions of any previous admission under the Visa Waiver Program.

**Q4. What are the passport requirements for travel under the Visa Waiver Program?**

**A4.** Visa Waiver Program requirements are:

- The passport must have a machine-readable zone on the biographic page.
- Issued on or after October 26, 2005 – Each Visa Waiver Program passport issued on or after this date must have a digital photo.
- Issued on or after October 26, 2006 – Each Visa Waiver Program passport issued on or after this date must be an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner.

**EXCEPTION:** To be eligible for the Visa Waiver Program, persons presenting United Kingdom passports must possess the unrestricted right of permanent abode in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man.

**EXCEPTION:** Citizens and nationals of Slovenia may use only the red cover Slovenian passport for admission under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

**EXCEPTION:** Effective July 1, 2009, Visa Waiver Program countries' emergency or temporary passports must be electronic passports.

- Citizens of the following Visa Waiver Program countries are required to present electronic passports:
  - o Chile
  - o Czech Republic
  - o Estonia
  - o Greece
  - o Hungary
  - o South Korea
  - o Latvia
  - o Lithuania
  - o Malta
  - o Slovakia
  - o Taiwan<sup>1</sup>
- A machine readable passport contains two lines of text with numbers and chevrons (<<<<) at the bottom of the personal information page with the passport bearer's picture. Document requirements vary according to the date a passport was issued or renewed as follows:
  - o Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended before October 26, 2005 have no additional requirements.
  - o If a passport was issued or renewed/extended on or after October 26, 2005 and does not meet the following requirements, the traveler must obtain a visa:
    1. Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended on or after October 26, 2005 through October 25, 2006 must meet the following requirements: A digital photograph printed on the passport data page is required OR an integrated chip containing information from the data page (e-passport). A digital photo is one that is printed on the page, not a photo that is glued or laminated into the passport.
    2. Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended on or after October 26, 2006 are required to be e-passports.
  - o For more information, please see the Customs and Border Protection website, [CBP.gov](http://CBP.gov), under Travel, For International Visitors, Visiting for Business or Pleasure, Visa Waiver Program.
- Taiwan passport holders must provide Passport Number and Personal Identification Number (PIN).

**Q5. When must I obtain a visa to travel to the United States?**

**A5.** You will need to obtain a visa if:

- If you intend to arrive in the United States aboard a non-signatory air carrier.
- If you intend to visit the United States for more than 90 days.
- If you believe any grounds of inadmissibility of the Immigration and Nationality Act § 212(a) apply to you, you should apply for a nonimmigrant visa before traveling to the United States. Although you may be inadmissible to the United States, you may qualify for a non-immigrant visa and waiver, which may allow you to travel to the United States.

- If you are traveling to the United States for a purpose other than short-term tourism or business.

**Q6. Are there disadvantages to using the Visa Waiver Program?**

**A6.** Before using the Visa Waiver Program, be aware of the following conditions that apply and carefully consider your options:

- If you are admitted to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program, you may not change or extend your nonimmigrant status.
- If your admission is denied, you have no right to appeal a determination as to admissibility.
- If you are found to have violated the terms of your admission, you also have no right to review or appeal, other than on the basis of an application for asylum, any removal action arising from an application for admission under the Visa Waiver Program.

**Q7. What if a Visa Waiver Program applicant is found to be inadmissible?**

**A7.** Travelers applying for admission to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program who are determined to be inadmissible to the United States will be denied admission and returned to their country of origin, or a third country from which the traveler holds a round-trip ticket, aboard the carrier on which the traveler arrived in the United States.

**Q8. How do I get more information about the Visa Waiver Program?**

**A8.** <http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/visa-waiver-program>

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

**Q9. Why is authorization under ESTA required for United States-bound travel under the Visa Waiver Program?**

**A9.** The Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Act of 2007 (part of the "Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007" (known as the "9/11 Act") (Pub. L. No. 110-53) amended Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), requiring that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implement an electronic travel authorization system and other measures to enhance the security of the Visa Waiver Program. ESTA adds another 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 Visa Waiver Program and whether such travel poses a law enforcement or security risk.

**Q10. By adding these additional questions, won't ESTA now be the equivalent of an electronic visa?**

**A10.** No. The requirements for a nonimmigrant visitor (B1/B2) visa are different under U.S. statute and more complex than the requirements for an ESTA. Applicants for a B1/B2 visa must complete a visa application (DS-160) and interview with a United States Department of State

consular officer. Part of the application process requires the applicant to submit their biometric information in advance of travel, and provide additional biographic information as required. These requirements do not exist for VWP travelers and will not exist with the addition of new ESTA questions.

## **Section 3: Applying for a Travel Authorization**

### **Q1. How do I apply for authorization to travel to the United States?**

#### **A1. Step 1: Complete Your Application**

Enter all required information. You will be asked to provide: basic biographic information; information from your VWP eligible passport and other passports; your current or previous employer; your address and point of contact in the United States; an emergency point of contact; and credit card information. You will also be asked to answer additional eligibility questions. Each member of your party must have an approved travel authorization or a visa, regardless of age, prior to traveling to the United States.

#### **Step 2: Submit Your Application**

Review your answers for accuracy. To make corrections, return to the application by selecting the Previous button.

#### **Step 3: Record Your Application Number**

After you submit your application, the system will provide you with an application number. Record save or print this application number for your records. If you want to check the status or to update your application, you will be asked to provide your application number, passport number, and date of birth.

#### **Step 4: Make Payment**

Enter your credit information for payment of fees associated with the Travel Promotion Act of 2009.

#### **Step 5: View Your Application Status**

In most cases the Electronic System for Travel Authorization will return an Application Status immediately. In cases where more time is needed to process an electronic travel authorization application, an answer will be usually returned within 72 hours. Information will be provided to check the application status if you receive a pending response. The three possible responses to an electronic travel authorization application are:

- **Authorization Approved.** Your travel authorization has been approved and you are authorized to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. The system

displays confirmation of the application approval and a payment receipt notice showing the amount charged to your credit card. A travel authorization does not guarantee admission to the United States as a Customs and Border Protection officer at a port of entry will have the final determination.

- **Travel Not Authorized.** You are not authorized to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. You may be able to obtain a visa from the Department of State for your travel. Please visit the United States Department of State website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for additional information about applying for a visa. This response does not deny entry into the United States. This response only prohibits you from traveling to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. The system also displays a payment receipt notice showing the amount charged to your credit card for the processing of the ESTA application.
- **Authorization Pending.** Your travel authorization is under review because an immediate determination could not be made for your application. This response does not indicate negative findings. A determination will usually be available within 72 hours. Please return to this website and choose **Retrieve Previously-Submitted Authorization to Travel to the United States for One or More Persons.** Your application number, passport number, and birth date will be required to check the status of your application.

**Q2. Can you provide more of a description or information for the eligibility questions?**

**A2.** Help is provided for some of the “Do any of the following apply to you?” questions where the meanings are less clear:

Field	Guidance – What does this question mean?
<p>Do you have a physical or mental disorder; are you a drug abuser or addict; or do you currently have any of the following diseases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chancroid</li> <li>• Gonorrhea</li> <li>• Granuloma Inguinale</li> <li>• Leprosy, infectious</li> <li>• Lymphogranuloma venereum</li> <li>• Syphilis, infectious</li> <li>• Active Tuberculosis</li> </ul>	<p><b>Diseases</b></p> <p>Under United States law communicable diseases of public health significance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chancroid</li> <li>• Gonorrhea</li> <li>• Granuloma inguinale</li> <li>• Leprosy, infectious</li> <li>• Lymphogranuloma venereum</li> <li>• Syphilis, infectious stage</li> <li>• Active Tuberculosis</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical or Mental Disorders</b></p> <p>With regard to physical or mental disorders, answer "Yes" to this question if:</p> <p>(a) You currently have a physical or mental disorder and a history of behavior associated with the disorder that may pose or has posed a threat to your property, safety or welfare or that of</p>

	<p>others; or</p> <p>(b) You had a physical or mental disorder and a history of behavior associated with the disorder that has posed a threat to your property, safety or welfare or that of others and the behavior is likely to recur or lead to other harmful behavior. Answer "No" if:</p> <p>(a) You currently have no physical or mental disorders; or</p> <p>(b) You have or had a physical or mental disorder without associated behavior that may pose or has posed a threat to your property, safety or welfare of that of others; or</p> <p>(c) You currently have a physical or mental disorder with associated behavior, but that behavior has not posed, does not currently pose nor will pose a threat to your property, safety or welfare or that of others; or</p> <p>(d) You had a physical or mental disorder with associated behavior that posed a threat to your property, safety or welfare or that of others, but that behavior is unlikely to recur.</p> <p><b>Drug Abusers and Drug Addicts</b></p> <p>Under United States law persons may not be admissible if they have been determined to be a drug abuser or drug addict.</p> <p>For further information refer to § 212(a)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(1)(A), and corresponding regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations.</p>
<p>Have you ever been arrested or convicted for a crime that resulted in serious damage to property, or serious harm to another person or government authority?</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Have you ever violated any law related to possessing, using, or distributing illegal drugs?</p>	<p>This question refers to crimes involving moral turpitude - Such offenses generally involve conduct which is inherently base, vile, or depraved and contrary to the accepted rules of morality and the duties owed to persons or society in general. There are factors, such as the age of the offender or the date of the offense that may affect whether an offense will be considered a crime involving moral turpitude for purposes of the Immigration and Nationality Act.</p> <p>For further information refer to § 212(a)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(2), § 101(a)(43) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(43) and corresponding regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations.</p>

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**Q3. Do travelers need to bring a paper printout of their travel authorization to the airport?**

**A3.** No. DHS will be able to communicate a traveler's ESTA status to the carriers. However, DHS recommends that travelers print out or electronically save the travel authorization application response in order to maintain a record of their traveler authorization application number and to have confirmation of their ESTA status.

**Q4. Is this website secure and private?**

**A4.** Yes. This website is operated by the United States Government and employs technology to prevent unauthorized access to the information you enter and view. Additionally, this website operates under the rules and regulations as specified by the United States Privacy Act and this [Privacy Statement](#) (website hyperlinks to CBP Privacy Statement) to insure the privacy of your information.

**Q5. What does my computer need to use the ESTA to submit an application for authorization to travel to the United States?**

**A5.** The minimum computer configuration includes:

- An internet browser that supports 128-bit encryption.
- All major browsers are supported. Please verify the release of the browser is the most up to date, is able to accept cookies, and has JavaScript enabled.

**Q6. Does the traveler ever need to reapply for a travel authorization through ESTA?**

**A6.** Yes, there may be instances when a new travel authorization via ESTA would be required. A new travel authorization may be required in any of the following circumstances:

- The traveler is issued a new passport;
- The traveler changes his or her name;
- The traveler changes his or her gender;
- The traveler's country of citizenship changes; or
- The circumstances underlying the traveler's previous responses to any of the ESTA application questions requiring a "yes" or "no" response have changed.

Travel authorization approvals will typically be granted for a period of two years or until the applicant's passport expires, whichever is sooner. ESTA will provide validity dates upon approval of the application. Therefore, a traveler must apply for a new travel authorization when a prior ESTA authorization or an applicant's passport expires. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted.

**Q7. My travel authorization is valid for travel to the United States but will expire before I depart the US. Do I need to apply for a new one before my trip?**

**A7.** No. ESTA travel authorization needs only to be valid upon arrival in the United States.

**Q8. What if I have dual citizenship, but my non-VWP passport is expired or I do not have a passport for that country?**

**A8.** If you have any additional non-VWP passports, please enter the most recent passport information, even if that passport is expired. If you are a dual citizen but do not have a passport from another country, select the country from the drop down list and do not enter anything in the Passport Number field. If you do not enter a passport number, you will still be allowed to continue with the application.

**Q9. Will my ESTA be denied if I leave a mandatory field blank?**

**A9.** All mandatory fields must be completed. If you do not know the required information you can enter Unknown or in the case of telephone numbers, you can enter all zeros. If erroneous information is entered this will not result in a mandatory denial, but may require manual adjudication (therefore additional time) prior to CBP providing a response back to the applicant.

**Q10. Why do you need my employer information?**

**A10.** Employment information will help DHS to more easily distinguish between the ESTA applications of lawful travelers and the ESTA applications of persons of interest in DHS law enforcement databases. For example, DHS will be better positioned to determine whether John Smith who works for XYZ Corporation is an exact match to John Smith who works for ABC Investments. If there is no exact match between the ESTA applicant and the person of interest, the individual will be able to travel without a visa and with an approved ESTA. Employment information can include: self-employed, student, child, homemaker, stay-at-home parent, or any other word to describe employment status.

## **Section 4: Updating a Travel Authorization**

**Q1. What information can I update?**

**A1.** Prior to submitting an electronic travel authorization application with the required payment information, you can update all application data fields except the passport number and passport issuing country. Once an application is complete and submitted with all the required payment information, you can still update any one of the following fields:

- E-mail address
- Address in the U.S.

**Q2. What should I do if the information on my passport has changed?**

**A2.** If you obtain a new passport or there is a change to your passport information, you must apply for a new travel authorization and pay the associated fees. See ‘What information can I

update?’ (website hyperlinks to Section 4, Q1) for a full listing of information that can be changed after submission of your application.

### **Q3. How can applicants correct a mistake on their application?**

**A3.** The website will allow applicants to review and correct their data prior to submitting the application, including reconfirming the passport number. Prior to submitting an application with the required payment information, you can correct all application data fields except the passport number and passport issuing country. If an applicant made a mistake on their application, they will have to apply again. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted. Any other mistakes may be corrected or updated by using the update function. If the traveler made a mistake in answering the eligibility questions, please see ‘For inquiries or questions regarding this application, please click Here’ (website hyperlinks to the CBP Information Center) at the bottom of each page.

### **Q4. How can applicants correct a mistake on Passport Issuance Date or Passport Expiration Date after completing their travel authorization application in ESTA?**

**A4.** An applicant can update the Passport Issuance Date or Passport Expiration Date as long as the application has not been paid for. If an applicant enters the wrong Passport Issuance Date or Passport Expiration Date after having paid for the ESTA application, the traveler will need to re-apply for a new travel authorization. The associated fee will be charged for each new application submitted. The previous application will be canceled.

### **Q5. What if I want to update my application and do not know my Application Number?**

**A5.** At the Welcome Page, select "**Retrieve Application**" under "**Retrieve Previously Submitted Authorization to Travel to the United States for One or More Persons**". At the next screen select the correct button for retrieving one application or a group of applications.

#### **Retrieve One Application**

1. Enter the passport number and date of birth.
2. If you know the application number, enter that number. If you do not know the application number, enter the family name, first (given) name and passport issuing country.
3. Click **Continue** for the application.

#### **Retrieve Group of Applications**

1. To retrieve a group of applications, the following Group Point of Contact\* information is required: Group ID, contact family name, contact first (given) name, contact birth date, and contact e-mail address.
2. If you do not have the Group ID, select the link "I do not know my Group ID" and it will be sent to the e-mail address provided when the group was created.
3. Enter the requested information.
4. Click **Continue** for the group of applications.

**\*Group Point of Contact - The person who submitted the applications for a group of travelers.**

**\*\*You can also access any single application in the group by clicking the 'Retrieve One Application' button on the Retrieve Application page.**

## **Section 5: Payment Required for a Travel Authorization**

### **Q1. Is there a fee for a travel authorization?**

**A1.** Yes, there is a fee associated with the Travel Promotion Act of 2009. The fee is comprised of two parts:

- Processing Fee. All applicants requesting an electronic travel authorization are charged for the processing of the application.
- Authorization Fee. If your application is approved and you receive authorization to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program, an additional \$10.00 will be charged to your credit card. If your electronic travel authorization is denied, you are only charged for the processing of your application. CBP is not responsible for any additional fees that may be charged by your credit card company for the transaction.

### **Q2. How do I pay for my travel authorization?**

**A2.** 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, Discover, JCB, and Diners Club. Your application will not be submitted for processing until all payment information is received.

### **Q3. Can I pay for two or more applications with one payment?**

**A3.** Yes. The system allows for one payment for a group of two or more applications submitted at the same time. The persons in the group are not required to travel together.

### **Q4. How many applications can I submit for one payment?**

**A4.** You can submit a maximum of 50 applications for one payment. The persons in the groups are not required to travel together.

### **Q5. Can I submit an application or a group of applications and pay for them at a later time?**

#### **A5. Single Application Payment:**

Yes. You may pay for a single application within 7 days of submitting the application. After that, you will be unable to access the application. If more than 7 days pass after you submit an application and you did not pay the fee, you need to submit a new application.

### **Multiple Application Payment:**

Yes. When two or more applications are submitted as a group, the group may be paid for any time within 7 days of submitting the second application for that group. After 7 days, you will be unable to access the applications and Group ID, and the Group Point of Contact will have to resubmit them.

### **Q6. Is the credit card information I use for payment secure?**

**A6.** Yes. The ESTA system does not retain your credit card information after the transaction is processed.

## **Section 6: Multiple Application Process**

### **Q1. When I submit the payment for a group of applications, will I receive the ESTA status for all of the applications at the same time?**

**A1.** Yes. The payment amount will appear once all applications have a status of "**Authorization Approved**" or "**Travel Not Authorized**". If any application in the group returns a status of "**Authorization Pending**", the payment amount will be withheld until all the applications in the group have been approved or denied.

### **Q2. How do I submit a group of applications?**

**A2.** Prior to paying for an application, you are given the option to "**Add New Application**" or "**Add Unpaid Application**". When applying for ESTA authorizations for a group of travelers, the following information is required of the applicant, who in this case, is the Group Point of Contact:

- Family name
- First (Given) name
- Date of birth
- E-mail address

The name of the organization making the payment may also be entered, but is optional.

## **Section 7: ESTA Data Privacy**

### **Q1. How does the U.S. Government protect the privacy of ESTA data and who has access to it?**

**A1.** Information submitted by applicants through the ESTA website is subject to the same strict privacy provisions and controls that have been established for similar traveler screening programs. Access to such information is limited to those with a professional need to know.

**Q2. How long is the travel authorization application data stored?**

**A2.** ESTA application data remains active for the period of time that the approved ESTA is valid, which is generally two years, or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first. DHS will then maintain this information for an additional year after which it will be archived for twelve years to allow retrieval of the information for law enforcement, national security, or investigatory purposes. Once the information is archived, the number of officials with access to it will be further limited. This retention is consistent both with CBP's border search authority and with the border security mission mandated for CBP by Congress. Data linked to active law enforcement lookout records, CBP matches to enforcement activities, and/or investigations or cases, including applications for ESTA that are denied, will remain accessible for the life of the law enforcement activities to which they are related.

As DHS transitions to a paperless I-94W, the ESTA application data will replace the data that is collected through the paper I-94W. In those instances where ESTA application data is used in lieu of the information collected through the paper I-94W, the ESTA application data will be maintained in accordance with the retention schedule for the I-94W, 75 years.

**Q3. Does DHS share ESTA data with others?**

**A3.** The information collected by and maintained in ESTA may be used by other components of DHS on a need-to-know basis consistent with the component's mission.

Under current agreements between DHS and the Department of State (DOS), information submitted during an ESTA application may be shared with consular officers of DOS to assist them in determining whether a visa should be issued to an applicant after a travel authorization application has been denied.

Information may be shared with appropriate federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign governmental agencies or multilateral governmental organizations responsible for investigating or prosecuting the violations of, or for enforcing or implementing, a statute, rule, regulation, order or license, or where DHS believes information would assist enforcement of civil or criminal laws.

Additionally, information may be shared when DHS reasonably believes such use is to assist in anti-terrorism efforts or intelligence gathering related to national or international security or transnational crime. All sharing will remain consistent with the Privacy Act System of Records Notice, which was published in the Federal Register [insert date] and is available on the DHS website.

While carriers will not receive the ESTA application information that travelers provide to DHS, they will receive confirmation of a passenger's ESTA status via the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) indicating whether an ESTA is required and whether authorization has been granted.

## **Section 8: Travel Not Authorized**

### **Q1. What should a traveler do if he or she is not approved for travel through ESTA?**

**A1.** If you receive a Travel Not Authorized response to your travel authorization application, but wish to continue with your travel plans, please visit the United States Department of State website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for additional information about applying for a visa. The denial of a travel authorization only prohibits travel under the Visa Waiver Program and is not a determination of eligibility for a visa to travel to the United States. In the event you are not approved for a travel authorization, no court shall have jurisdiction to review an eligibility determination under ESTA.

### **Q2. Should a traveler not authorized for travel through ESTA reapply?**

**A2.** If a traveler is denied ESTA authorization and his or her circumstances have not changed, a new application will also be denied. A traveler who is not eligible for ESTA is not eligible for travel under the Visa Waiver Program and should apply for a nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Reapplying with false information in order to qualify for a travel authorization will make the traveler permanently ineligible for travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program.

### **Q3. How can a traveler find out the reason a travel authorization was denied?**

**A3.** DHS has carefully developed the ESTA program to ensure that only those individuals who are ineligible to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program or those whose travel would pose a law enforcement or security risk are refused a travel authorization. While the ESTA website provides a link to the DHS Travel Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP) website, there are no guarantees that a request for redress through DHS TRIP will resolve the Visa Waiver Program ineligibility that caused an applicant's ESTA application to be denied.

Please note that Embassies and Consulates are not able to provide details about ESTA denials or resolve the issue that caused the ESTA denial. Embassies and Consulates will be able to process an application for a non-immigrant visa that, if approved, will be the only way that a traveler whose ESTA application has been denied would be authorized to travel to the United States.

### **Q4. If a traveler was denied approval and needs to travel immediately, is it possible to get an emergency visa appointment at a United States Embassy or Consulate?**

**A4.** Unfortunately, the Department of State is unable to guarantee next-day appointments because of varying demand for visas. Information about the appointment process is available at the nearest consular section or at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). As a result, travelers are encouraged to apply for an ESTA approval far in advance of the proposed travel.

**Q5. My group is locked and I cannot use the Group ID to access my application. How can I access my application?**

**A5.** You can also access any single application in the group by clicking the 'Retrieve One Application' button on the Retrieve Application page.

**Footnote (throughout document, all references to Taiwan):**

[1] With respect to all references to "country" or "countries" in this document, it should be noted that the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, Pub. L. No. 96-8, Section 4(b)(1), provides that "[w]henever the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan." 22 U.S.C. § 3303(b)(1). Accordingly, all references to "country" or "countries" in the Visa Waiver Program authorizing legislation, Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1187, are read to include Taiwan. This is consistent with the United States' one-China policy, under which the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979.