

MARCH 21, 2020

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DHS & DOS CASE PROCESSING & TRAVEL UPDATES

Please note the following immigration benefit case processing and travel updates released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State (DOS):

- Effective March 16th U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) allows ESTA/ Visa Waiver Participants (VWP) who were admitted into the U.S. through **John F. Kennedy International Airport, NY (JFK) or Newark Liberty International Airport, NJ (EWR)**, and who are unable to depart before their authorized 90-day period of stay ends due to COVID-19, to request "Satisfactory Departure." Normally U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews these request, however, CBP is authorized to adjudicate Satisfactory Departure requests in an emergency.
- Under Satisfactory Departure, a traveler may be granted 30 additional days of authorized stay in the U.S. if there is an emergency situation that prevents departure within the initial 90-day period of authorized stay. As long as a traveler leaves the U.S. within the additional 30-day period for Satisfactory Departure, then he or she will not be considered to have violated U.S. immigration laws by overstaying the initial 90-day authorized period.
- At this time eligible ESTA/VWP travelers who have periods of admission expiring within 14 days may apply for Satisfactory Departure by contacting the CBP Deferred Inspections office at the airport. Travelers should be prepared to provide their names, dates of birth, and passport information, and also provide flight itineraries showing original and updated flight information.
- Effective March 18th USCIS suspended routine in-person services until at least April 1, its staff will continue to perform duties, and emergency appointments may be provided for limited services through the **USCIS Contact Center**.
- Effective March 20th, DHS suspended expedited premium processing for **all I-129** non-immigrant visa petitions and for **all I-140** immigrant visa petitions

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DHS & DOS CASE PROCESSING & TRAVEL UPDATES

This publication is a summary of legal principles. Nothing in this article constitutes legal advice, which can only be obtained as a result of a personal consultation with an attorney. The information published here is believed accurate at the time of publication, but is subject to change and does not purport to be a complete statement of all relevant issues.

until further notice. Petitions already accepted for premium processing may be adjudicated within the 15-calendar day period, although, if no agency action occurs, USCIS will refund the expedited processing fee. Petitions not yet accepted for premium processing will be rejected and returned, even if they were mailed before March 20th.

- Effective March 20th, DOS suspended routine visa services at **all** U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide and will cancel all routine visa appointments.
- Effective March 21st, DHS is restricting **all non-essential** travel across both the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico land borders for a period of 30 days.

Given that this is a rapidly changing situation, please also refer to the following online resources, and be sure to review the "last updated" date:

- **World Health Organization, Health Topics: Coronavirus**
- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Coronavirus Disease 2019**
- **U.S. Department of State: COVID-19 Country-Specific Information**
- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**
- **U.S. Department of Labor: Coronavirus Resources**

Associate **Ashley Moore** contributed to this briefing.

*Wiggin and Dana's Immigration and Nationality Law and Compliance Practice Group will continue to provide briefings as more information becomes available. Please contact the practice group Co-Chair, **Najia Khalid**, at 203.498.4314 or nkhalid@wiggin.com if you have any questions.*