



U.S. Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)

New fee introduced for travellers applying for ESTA approval beginning 8 September 2010

What is ESTA?

ESTA is an online system, designed to determine the eligibility of visitors to the United States before they travel. ESTA applies to citizens of all countries participating in the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP), who are travelling to the United States for business or leisure trips of 90 days or less. Once approved, an ESTA is valid for multiple entries to the United States, and remains valid for up to two years, or until the applicant's passport expires.

How to apply for ESTA approval

Beginning 8 September 2010, travellers will be required to pay a US\$14 fee for new applications or to renew ESTA. All payments for electronic travel authorization applications must be made by credit card or debit card when applying for or renewing ESTA during the application process and directly via the ESTA Web site.

To apply for ESTA approval, travellers must log on to the ESTA Web site (<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>) and complete the online application form. Travellers are required to complete personal biographical and eligibility information.

The ESTA system currently accepts only the following credit / debit cards: American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Discover. Applications will not be submitted for processing until all payment information is received.

Please note that the U.S. Government does not support the use of third party vendors for the purpose of applying for ESTA, and recommends that you do not pay a third party vendor to apply on your behalf as accuracy of data cannot be verified.

Specific travel plans are not required at time of application, which means that an ESTA request can be submitted at any time prior to travel to the United States; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourages VWP travellers to seek ESTA approval as soon as they begin to plan their trip.

Travel information can be updated online once travel details are finalised. It is recommended that ESTA applications are submitted no less than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who fail to obtain ESTA may be denied boarding, experience delayed processing, or be denied admission into the United States.

How American Express Business Travel supports travellers

American Express Business Travel consultants will advise travellers during the booking process that an ESTA approval may be required for their trip. American Express will also add a reminder and link to the registration Web site to e-itineraries, subject to technology capabilities.

ESTA applications require travellers to provide personal biographical and eligibility information. Please note that, in order to safeguard data of this highly confidential nature, American Express will not undertake ESTA registration on behalf of travellers; travellers should register themselves through the official Web site.

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Answering Your Questions

What is the Visa Waiver Programme? Which countries participate?

The Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) enables citizens or nationals of certain countries to travel to the United States for business or leisure purposes for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. Countries that are part of the VWP: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Who must complete an ESTA?

Citizens or nationals of the above Visa Waiver Programme countries are required to receive ESTA approval prior to travel to the United States. This includes nationals of VWP countries who are resident in a non-VWP country. Accompanied and unaccompanied children, regardless of age, will also be required to obtain independent ESTA approval. Travellers who fail to obtain ESTA approval may be denied boarding, experience delayed processing, or be denied admission into the United States.

Nationals or citizens of countries which are not part of the Visa Waiver Programme should continue to follow their normal visa application process. This does not affect U.S. citizens travelling overseas.

What is the fee for ESTA and how do I pay it?

Beginning 8 September 2010, a US\$14 fee will be charged for processing ESTA applications. This fee is payable at the time of application, and directly to the U.S. government. **The U.S. Government does not support the use of third party vendors for the purpose of applying for ESTA**, and recommends that you do not pay a third party vendor to apply on your behalf as accuracy of data cannot be verified. All payments for ESTA applications and renewals must be made by credit card or debit card when applying for or renewing an ESTA. The ESTA system currently accepts only the following credit/debit cards: American Express, MasterCard, VISA and Discover. Applications will not be submitted for processing until all payment information is received.

When should I apply for an ESTA?

An ESTA request can be submitted at any time prior to travel to the U.S.. However, it is recommended that ESTA applications are submitted no less than 72 hours prior to travel, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourages VWP travellers to seek ESTA approval as soon as they begin to plan their trip. Travel information can be updated online once travel details are finalised.

Can American Express apply for ESTA on my behalf?

American Express Business Travel consultants will advise travellers during the booking process that an ESTA approval will be required for their trip. American Express will also add a reminder and a link to the registration Web site to e-itineraries, subject to technology capabilities.

ESTA applications require travellers to provide personal biographical and eligibility information. To safeguard data of this highly confidential nature, American Express will not undertake ESTA registration on behalf of travellers; travellers should register themselves through the official Web site.

Do I need to provide American Express with my ESTA number?

American Express Business Travel does not require you to provide us with your ESTA number.

How long is an ESTA valid for?

Once approved, an ESTA is valid for multiple entries to the U.S., and remains valid for up to two years, or until the applicant's passport expires.

How can I check the progress of my ESTA application?

The progress of ESTA applications can be tracked through the Web site at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. There are three types of responses to an ESTA application: Authorization Approved, Authorization Pending and Travel Not Authorized.

What if my ESTA application is denied?

Travellers whose ESTA applications are not authorised will need to contact their local U.S. Embassy or Consulate for information on applying for a visa. Travellers also have the option of reapplying for an ESTA after a period of 10 days, should their circumstances have changed.

What if I have an emergency and need to travel to the U.S. straightaway?

The ESTA Web site has been designed to accommodate last minute and emergency situations.

Important Note:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security states that ESTA approval is not a guarantee of admission into the United States. In all cases, U.S. Customs and Border Protection makes admissibility determinations at their respective ports of entry.

More questions?

If you have more questions on ESTA, please visit www.cbp.gov/esta.