

## **Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) – More News**

To find out if you are from a Visa Waiver country and to determine if you can register with ESTA, go onto this website and answer a few questions: [http://london.usembassy.gov/cons\\_new/visa/visawizard/index.html](http://london.usembassy.gov/cons_new/visa/visawizard/index.html).

If you wish to read the below article online and to be able to click on the underlined links you may do so by going onto this website: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_1990.html#mrprequirements](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html#mrprequirements).

### **What do I need to know about VWP machine-readable passport (MRP) and e-Passport requirements?**

All VWP travelers, regardless of age or type of passport used, must present a machine-readable passport. In addition, depending on when VWP travelers' passports were issued, other passport requirements apply:

Nationals of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Republic of Korea, and the Slovak Republic require passports with an integrated chip containing the information from the data page ([e-Passport](#)).

Nationals of other VWP countries need:

- Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended on or after 10/26/06: passports must have integrated chips with information from the data page ([e-Passport](#)).
- Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended between 10/26/05 and 10/25/06: passports must have digital photographs printed on the data page or integrated chips with information from the data page.
- Machine-readable passports issued or renewed/extended before 10/26/05: no further requirements.

**Notice:** Effective July 1, 2009, all Visa Waiver Program (VWP) emergency or temporary passports must be electronic passports (e-Passports) to be eligible for travel to the United States without a visa under the VWP. This includes VWP applicants who present emergency or temporary passports to transit the United States. U.S. Customs and Border Protection may exercise discretion at the ports of entry for cases in which VWP applicants are traveling for medical or other emergency reasons. A VWP national arriving in the United States with a non-compliant passport, for other than emergency travel reasons, may be detained for further processing and/or denied admission". Review the [CBP Website notice](#).

Please refer to the [Visa Waiver Program Traveler Guide](#) on the United States CBP website for additional details on passport requirements.

Passports, regardless of the type, must be valid for six months past the expected stay in the United States (unless [country-specific agreements](#) provide exemptions). This is a requirement for all categories of passports – regular, diplomatic, and official – when the traveler is seeking to enter the United States for business or tourist purposes, for a maximum of 90 days.

If you are a traveler from a VWP country and your passport does not meet these requirements, you may want to consider obtaining a new VWP-compliant passport from the passport issuing authority in your country of citizenship. Otherwise you cannot travel under VWP and you must obtain a visa in your valid passport for entry into the United States.

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**Now that you have read the above information, if you determine that you are eligible to register with ESTA and that you do not need a visa, please register at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>. This is a secure website. Please return to the site a day after you register, print out the approval notice, and staple it into your passport. It is valid for two years. If your registration is denied, you will need to apply for a visa to enter the United States.**

Applicants presenting themselves for admission to the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program, but who have a valid, unexpired B1/B2 visa in a passport, are not to be considered for admission as Visa Waiver Program applicants, regardless of whether they present completed Form I-94Ws or not. The Visa Waiver Program is intended for applicants without U.S. nonimmigrant visas. The B1/B2 visas take precedence over any application for admission to the U.S. made under the Visa Waiver Program.

**Bottom Line: If you have a B1/B2 visa in any passport, USE IT. Do not use the Visa Waiver Program.**