

Presidential Proclamation – Frequently Asked Questions

(updated March 08, 2021)

1. What visa categories are impacted by the January 25, 2021 Presidential Proclamation (P.P. [10143](#)) and June 22, 2020 Presidential Proclamation (P.P. [10052](#))?

Presidential Proclamation 10143 bans entry to the United States of persons present in the Schengen Area (including Estonia), the UK, Ireland, Brazil, and South Africa. Presidential Proclamation 10052 imposes certain restrictions on visas in order to protect the U.S. labor market.

For those holding valid U.S. visas, some may travel without restrictions, while others may travel only by first seeking approval from the U.S. Embassy. If you hold a valid non-immigrant visa or ESTA and wish to travel to the United States, please carefully read the information below to determine what restrictions may apply to you.

For those who wish to apply for a U.S. visa, U.S. Embassy Tallinn is approving only a small number of certain nonimmigrant visas at this time, as described below.

THE GUIDANCE ON THIS PAGE REGARDING WHO MAY TRAVEL TO THE U.S. OR APPLY FOR A U.S. VISA MAY CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK BACK REGULARLY FOR UPDATES.

2. I have a U.S. valid visa. Can I travel to the United States?

You may travel to the United States without following any additional procedures if you hold a valid visa in any of the following categories:

- Official visas: A, G, NATO
- Air/sea crew visas: C1/D, B1 (only if annotated “OCS” for seaman working on the Outer Continental Shelf of the United States, or if traveling for work at off-shore locations such as windfarms)
- Student visas: F (if holding a valid Form I-20) or M (if holding a valid Form I-20).

As of January 26, 2021, all air passengers traveling to the United States must present to the airline documentation of a negative COVID-19 test taken within the previous three days or present documentation of having recovered from COVID-19, before boarding the flight. Please see the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s [FAQs page](#) for more details.

If you hold a valid non-immigrant visa of another category not listed above, you must follow additional procedures in order to be allowed to travel to the United States, as described below. Documentation of a negative COVID-19 test, of having recovered from COVID-19, or of having received a COVID-19 vaccine do NOT exempt you from the Presidential Proclamations.

3. I have a valid visa in a category not listed above. Can I travel to the United States?

If you hold a valid visa in a category not listed above, you may travel **only** if the U.S. Embassy approves a “national interest exception (NIE)” for your trip. If approved, the NIE will allow you only one entry to the United States within 30 days of the date of approval by the Embassy. In general, these national interest exceptions are provided to certain travelers seeking to provide vital support for critical U.S. infrastructure, academics, and persons traveling for specific humanitarian reasons. The following categories of non-immigrant visa holders may qualify for an NIE under PP10143:

- Visa holders (may include B1/B2, E, and O) seeking to provide vital support for critical infrastructure.
- I visa holders traveling in their capacity as journalists.
- J visa holders (with valid Form DS-2019) who are professors, research scholars, short-term scholars, or specialists.
- B2 (or B1/B2) visa holders traveling for lifesaving emergency medical treatment (including for family members).
- B2 (or B1/B2) visa holders traveling to provide care for a close family member who is a U.S. citizen, legal permanent resident, or other nonimmigrant-in-lawful-status alien, to include alleviating the burden of care from a medical or other institution.
- H-1B visa holders (and their dependents) who are public health or health care professionals, medical researchers, or are engaged with projects essential to a U.S. government agency.
- L visa holders (and their dependents) who are public health or healthcare professionals or are medical researchers.

PP10052 adds additional restrictions to certain H, L, and J visa holders and applicants in categories that are not included above. For more information on how to request an NIE for these travelers, please email VisaTallinn@state.gov. For the latest information regarding NIEs, please go to the Department of State’s [U.S. Visas News](#). NIEs under PP10143 are described [here](#). Guidelines for PP10052 NIE requests for H, L, and J visas are [here](#).

If you meet one of the above categories, you may seek a national interest exception (NIE) by following the procedures in item 6 below. Except for those categories in item 2 above, any non-immigrant visa holder who tries to travel to the United States for business purposes without obtaining an NIE will not be permitted to board a U.S.-bound flight.

4. I am a professional athlete with a P visa. How do I request an NIE?

U.S. Embassy Tallinn is no longer able to process NIE requests for P visa holders (or applicants). Please contact DHS directly at <http://www.dhs.gov/contact-us> for more information.

5. I have a valid ESTA. May I travel to the United States?

ESTA holders who are traveling for business, humanitarian, or urgent medical reasons (see item 3 above) may also seek a national interest exception (NIE) to PP10143 by following the procedures in item 6 below. If you attempt to travel on an ESTA without obtaining an NIE in advance, you will not be permitted to board a U.S.-bound flight and your ESTA will be cancelled.

6. I have a valid U.S. visa or ESTA and believe that I may qualify for a national interest exception (NIE). How do I apply?

If you hold a valid non-immigrant visa and believe that you qualify for a national interest exception, you should write to VisaTallinn@state.gov and provide the following information for each traveler:

- Full name (as it appears in your passport)
- Date of birth
- Scan of your passport bio page
- Scan of your current U.S. visa or ESTA confirmation
- Description of the purpose of your proposed trip to the United States
- Travel dates
- Any documentation supporting your request, e.g., information regarding your proposed business visit, the nature of your humanitarian reasons, etc. This does not include documentation related to COVID-19, which will only be required at the time of travel.

If the Embassy approves your national interest exception (NIE) request, the NIE allows you to take only one trip to the United States, and you must travel within 30 days of the date of the approval. If you wish to travel again in the future, you will need to seek another NIE approval.

7. Our company needs to send employees to the U.S. for business. May we request an NIE on their behalf?

A company may submit an NIE request for an employee, provided that the employee is copied on the email. This is due to privacy regulations. Please follow the instructions provided in item 6 above. Please note that any decision on an NIE may only be conveyed to the applicant.

8. I was granted an NIE. What do I need to do at the airport?

Information on your NIE will be entered into applicable systems to authorize U.S. travel. Arrive at the airport early. If the airline has any questions on your travel eligibility, it should contact the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Regional Carrier Liaison Group (RCLG).

If traveling on ESTA, you may contact the CBP Travel Coordination Center for formal and informal inquiries related to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) at help@cbp.dhs.gov or at US phone number 1-877-227-5511.

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9. I wish to apply for a visa. Are there appointments available?

A limited number of appointments for specific categories of non-immigrant visas are available at U.S. Embassy Tallinn. The consular officer will determine whether you are eligible to travel under the current Presidential Proclamations at the time of the interview. Thus, for example, qualified students (categories F and M) or air/sea crew (category C1/D or certain B1 visas) may be processed as normal. Other categories may also be processed, but will only be issued if the consular officer determines that a “national interest exception” (NIE) applies as described above (i.e., certain business travelers, academics, and persons traveling for humanitarian reasons). If you do not believe that you will qualify for a visa due to the restrictions in the Presidential Proclamations, you may wish to postpone your visa application to a later date.

For travelers seeking an appointment for a B1/B2 visa: if you have an urgent need to travel on a B1/B2 visa, and believe you are eligible for an NIE (see Item 3 above for more information), you may request an expedited appointment. To request an

expedited appointment, please e-mail to VisaTallinn@state.gov. A consular officer will review your request, and we will contact you with more information.

10. Can I get a refund of my application fee or ESTA fee?

Unfortunately, visa application fees and ESTA application fees are not refundable. You can reschedule your visa appointment at no additional charge during the one-year period beginning on the date the fee was originally paid. Approved ESTAs remain valid for up to two years.

11. I'm not from Estonia and my case is still pending with U.S. Embassy Tallinn. Please transfer my profile back to my country. I wish to apply there.

You may be able to use your existing account profile in your home country. However, the fee you paid in Estonia cannot be transferred to pay for a case processed outside of Estonia. If you wish to apply for a U.S. visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate outside Estonia, you will need to make a new fee payment and fill out another application form according to the application procedures at that location.

12. My spouse is a U.S. citizen but I am not. What do I need in order to travel?

As the spouse of a U.S. citizen, you are not subject to the Presidential Proclamation travel restrictions, and do not need a national interest exception (NIE). However, you do need a visa or ESTA, and you must travel with proof of your spouse's U.S. citizenship and an original marriage certificate to prove your relationship.

If traveling on ESTA, a notation must be added to the ESTA system to allow you to travel. Therefore, if you are planning to travel to the U.S. from the Schengen Area on ESTA, please contact VisaTallinn@state.gov for more information at least 10 days before you plan to travel to ensure your ESTA authorization is valid for travel.

For a full list of travelers not subject to the Proclamations, please see [P.P.10143](#).