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Phased Resumption of Routine Visa Services

Last Updated: July 14, 2020

Phased Resumption of Routine Visa Services

- The Department of State suspended routine visa services worldwide in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As global conditions evolve, U.S. Embassies and Consulates are beginning a phased resumption of routine visa services.
- The resumption of routine visa services will occur on a post-by-post basis, in coordination with the Department's Diplomacy Strong framework for safely returning our workforce to Department facilities. U.S. Embassies and Consulates have continued to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services since March and will continue to do so as they are able. As post-specific conditions improve, our missions will begin providing additional services, culminating eventually in a complete resumption of routine visa

services.

- We are unable to provide a specific date for when each mission will resume specific visa services, or when each mission will return to processing at pre-Covid workload levels. See each individual U.S. Embassy or Consulate's website for information regarding operating status and which services it is currently offering.
- Our missions overseas continue to provide all possible services to U.S. citizens. More information is available on each post's website.
- This does not affect travel under the Visa Waiver Program. See <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/faq?focusedTopic=Schengen%20Travel%20Proclamation> for more information.
- Applicants with an urgent matter who need to travel immediately should follow the guidance provided on their nearest embassy or consulate's website to request an emergency appointment.

FAQ

Q. Which additional visa services are embassies/consulates beginning to provide?

- All of our missions are continuing to provide emergency and mission-critical visa services. As post-specific conditions permit, our missions will phase in processing some routine nonimmigrant and immigrant visa cases, for example: travelers with urgent travel needs; students (F-1, M-1, and certain J-1); and some family members of U.S. citizens consistent with Presidential Proclamation 10014. We expect the volume and type of visa cases each post will process to depend on local circumstances. An embassy or consulate will resume adjudicating all routine nonimmigrant and immigrant visa cases only when adequate resources are available and it is safe to do so.

Q. What criteria are missions using to determine when to resume routine services?

- We are closely monitoring local conditions in each country where we have a U.S. presence. Local conditions that may affect when we can begin providing various public services include medical infrastructure, COVID-19 cases, emergency response capabilities, and restrictions on leaving home.

Q. What steps are being taken to protect customers from the spread of COVID-19?

- The health and safety of our workforce and customers will remain paramount. Our embassies and consulates are implementing safeguards to keep staff and customers safe, including implementing physical distancing in our waiting rooms, scheduling fewer interviews at a time, frequent disinfection of high touch areas, and following local health and safety regulations.

Q. Do the various Presidential Proclamations/travel restrictions still apply, or are those lifting with the resumption of visa services?

- The five geographical COVID-19 Proclamations (P.P. 9984, 9992, 9993, 9996, 10041) and the two COVID-19 Labor Market Proclamations suspending the entry of certain aliens (P.P. 10014 and 10052) remain in effect.

Q: Is my situation an emergency? I need to go the United States immediately for X.

- Applicants can find instructions on how to request an emergency visa appointment at the Embassy or Consulate's website.

Q. What about my MRV fee that expired while routine services were suspended?

- The Machine Readable Visa (MRV) fee is valid and may be used to schedule a visa appointment in the country where it was purchased within one year of the date of payment.

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