

GENERAL  
INFORMATION

## Travel Information for Nonimmigrants in H-1B or O-1 Status

### BEFORE TRAVELING

Verify whether you need a new visa. Refer to our [H-1B/O-1 Visa Renewal](#) guidance if you plan to renew your visa.

If your trip is longer than 5 weeks for personal travel or 2 weeks for professional travel, you must request [Extended Absence from NIH](#) approval from DIS before you leave.

*If you are not traveling to your home country, you may need a visa or authorization from the destination country. Contact the Embassy in that country before leaving the United States.*

Consult with DIS if you have:

1. An open or pending case with a DIS Immigration Specialist
2. A pending petition or application at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

For international travel, bring these documents as evidence of your eligibility to re-enter the U.S. in H-1B/O-1 status:

- Valid Passport
- Valid Visa (unless an exception applies – see right column)
- Current Form I-797A H-1B or O-1 Approval Notice
- Current Form I-94 ([located online](#) or on the bottom of most recent Form I-797A Approval Notice)
- Travel letter from your Institute/Center
- If in H-1B status:
  - Copy of most recent Labor Condition Application (LCA)
  - Original Form I-797 Approval Notice to Waive the Foreign Residence Requirement (I-612 Waiver Approval), if applicable
- If not traveling to home country: Authorization/visa to enter destination country, if applicable
- Other recommended documents:
  - NIH Identification (ID) Badge
  - Copy of two most recent Leave and Earnings Statements

### H-1B/O-1 TRAVEL WITH PENDING LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT APPLICATIONS

If you have a pending I-485 application to adjust to lawful permanent resident, international travel must be carefully planned. H-1B status and O-1 status are impacted differently by travel while an I-485 application is pending. Depending on your situation, you *may* need to use Advance Parole travel authorization in lieu of an entry visa. Consult with your attorney or DIS for additional information.

### EXCEPTIONS TO VISA REQUIREMENT

#### Automatic Visa Revalidation

A valid, unexpired U.S. entry visa may not be required if you will travel to Canada or Mexico for less than 30 days, provided:

- You are not a citizen of Iran, Syria, Sudan, North Korea, or another ineligible country
- You have maintained your H-1B or O-1 status and intend to resume your activity upon re-entry
- You re-enter the United States before the end date listed on your most recent Form I-94
- Your visa was not cancelled or revoked
- You do not apply for a new U.S. visa while traveling
- You do not travel to another country besides Canada or Mexico on your trip

Change of Status – You may still be eligible for Automatic Visa Revalidation if you changed your immigration status in the U.S. (e.g. J-1 to H-1B) and have never received an H-1B/O-1 entry visa in your passport. All other requirements for automatic revalidation still apply.

Refer to the Department of State website for additional information on [Automatic Visa Revalidation](#). When travelling on a cruise ship, you should always check with the carrier for any immigration restrictions before booking your trip.

#### Citizens of Canada and Bermuda

If you are a citizen of Canada, you do not need a valid visa stamp to re-enter the U.S. in most cases. Bermudians are often visa exempt but only if they will be staying in the U.S. for 180 days or less. Refer to this website for additional information for [Visa Requirements for Canadians and Bermudians](#).

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### WHILE TRAVELING

Store your documents in a safe and secure location.

Notify DIS and your lab if your travel plans change significantly, such as extending your stay outside of the United States beyond 5 weeks.

### RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES

Keep your original immigration documents in your carry-on luggage so you can easily present them to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) upon re-entry to the United States.

After you pass through the CBP port of entry, verify that the information on your passport entry stamp is correct. Your immigration status should be H-1B or O-1 and your "Admit-Until Date" should reflect the end date of your immigration status as reflected on the most recent I-797A Approval Notice.

If there is a mistake, politely request that the CBP officer review your documents again and correct the entry stamp. If you are unable to resolve the issue with CBP at the port of entry, contact DIS as soon as possible.

Once you have internet access, check your most recent Form I-94 online. Verify that all information on the I-94 is correct. The I-94 is sometimes issued for a period shorter than is reflected on the I-797A Approval Notice, usually when your passport expiration date is before the end date listed on the approval notice. If this occurs, immediate review is required by DIS to ensure continued lawful stay and employment authorization.

### PROVIDE UPDATED DOCUMENTS TO DIS

Upon your re-entry to the United States, send DIS a copy of any updated immigration documents, such as your Form I-94 and passport or visa. Immigration documents contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII), so they must be sent via a secure delivery method such as Secure Email File Transfer (SEFT): [secureemail.nih.gov/bds/Login.do](https://secureemail.nih.gov/bds/Login.do) to [DIS@mail.nih.gov](mailto:DIS@mail.nih.gov). Please do not send unencrypted e-mails to DIS that contain PII.

### RELEVANT RESOURCES

Request for Extended Absence Abroad Form:

<https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/AdministrativeStaff/Documents/RequestforExtendedAbsencefromNIH.pdf>

Download Most Recent I-94:

[i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94)

Template for IC Travel Letter:

[ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/SampleLetterTravel.doc](https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/VisitingScientists/Documents/SampleLetterTravel.doc)

List of countries ineligible for Automatic Visa Revalidation:

[state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/](https://state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/)

Information on Automatic Visa Revalidation:

[travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-expiration-date/automatic-revalidate.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-expiration-date/automatic-revalidate.html)

Information for citizens of Canada and Bermuda:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/citizens-of-canada-and-bermuda.html>

Secure Email and File Transfer (SEFT):

[secureemail.nih.gov/bds/Login.do](https://secureemail.nih.gov/bds/Login.do)

Contact DIS:

[ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/AboutDIS/Pages/ContactUs.aspx](https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/AboutDIS/Pages/ContactUs.aspx)

**Send above documents via secure method to DIS:**

Building 31, Room B2B07  
31 Center Drive MSC 2028  
Bethesda, MD 20892-2028  
Telephone: (301) 496-6166  
[ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis](https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis)

Keep copies of everything you send to DIS