

What to Do After Your U.S. Visa or Work Authorization Is Approved: Next Steps Explained



Immigration Blog

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September 17, 2025 | **IMMIGRATION**

Congratulations; your visa or work-authorized status application/petition has been approved! There are a few things that are absolutely critical to understand following approval, both about your obligations and about maintaining valid (and correct) status while in the U.S.

1. It is important to **send your attorney a copy of your visa** once you receive your passport back, **or the stamp in your passport** if you apply for work-authorized status at the border and receive a passport stamp upon approval, so they can track your visa/status expiration in their records. If you have not received either of these, please send your attorney a copy of your I-94 Arrival/Departure Record showing your work-authorized status and dates of approval, which is available by clicking on “Get Most Recent I-94/I-95” at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>.
2. If you have a visa that grants you work authorization, when you enter the U.S. or go through Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Preclearance at the airport, **please open your passport to the visa page and specifically request to be admitted in your approved, work-authorized status**. If you are visa exempt (i.e., Canadian or Bermudian),

please either **show your passport stamp confirming your work authorized status** when entering, and/or **specifically request to be admitted in your work authorized status**. Without this, CBP might admit you as a visitor instead, depending on the stated purpose of your trip or by mistake—in which case you are not authorized to work while in the U.S. on that trip.

3. Once admitted to the U.S., double-check immediately that you have been admitted in the correct status. You should immediately check your I-94 Arrival/Departure record at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/home> to make certain that you have been admitted in the correct (work-authorized) status, and that you are aware of the “admit until” date. Please note that for Canadians issued E visas, the most Customs and Border Protection can issue E visa status for each entry is two (2) years, but you will continue to be able to leave and re-enter using the E visa in your passport over the entire 5-year period of its validity. This is especially important now, since a valid I-94 Arrival/Departure record showing your status is proof that you have fulfilled the new “Alien Registration Requirement” for foreigners spending 30 days or more in the U.S.

4. If you have been admitted in the wrong status (such as “B-1” or “B-2” visitor), please reach out to CBP Deferred Inspection at either (a) the port you entered at, or (b) the location nearest to where you are in the U.S. You can find a list of Deferred Inspection sites and email addresses at <https://www.cbp.gov/about/contact/ports/deferred-inspection-sites>. You should let them know you were admitted in the wrong status, and provide them with a copy of your passport bio page and copy of your E visa, electronically. In some instances, they may be able to make the change to your I-94 arrival/departure record over the phone.

5. As noted above, a valid, accurate **I-94 Arrival/Departure record also serves as proof of “Alien Registration”** with Department of Homeland Security, required of all foreign nationals who will be/are in the U.S. for 30 days or longer on any single visit. If you have a valid visa and/or (matching) I-94, you are considered already registered, and do not need to complete the [Form G-325R](#). If asked for proof of status for any reason while in the U.S., you should present your I-94 showing your valid status, including your “admit until” date.

6. Don’t forget: The above advice applies to spouses and children entering in dependent status as well.

7. WARNING: IF YOU ARE NOT ATTENTIVE TO YOUR STATUS, or specifically, your “admit until” date issued or potentially updated each time you enter, and you inadvertently overstay your authorized time and accrue time in “unlawful presence” while in the U.S., CBP will not care that it was their mistake in admitting you in the wrong status. They have made very clear that they will not correct I-94s unless the issue is raised and correction requested immediately or close-in-time to issuance of the I-94 Arrival/Departure Record. This is why it is absolutely pivotal to check your I-94 Arrival/Departure Record each and every time you enter the U.S. The onus of obligation to ensure that you have been admitted in and maintain valid, correct status while in the U.S. falls on you, not the U.S. government.

If you have questions about the steps following the approval of your U.S. Visa or Work Authorization, please contact Elizabeth M. Klarin at eklarin@lippes.com or Eileen M. Martin at emartin@lippes.com.

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