

International Traveler's Checklist: Pre-Travel Preparation for U.S. Entry



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As international travel regulations and immigration enforcement policies continue to evolve, it is critical that non-citizen employees—including visa holders and lawful permanent residents (LPRs)—entering the U.S. are well-informed, cautious, and prepared. This checklist is designed to prepare for international travel and smooth re-entry into the U.S.

> Documents & Status Verification

- **Passport** is valid for at least **six months** beyond intended return date.
- **Visa, green card, or work authorization** documents are valid and accessible.
- **I-797 Approval Notices** (if applicable) are printed or saved.
- **Most recent I-94 record** downloaded from cbp.gov/i94.
- **Employment verification letter** available (if required for your visa type).
- Travel itinerary complies with your **immigration status conditions** (e.g., expiration dates, restrictions).

> Travel Planning & Risk Awareness

- Checked for **CBP updates or travel advisories** at the intended port of entry.
- Consulted with HR and/or legal counsel **if traveling to/from higher-risk countries** (e.g., Iran, Syria, Cuba, North Korea).
- Reviewed potential issues related to **immigration history** (e.g., prior visa denials, overstays, arrests).
- Shared itinerary and emergency contact info with **HR or a trusted contact**.



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> Electronic Devices & Data Protection

- Removed or encrypted **sensitive personal and work-related data** from phones and laptops.
- Signed out of **social media, messaging, and email apps**.
- Disabled **biometric access** (Face ID, fingerprint unlock).
- Enabled **device encryption** and set strong alphanumeric passwords.
- Turned off **cloud syncing** or deleted apps that store confidential data (e.g., Dropbox, Signal, Slack).
- Considered using a **travel-only device** with minimal stored data.

> At the Port of Entry

- Ready to clearly and concisely explain the **purpose of your visit** and your employment status.
- Have printed or digital copies of key documents **easily accessible** in carry-on luggage.
- If selected for **secondary inspection**, remain calm and cooperative; request to contact legal counsel if needed.
- Memorized contact info for HR or attorney **in case your device is seized or locked**.

> Post-Arrival Recommendations

- Change passwords and enable **multi-factor authentication (MFA)** for email, banking, and sensitive accounts.
- Notify HR or legal counsel if CBP **retained your device** or questioned you extensively.
- Document the experience if issues arose, including officer names (if known), questions asked, and any delays.

> Additional Tips

- Be prepared to explain your travel purpose, employer, and visa status clearly and concisely.
- Ensure any data on your device does not conflict with your stated purpose of entry.
- Avoid saving politically sensitive material or participating in online discussions that could be misinterpreted.



➤ Need to File a Complaint or Seek Redress?

If you believe your rights were violated during a CBP questioning or your device was mishandled, you can file a redress request through the DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP). TRIP is a formal avenue for travelers to inquire about or resolve issues related to CBP inspections, delays, or treatment at the border. Submit a complaint or redress request here: <https://www.dhs.gov/trip>

Questions before you travel?

In today's enforcement landscape, international travelers—especially visa holders and lawful permanent residents—must approach U.S. border entry with increased vigilance. Being well-prepared with a valid passport and visa is essential, but so is having a clear understanding of the evolving risks at U.S. ports of entry. To assess your specific risks and circumstances, it is strongly recommended that you consult with experienced immigration legal counsel before traveling.

Contact Punam Rogers



Punam Rogers

Phone: 617.849.7884

Email: progers@constangy.com

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