

Tipps für die Passkontrolle bei der Einreise:

With Permission from Visaserve.Com, David H. Nachman, www.visaserve.com, October 12, 2007

• What to Expect at the Border

Crossing the U.S. border may not be easy, even when you have a valid visa in hand. Here are some tips to smooth your passage.

The first person you meet on arrival in the United States probably won't offer you a smile or a cold drink. A string of questions is more likely what you'll get from the U.S. border protection officer who inspects your passport and documents when you arrive at a border post. The officer is looking for information that might prevent you from entering the country.

Border protection officers are trained to be skeptical of everyone. Security is their first concern these days, and you may encounter delays as your name is checked against various computer databases. The officers are also on the lookout for people who might be using a tourist or nonimmigrant visa to gain entry to the United States for a permanent stay. No matter what paperwork you received beforehand, if the officer finds a problem with it, or believes you're lying, you can be refused entry at the border and returned to your home country.

The more prepared you are when you reach an airport or other border post, the fewer problems you will face. Here are the most likely questions you'll have to answer. However, the officer is free to ask you just about any question he or she can think of.

Why are you visiting the United States? Your answer must be compatible with your visa. If, for example, you have a visitor visa but say that you're coming to find a job, you'll be put on the next flight home. Your answer must also show that you don't plan to violate any U.S. laws.

Where will you be staying? The officer wants to know that you have clear plans for what you will be doing in the United States. If you have no previously arranged places to stay, the officer might question whether you should be allowed in.

Who will you be visiting? Again, the officer is looking to see that you have clear -- and legal -- plans.

How long will you be staying? The officer wants to know that you don't plan to stay longer than you should. Even if your visa says "multiple entry" or "one year," you may not be allowed to remain for that length of time -- the little I-94 card you're given by the officer will tell you the date by which you must leave.

How much money are you bringing? The officer wants to know that you will be able to cover your expenses in the United States.

Have you visited the United States before, and if so, did you remain longer than you were supposed to? If you have previously stayed in the United States for six months longer than you were allowed, you are not eligible to come to the United States again without special permission (unless you've waited outside the United States for at least three years). If your overstay lasted a full year, you're expected to remain outside the United States for ten years before trying to return.

How often do you come to the United States? The officer is looking to see whether you are repeatedly using nonimmigrant visas as a way of living in the United States -- in which case you'll be accused of misusing your visa and denied entry.

- **More Tips for Entering the United States**

When you arrive at a U.S. border post, you will be subjected to two types of inspection at once. An agency of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) called Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will inspect your documents and decide whether you will be permitted to enter the country. CBP will also check your luggage to see if you are bringing any illegal or banned materials into the country.

Don't try to make light of the border or airport inspection process. It is serious, and the CBP officers do not take their jobs lightly, even if they appear to be informal. To avoid the prying eyes of these officers, remember to:

Make sure nothing that you bring to the United States appears to contradict the visa status you have been given. If you are coming as a tourist, don't bring along a book on how to immigrate to the United States or a stack of resumés. You might have these things because you have future plans to apply for immigration, but the CBP won't see it that way.

Do not bring illegal or questionable items through the border. It may be legal in your country to carry a firearm (a gun). It is not legal to bring it into the United States and, if you have one in your luggage, it could lead to your immediate removal. Make sure you are not carrying other illegal or questionable items in your luggage such as illegal drugs, pornography, or plants, fruits, and animals that are not allowed into the United States.

Pay attention to your appearance. Dress plainly and neatly. Visitors coming to the United States on a tourist visa dressed in old, ragged clothes might raise questions about how they can afford their vacation. On the other hand, people coming from a poor country who are dressed too richly might raise questions about how they can afford their lifestyle. Someone coming for a short stay with a lot of luggage might also raise concerns.

Be polite and calm. It may be hard after a long airplane flight, but a little politeness goes a long way. If you seem likeable, the CBP officer may treat you with more respect.

Have all your required papers. If you lack any required visa documents, you will be detained, even if you are otherwise entitled to enter the United States. Lacking papers is a red flag to the CBP officer to take a closer look at you.

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