Proskauer

Summer Travel Tips for Foreign Nationals Living in the U.S. on a Temporary Visa

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Any foreign national making plans to travel abroad this summer should make sure to prepare in advance, from a U.S. immigration perspective. Following are 5 helpful tips for summer travel:

1. **Plan for Delays at U.S. Consulates:** During the summer months, there is typically an uptick in visa applications made at U.S. Consulates. Adding to the volume of applicants, some consulates may have reduced staffing, and limited appointment availability. For example, it is being reported that it is taking between 3 to 4 weeks to secure a nonimmigrant visa appointment in London with similar wait times for appointments in Frankfurt and Munich. Travelers should plan accordingly and prepare in advance when at all possible. Once abroad, travelers should also plan for possible visa issuance delays.
2. **Make Sure Passport Is Valid:** A passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the expiration of the requested period of admission to the United States. There are limited exceptions to this rule, however generally, the rule is in place to ensure that a traveler will be able to leave the United States and return to his or her country of citizenship.
3. **New Social Media Questions on DS-160 and DS-260 Visa Applications:** Recently, a new question was added to the immigrant and nonimmigrant visa application forms requiring applicants to disclose their social media identifiers for all accounts used in the last 5 years. The added question appears on the form under a section called "social media". The information gathered will likely be used by consular officers to validate the identity of the visa applicant and to verify the information represented in the visa application. We encourage visa applicants to ensure their professional profiles have accurate and updated employment information to avoid any inconsistencies.
4. **Be Prepared for Additional Security Procedures:** Every visa applicant should account for possible security background checks during the visa application process. The U.S. consulate may require additional security checks based on a number of factors such as country of origin, a name similar to an individual listed

in a government database, or jobs in high-tech fields among others. Security clearances will delay the processing of your visa application from a few days to several weeks or even months in extreme circumstances. Travelers should also be prepared for security screening measures when they return to the U.S. The Biometric Data Collection System collects fingerprints, photographs and scans travel documents upon arrival in the U.S. Travelers may be subject to questions about immigration status and should be patient and answer questions in a clear and concise manner.

5. **Be Clear On Your Current U.S. Immigration Status:** Travelers should be acutely aware of their U.S. immigration status prior to departing the United States. Travelers should always check the visa stamp in their passport to ensure it is unexpired. (Canadian citizens in most instances do not need a visa for travel.) Travelers with pending adjustment of status applications should ensure that they review their status and ability to travel. They may be required to present an advance parole document or a valid H or L visa. When returning to the U.S. after international travel, be sure to verify the accuracy of the I-94 admission record available at cbp.gov. The I-94 admission record determines what status an individual was admitted to the U.S. in and for what length of time. Also, certain travelers who have applications pending with USCIS for extension or change of status, should verify whether any travel will jeopardize pending applications.

For more information on travel and immigration please speak to your Proskauer representative.