

Voluntary ESTA Registration For Visa Waiver Travel Starts August 1

July 21, 2008

On August 1, 2008, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will begin accepting voluntary registrations for the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program. ESTA is an automated system used to verify the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). (The program allows citizens and nationals of selected countries, including Australia, Japan, Singapore and most Western European countries, to travel to the United States for business or tourism for a period of up to 90 days without the need for a visa.)

On August 1, 2008, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will begin accepting voluntary registrations for the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program. ESTA is an automated system used to verify the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). (The program allows citizens and nationals of selected countries, including Australia, Japan, Singapore and most Western European countries, to travel to the United States for business or tourism for a period of up to 90 days without the need for a visa.) ESTA registration is expected to become mandatory for VWP travelers in January 2009. At that time, all VWP travelers will be required to obtain an ESTA approval prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea (land ports from Canada and Mexico are exempt).

ESTA authorizations will be generally valid for two years and will enable multiple entries into the U.S. While an ESTA authorization is not a guarantee of admission to the U.S., it will serve to prevent some VWP applicants from being refused admission and returned to his/her home country following inspection by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) after arriving in the United States on an international flight. To register, visit the [ESTA website](#) after August 1. For more information, see the [DHS Fact Sheet](#), the [DHS' Frequently Asked Questions](#), and the [ESTA information page](#).

Note: This article was published in the [July 2008 issue](#) of the *Immigration eAuthority*.

TOPICS

Immigration