

# DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL VISA NEWS

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**Welcome** to the inaugural issue of **Diplomatic and Official Visa News** from the Visa Office's Diplomatic Liaison Division. We are hoping this will prove to be a helpful publication of reminders and news every two months or so, which we will disseminate both electronically and in paper form at our Diplomatic Reception Window. If you would like to be added to our electronic distribution list, please e-mail [JordanRL@state.gov](mailto:JordanRL@state.gov). We also welcome your feedback on this newsletter, as well as topics you would like to see addressed in future issues. For now, we have focused on a few matters dear to our hearts (and probably yours, too!).



## Importance of Applying Early for Visa Renewals, Especially if Subject to Administrative Processing

Much like our colleagues around the world, we expect an extraordinary peak application period this summer, combined with the usual staff gaps. Therefore, we encourage everyone to plan ahead to allow us enough time to process visas before any travel dates. This summer, we recommend that travelers begin the visa application process at least two weeks before they plan to travel, and at least eight weeks in advance if subject to administrative processing. This will ensure that, even if we have systems problems or other issues, the vast majority of applicants will receive their new visas in time to travel. Please bear in mind our usual minimum turnaround time is three to five business days for cases not subject to administrative processing.

## Operating Hours Reminder

Reception Window is open 11-12, Monday through Friday; please come in at least weekly to check for packages ready for pick-up. Phone Calls are taken 2-4, Monday through Friday, to allow us to spend the rest of the day actually working on the cases you call to inquire about. Calling outside these hours may result in delayed processing of cases due to our small number of staff and large workload, so we appreciate your cooperation with these hours.

## Immigration Issues

As promised at our seminar in March, we have researched the question of whether embassies and IOs can employ non-A and G visa holders. From the Visa Office's perspective, the answer is still "no" with very limited exceptions (e.g., students doing summer internships before they return to school). In general, Embassy and IO staff should hold A or G visas if they are not green card holders, and green card holders cannot serve in A-1 equivalent positions. Non-A or G visa holders should not take up employment with an Embassy/IO until USCIS has approved their change of status, and generally their dependents must also change status. Students hired while on an OPT program should submit a photocopy of their OPT card in addition to other required paperwork for changing status.

## Common DS-1648 Mistakes

Missing Embassy/Organization/Mission Seal on confirmation page or diplomatic note/U.S. military letter; at least one is required. Old Photos – We continue to refuse at least a handful of cases each day for photos that are more than six months old. Incomplete Names – Applicant names should exactly match their passport information. Extra Spaces – Please ask applicants to avoid extra spaces after their surnames and in passport numbers, as these additions can cause visas to be unreadable at ports of entry. Copy of Principal's Visa and I-94 – required for anyone applying separately from their principal.

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