

## What Foreign Nationals Need to Know About DHS's New Online Registration Requirement

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Beginning April 11, 2025, certain foreign nationals in the United States will be required to register online with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and undergo biometrics collection and a background check, according to a [newly published federal regulation](#).

Most foreign nationals present in the United States – including those who entered on a U.S. visa or were issued a permanent resident card (green card), an I-94 admission record, an employment authorization document (EAD), or a border crossing card – are considered already registered and generally will not need to take further action under the new process. But it is crucial that these foreign nationals carry immigration documentation with them at all times and report any change of address within the required 10-day timeframe. Click [here](#) for more information on these separate requirements.

Three groups of foreign nationals will need to comply with the new registration requirement (with some exceptions):

- Visa-exempt Canadian nationals who enter the United States for business or tourism at a land port of entry, were not issued a Form I-94, and remain in the United States for 30 days or more are required to register;
- Foreign nationals who are in the United States for 30 days or more and who turn (or turned) 14 while here may be required to register, though DHS instructions are not yet clear as to certain classes of children; see Questions 5-8 for further information; and
- Foreign nationals who entered the United States without inspection (known as EWI) and will remain in the United States for 30 days or more and are not already considered registered (see Question 2) are required to register.

The following are answers to some frequently asked questions about the new process and who is subject to it. These FAQs will be updated as DHS provides more information about the new system and process.

## REGISTRATION: THE BASIC REQUIREMENT

### 1. Why is the U.S. government introducing this new process?

Longstanding U.S. laws and rules require foreign nationals in the United States to register with the federal government. For many, registration occurs when a foreign national applies for a visa (immigrant or nonimmigrant) outside the United States and is fingerprinted, or receives a Form I-94 arrival record, an employment authorization document, a permanent residence card (green card), or another qualifying immigration document. Those who enter the United States without a visa must register if they are in the United States for 30 days or more. Children who enter before they turn 14 may be required to re-register within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. (See Questions 5-9 for more information about children and registration.)

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an [executive order](#) that, among other things, directs the Department of Homeland Security to strictly enforce the established registration requirements and ensure that foreign nationals are complying with them. In fulfillment of the executive order, DHS created a new online process for those who are unregistered, enabling them to register and have their fingerprints collected.

## WHO IS SUBJECT TO THE NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS?

### 2. Who is considered already registered and thus not required to use the new system?

Many foreign nationals will not need to take any action because they already possess a document or have filed an application that meets the registration requirements. This includes foreign nationals who entered the United States after turning 14 and either entered on a visa or were issued any of the following documents:

- A lawful permanent residence card (green card);\*
- A border crossing card;\*
- A USCIS employment authorization document (EAD);\*
- An I-94 or I-94W arrival record for nonimmigrants and parolees;\*
- A valid, unexpired DHS nonimmigrant admission stamp or parole stamp in a foreign passport; or
- A Notice to Appear (NTA) or other type of document issued when a foreign national is placed into removal (deportation) proceedings.

\* This document should be acceptable proof of registration even if it has expired.

Foreign nationals who have filed one of the following types of applications have also met the registration requirement and generally should not need to take further action:

- A Form I-485 adjustment of status application;

- A Form I-590 application for Registration for Classification as a Refugee; or
- Certain applications for temporary residence status.

### 3. Who is exempt from the registration requirement?

Some foreign nationals are exempt from the registration:

- Foreign nationals in the United States who were issued a nonimmigrant or immigrant visa before they arrived and who entered the country after turning 14;
- Individuals who have applied for or who hold an A or G visa; and
- Foreign nationals who are in the United States for less than 30 days.

**IMPORTANT: It is not yet clear whether a foreign national who entered on a visa when they were under age 14 must re-register when they turn 14 in the United States. See Question 6.**

### 4. Who is required to register in the new system?

There are three groups of foreign nationals who are not covered by existing registration procedures or exempt and therefore must complete the online registration process:

- Canadian visitors of any age who (1) are traveling visa-free for business or tourism, (2) entered the United States by land, (3) were not issued an I-94 arrival record, and (4) remain in the United States for 30 days or more.
- Foreign nationals who are in the United States for 30 days or more and turn 14 in the United States must register within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and be fingerprinted. It is not yet clear whether this requirement applies to foreign nationals who entered on a visa or are in valid nonimmigrant status (e.g., H-4, L-2, TD); see Questions 6-7 for details.
- Foreign nationals of any age who entered the United States without inspection and
  - Remain in the United States for 30 days or longer; and
  - Do not have a registration document (see Question 2); and
  - Have not applied for adjustment of status, refugee status, or temporary residence status. This includes foreign nationals who entered without inspection and have applied for DACA, TPS, or asylum but who have not been issued an EAD, NTA, or other document that qualifies as evidence of registration (see Question 2).

## REGISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AGE 14 OR YOUNGER

### 5. My child entered the United States and has been here for 30 days or more and will be turning 14. Is my child required to register or re-register?

Children who have been in the country for 30 days or more and are turning 14 – whether previously registered or not – are generally required to register or re-register within 30 days after turning 14 and to undergo fingerprinting. However, if your child entered on a visa or is a

Canadian national with an I-94 or a U.S. permanent resident, please refer to Question 6, 7, or 8 below, respectively.

**6. My child entered the United States on a nonimmigrant visa and has been here for 30 days or more. Is my child required to register after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday?**

The law and regulations are not clear on whether children entering on a nonimmigrant visa – such as an H-4 or L-2 dependent visa – are required to register when they turn 14.

Absent more information from DHS, you may wish to explore the benefits of registration for your child even if it is not clearly required. Registering may help avoid risks in the future if the agency later confirms that children who entered on a visa are required to register within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. When you attempt to register your child online, the registration system should detect whether your child is deemed already registered based on their visa. If your child is deemed registered, the online system should indicate as such when it reviews your child's registration form.

**7. My child is a visa-exempt Canadian national who entered the United States as a nonimmigrant and has been here for 30 days or more. Is my child required to register when they turn 14?**

If your child entered by land as a visa-exempt Canadian visitor and was not issued an I-94, they must register within 30 days of entry and re-register within 30 days after turning 14.

If your child entered in a nonimmigrant status like H-4, L-2, or TD and was issued an I-94, the law and regulations are not clear on whether they are obliged to register on turning 14. But because they did not enter on a visa, it may be advisable for them to register when they turn 14 even if the law is not completely clear on that issue. Registering may help avoid risks in the future if the agency later confirms definitively that children who entered in a nonimmigrant status are required to register within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. When you attempt to register your child online, the registration system should detect whether your child is deemed already registered. If your child is deemed registered, the online system should indicate as such when it reviews your child's registration form.

**8. My child became a lawful permanent resident before the age of 14. Is my child required to register when they turn 14?**

Longstanding laws and regulations generally require a permanent resident to apply for a new green card within 30 days after they turn 14 using USCIS Form I-90. It is not clear whether the I-90 application for the new green card serves to re-register the child with DHS. Therefore, after Form I-90 is filed on your child's behalf, you may wish to register your child even if it is not clearly required. Registering may help minimize risks in the future if DHS later determines that children who apply for a new green card after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday are required in addition to register. When you attempt to register your child online, the registration system should detect



whether your child is deemed already registered. If your child is deemed registered, the online system should indicate as such when it reviews your child's registration form.

#### **9. Do children under the age of 14 need to register?**

Children under 14 years old who entered the United States without a visa and who were not issued an I-94 are required to be registered by their parent or guardian, but they are not required to provide fingerprints. This includes:

- Children under 14 who are Canadian, are traveling visa-free for business or tourism, entered the United States by land, were not issued an I-94 arrival record, and will remain in the United States for 30 days or more; and
- Children under 14 who entered the United States without inspection (EWI), will remain in the United States for 30 days or more, and do not have registration document or a qualifying pending application. See Question 18 for further information and important risk considerations.

Children in these two groups will also need to re-register after they turn 14, and at that point, they will be required to undergo fingerprinting.

Children under 14 years old who entered the United States with a visa or were issued an I-94 are not required to register. Please refer to Questions 6-7 regarding whether such children would need to register upon turning 14.

### **THE REGISTRATION PROCESS**

#### **10. How does a foreign national register with DHS?**

If you are subject to registration in the USCIS system, you will need to:

- (1) Create a personal account in myUSCIS; if the registrant is a child under 14, a parent or guardian must create the account for the child;
- (2) Complete and submit USCIS Form G-325R, the online registration form; and
- (3) If age 14 or older and not a Canadian visitor, appear at a USCIS Application Support Center for fingerprinting and photographing.

#### **11. What is the deadline for registering? What about for foreign nationals who entered the United States or turned 14 before the new registration rule takes effect?**

In general, for those subject to the registration or re-registration requirement, the deadline to register is within 30 days of entry, or within 30 days after turning 14, as applicable.

The deadline is not clear, however, for individuals subject to registration who entered the U.S. or turned 14 more than 30 days before the April 11 effective date of the new rule, and whose 30-day registration or re-registration deadline will have already passed by the April 11 effective

date of the rule. For these individuals, it is recommended that they register or re-register within 30 days after the April 11 effective date of the rule.

**12. Can a third party complete and submit the registration for me? What about my attorney?**

No, you must submit the registration on your own behalf. Attorneys or other third parties cannot create a myUSCIS account for you, submit the G-325R form for you from within your myUSCIS account, or log into your account even if you give your permission. However, if the registrant is a child under 14, the child's parent or guardian can complete and submit the form on the child's behalf.

Even though most foreign nationals must complete the registration process themselves, they can seek assistance from a third party. If a third party helps you complete the registration form, you must disclose the name of that person and other information about them when completing the G-325R form, and they must sign a document concerning their role as a preparer, which must be uploaded into the myUSCIS system.

**13. What information must a foreign national provide during the registration process?**

Form G-325R asks registrants to provide their biographic data, contact information, and immigration information, their date of last entry to the United States, their current and future activities in the United States, how long they plan to stay, when they plan to depart, information on their spouse (if any) and parents, and any criminal history.

The information a foreign national provides in their registration must be truthful; false or misleading information can have serious consequences. At the same time, disclosing information about criminal history or immigration violations – including entry to the United States without inspection – can pose significant risks. Individuals who are required to register and who have a criminal history, or who entered the United States without inspection or are otherwise not in lawful immigration status, should consult an immigration attorney – and in some cases, a criminal attorney – before completing the online registration process. See Question 18 for more information.

**14. What happens after a foreign national submits an online registration?**

- **Initial USCIS review:** After a foreign national submits Form G-325R online, the system will review the application. If USCIS records show that the foreign national is already registered (other than a child re-registering after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday), the system will inform the foreign national and the application will be closed with no further action necessary.
- **Biometrics appointment scheduling:** If the foreign national's Form G-325R is accepted, USCIS will schedule the foreign national for biometrics, unless the registrant is under 14 or is a Canadian visitor, in which case biometrics are waived.

- **Biometrics appointment and background checks:** The foreign national must then appear for in-person biometrics collection at a local USCIS Application Support Center. Once fingerprints and a photograph are collected, USCIS initiates security and background checks.
- **Issuance of registration documentation:** Finally, once registration processing is complete, the online system will produce a “Proof of Alien Registration” document bearing a unique identifier. The foreign national must print this document and carry it with them at all times.

#### 15. Must foreign nationals carry documentation of registration?

Yes. This requirement is mandatory for all foreign nationals in the United States who are age 18 or older, including those who are not required to register in the new online system.

Those who register in the new system will be issued a document entitled “Proof of Alien Registration” in their myUSCIS account. Each registrant must print that document out and carry it with them at all times. See Question 17 for the penalties for failure to carry a registration document.

Those who are deemed to have already registered because they entered on an immigrant or nonimmigrant visa, are lawful permanent residents, or on some other basis (see Question 2) are also required to carry proof of registration. Documents acceptable for this purpose include:

- A Form I-94 admission record;
- A U.S. Customs and Border Protection passport admission stamp;
- A Form I-551 Permanent Resident Card (“green card”);
- A Form I-766 Employment Authorization Document (EAD); or
- A Form I-185 or I-186 Border Crossing Card for citizens of Canada and Mexico

With the exception of the passport admission stamp, which must be unexpired, the other documents on the above list should be acceptable proof of registration even if they have since expired.

As noted further below, failing to carry a required registration document is a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000 or up to 30 days in jail, or both.

### IMPACT OF REGISTERING OR FAILING TO REGISTER

#### 16. Does registration confer any benefits, like status or work authorization?

Registration is a legal obligation of foreign nationals in the United States. It does not confer immigration status, work authorization, or other benefits beyond fulfillment of the legal obligation.

## 17. What are the consequences if I don't comply with the registration requirement? What are the penalties and risks of noncompliance?

Registration is an essential legal obligation of foreign nationals in the United States. As an initial matter, it is critical that foreign nationals confirm whether (1) they are deemed to be already registered (see Question 2); or (2) they are obligated to register in the USCIS online system (see Question 3).

Foreign nationals who are required to register and are found to be noncompliant face serious consequences:

- **Willful failure or refusal to register** is a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000 or up to six months in jail, or both.
- **Failing to carry proof of registration** is a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000 or up to 30 days in jail, or both.
- **Failing to file a timely change of address with DHS** is a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000 or up to 30 days in jail, or both; it also renders the foreign national subject to detention and removal unless the failure was reasonably excusable or not willful.

Foreign nationals who have a criminal history or entered the United States without inspection (EWI) face additional risks and consequences. See Question 18.

## 18. Are there any risks to registering with DHS?

As discussed above, registration is a legal obligation of foreign nationals in the United States, and failing to register can subject an individual to serious penalties.

However, for some foreign nationals, registering with DHS will mean disclosing activities that may violate immigration or criminal laws. Those who entered the United States without inspection and who register with DHS will be making themselves known to the U.S. government. In either circumstance, the foreign national could be subject to enforcement proceedings and penalties up to and including imprisonment and/or removal (deportation) from the United States.

Therefore, individuals with any criminal history, or those who entered without inspection or are otherwise not in lawful immigration status, and who are subject to the registration requirement should consult with an immigration attorney, and in some cases, a criminal attorney, to be fully apprised of the risks and consequences associated with DHS registration.