

United States

Business visitors: FAQs



If planning on traveling to the U.S. for temporary business, it is important to remain compliant with the immigration laws of the United States. The purpose of the visitor's intended travel, duration of stay and citizenship will determine if and what type of visa is required. The information in this document is intended to serve as an informational resource about business visitor requirements in the U.S.

Who needs a business visitor visa for the U.S.?

A business visa is required for persons who wish to enter the U.S. for purposes of temporary business. Business visitors are not permitted to engage in employment of any kind while in the U.S.

For any activities other than those listed below, or if the person will receive payment from a U.S. source, or engage in any productive employment, a work permit is normally required.

What activities are permitted as a business visitor?

- Participating in business conferences or seminars
- Consulting with business associates
- Attending board meetings or annual meetings
- Negotiating contracts
- Speaking or lecturing at business or professional functions
- Purchasing goods or materials
- Investigating or making a business investment
- Appearing as a witness in court trials, such as business litigation

- Undertaking independent research, such as feasibility or market studies
- Installing or servicing equipment pursuant to a contract of sale
- Participating in short-term training

Among the prohibited activities under a business visitor visa:

- Performing productive work
- Accepting paid or unpaid employment
- Working under the supervision of a U.S. employer
- Attending school or study
- Working in any information media
- Performing for pay or before a paying audience
- Seeking permanent residence in the U.S.

These lists are subject to change and are not all-inclusive.

Who is required to apply for a business visa?

The requirement of applying for a business visa at a Consulate abroad is dependent upon the visitor's nationality. Citizens of certain countries are visa-exempt, and therefore do not require a business visa application to be filed at a Consulate prior to travel to the U.S.

How long can a visitor stay in the U.S. on a business visa?

Generally, the maximum allowable stay on a business visa in the U.S. is one-six months.

Is there a limit on the number of times a visitor may travel to the U.S. on a business visa in any given period?

A business visitor is able to enter the U.S. at any time within the validity of the visa; however, the majority of the approved visits are for fewer than three months at a time.

Can a visitor's spouse and children also travel to the U.S.?

A business visitor's spouse and children can travel to the U.S. as visitors, however, they must each apply for their own separate visa.

Penalties related to non-compliance for the business visa category?

Engaging in unlawful work in the U.S. can result in serious consequences for both the employer and the business visitor, including:

- Fines and a term of imprisonment may be imposed upon the employer
- Employees are subject to inadmissibility and may be excluded from returning to the U.S.
- Fines and imprisonment may be imposed upon the employee

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document is provided for general information purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. If you have any further enquiries regarding the applicability of this information, please contact Crown's Regional Immigration Manager, Americas.