



Greenspoon Marder LLP

CLIENT ALERT

Non-Essential Travel Between the U.S. and Canada to be Suspended

This morning President Trump said that the U.S. and Canada will suspend non-essential travel between the two countries due to the coronavirus pandemic. Trump communicated that temporarily closing the Northern Border with Canada to non-essential traffic was upon mutual consent, and that trade would not be affected. We are awaiting details of how this will be implemented and what constitutes non-essential traffic. We will release updates as we receive them.

Travel Restrictions Extended to the UK and Ireland

The Trump Administration expanded travel restrictions from Europe to include the UK and Ireland effective March 16, 2020. This is an expansion of Trump's Proclamation, which went into effect on March 13th and had initially excluded the UK. All other exceptions as listed in our [March 12th alert](#) now applies to the UK and Ireland.

U.S. Consulates Suspending Services due to Coronavirus

Due to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Embassies and Consulates have cancelled nonimmigrant and immigrant visa appointments from March 16, 2020 until May 31, 2020. This action does not apply to diplomatic/official visa application or to immigrant visa applications. There are jurisdictions that remain open for scheduling routine visa and passport appointments, this is a fluid situation and we expect changes.

If you had a nonimmigrant visa appointment scheduled March 16, 2020 – May 31, 2020 at the below US Consulates your visa appointment is cancelled

The latest service suspensions include, but are not limited to the following:

- **The United Kingdom:** The U.S. Embassy in London is canceling routine nonimmigrant and immigrant visa appointments beginning March 17 and until further notice. Those with an urgent matter and who may need to travel immediately can follow the guidance provided at www.ais.usvisa-info.com/en-GB, or call +44 20 3608 6998 to request an emergency appointment.
- **Canada:** The U.S. Consulate in Toronto has started canceling routine nonimmigrant visa appointments.
- **South Africa:** The U.S. Mission is canceling most nonimmigrant visa appointments from March 16 until May 31, 2020. This does not apply to diplomatic/official visa applications or to immigrant visa applications.
- **Amsterdam, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Philippines, Poland, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland:** The U.S. Embassies/Consulates in these countries are canceling most immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments beginning March 16 or earlier and until further notice.

Links to consular websites can be found at <http://usembassy.gov>.

USCIS Closes In-House Interviews

USCIS will temporarily close its local field offices and Application Support Centers (ASCs) and suspend in-person services, effective immediately. The suspension is expected to remain in place until at least April 1.

During this time, the agency will not conduct in-person green card or naturalization interviews, naturalization ceremonies, or biometrics appointments at ASCs. Foreign nationals with appointments scheduled for the coming weeks will receive cancellation notices.

Green card interviews, naturalization interviews and naturalization ceremonies will be rescheduled after USCIS local offices resume in-person services. ASC appointments will be rescheduled automatically, and affected foreign nationals will receive rescheduling notices by mail.

Premium Processing Suspended

USCIS [announced](#) today that it is temporarily suspending premium processing for FY 2021, but will resume the service in a two-phased approach starting no later than May 27, 2020 for certain H-1B cap filings.

Petitioners filing FY 2021 cap-subject H-1B petitions will not be able to request premium processing when USCIS begins accepting cap-subject petitions on April 1. However, beginning no later than May 27, 2020, the agency will begin accepting premium processing requests for H-1B petitions requesting a change of status from F-1.

USCIS will then begin accepting premium processing requests for all other cap-subject H-1B petitions no earlier than June 29, 2020. USCIS is expected to announce specific opening dates for its two phases of cap premium processing in the coming months.

As a reminder, under the new H-1B registration system process, the H-1B cap filing period lasts from April 1 to June 30.

We will continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as we receive them. Please contact us with any questions.

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