

## YOUR WORKING CHECKLIST

# Visa Waiver Program: ESTA, a visitor visa and admission

## Is ESTA the same as a visa or permission to enter?

ESTA is a travel-authorization system for the Visa Waiver Program, not a visa or guaranteed admission. The Department of State distinguishes VWP travel from a visitor visa and separately explains the program's limits on extending or changing status after entry.

Check the boxes on screen or by hand. Use the notes area for records to find and questions to ask.

## Your preparation checklist

- ☐ Keep the actual authorization and its identifying information.
- ☐ Identify the passport connected to the travel request.
- ☐ Describe the visit without assuming a travel-authorization result decides the permitted activities.
- ☐ Preserve the document associated with actual entry when it occurs.

## Notes and questions to follow up

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## Source links and current instructions

Sources checked October 25, 2026. Follow current instructions at the linked institution.

### U.S. Department of State: Visa Waiver Program: ESTA and admission distinctions

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

### U.S. Department of State: Visa information: frequently asked questions

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/frequently-asked-questions.html>

### Immigrant Insider: Editorial policy and verification status

<https://immigrantinsider.com/editorial-policy/>

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### Return to the complete guide

<https://immigrantinsider.com/immigration-paths/visitor/visa-waiver/>

### General information

This free organizer is not a government form and does not submit an application, establish eligibility, preserve a deadline or replace individual legal advice. Government filing fees and professional services are separate.