

# **TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, VISITING SCHOLARS & EMPLOYEES**

May 2, 2008

If you are planning to travel outside the U.S. during summer break, please read this travel advisory so that you will be less likely to have problems during your trip and when you return to the U.S.

The topics addressed in this advisory include:

- Departure Procedures for Individuals who are Subject to Special Registration
- Alert about U.S. Border Patrol Checks at Public Transportation Hubs
- Advice about Travel Outside Buffalo and Re-entry to the U.S.
- Important Advice about Bringing Money into the U.S.
- Important Reminder about Your I-94 Card
- Important Reminder about Your Passport
- Things to Consider about Renewing your U.S. Visa

## **Departure Procedures for Individuals who are Subject to Special Registration**

Individuals who are subject to Special Registration must notify Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) when they leave the U.S. and may only leave through designated ports. In determining if you are subject to Special Registration, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have an FIN number on my I-94 card?
- Was I ever required to Special Register when I entered the U.S.?
- Was I ever required to report to the local USCIS office for Special Registration?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you are subject to Special Registration departure procedures, which means that you must notify Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) when you leave the U.S. and may only leave through designated ports. If you don't, you may be denied re-admission to the U.S. at a later date.

A list of designated ports can be found at:

[www.ice.gov/doclib/pi/specialregistration/WalkawayMaterial.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/pi/specialregistration/WalkawayMaterial.pdf) (pages 7-26)

For further information about Special Registration, please consult:

[www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm)

## **Alert about U.S. Border Patrol Checks at Public Transportation Hubs**

In the past six months, there has been a dramatic increase in activity by U.S. Border Patrol officers in and around public transportation hubs, such as bus and train stations within 25 miles of the U.S.-Canada border. Although Amtrak train stations and Greyhound bus stations in Rochester, Syracuse, Chicago, Detroit and other cities are

not international border crossings, U.S. Border Patrol has legal jurisdiction in such locations and may stop you to request proof of legal immigration status. These officers will usually wear green uniforms, but are sometimes not in uniform.

Please be reminded that you are required by law to carry your original I-94 card at all times. We also urge you to carry the following documents any time you are near an airport, train or intercity bus station and any time you travel outside Buffalo:

- Original passport

AND

- I-20 (for F-1 students) OR DS-2019 (for J-1 students and scholars) OR I-797 approval notice (for H-1B employees).

\* UB card + Proof of Full-time Enrollment (e.g. course schedule print-out with name on it) (for students) Note: We recently learned that U.S. Border Patrol considers university ID cards as important evidence of student status. Since UB cards do not have dates on them, it is a good idea to carry a print-out of your course schedule as well.

If you cannot prove your immigration status, U.S. Border Patrol officers can detain you until they determine that you are in the U.S. legally. We do not want your trip to be delayed or, even worse, for you to end up in a detention facility so please carry your immigration documents when you travel!

If you receive discourteous treatment or incorrect information about your immigration status from a Border Patrol officer, you should note the officer's name (it can be found on his/her name badge or you can ask the officer's name) and contact International Student and Scholar Services, 210 Talbert Hall, North Campus (645-2258).

### **Advice about Travel Outside Buffalo and Re-Entry to the U.S.**

If you will travel outside Buffalo (including nearby cities) during summer break, you must carry the following documents with you.

\* Valid passport

\* Valid U.S. visa stamp with at least one remaining entry (For travel outside the U.S.)

(Exception: travel to Canada, Mexico and Caribbean islands as explained at [www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/traveltocanada.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/traveltocanada.html))

In addition, you will need to carry the following:

#### **For F-1 Students**

- Valid SEVIS I-20 with unexpired signature (dated within the past 12 months) of Designated School Official on Page 3 AND all previous I-20's (Note: If the DSO signature on Page 3 will be less than one year old on the day you return to the U.S., you do not need a new signature. Also, if you have multiple I-20's, bring all of them but only present your current I-20 initially.)

- Financial Documents showing ability to cover the costs of a U.S. education

- UB Card + Proof of Full-time Enrollment (e.g. course schedule print-out with name on it)

#### For J-1 Students and Scholars

- Valid SEVIS DS-2019 with unexpired signature of (Alternate) Responsible Officer in the Travel **Designation** box on Page 1 AND all previous DS-2019's and/or IAP-66's
- Financial Documents showing ability to cover the costs of a U.S. education (*for J-1 students*)
- \* UB Card + Proof of Full-time Enrollment (e.g. course schedule print-out with name on it) (*for J-1 students*)

#### For Students on Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Academic Training (AT)

- Valid SEVIS I-20 with unexpired signature (not more than six months old) of Designated School Official on Page 3 AND all previous I-20's + written job offer \* + valid EAD card (*for F-1 students on OPT*) **OR**
  - Valid SEVIS DS-2019 with unexpired signature of (Alternate) Responsible Officer in the Travel **Designation** box on Page 1 AND all previous DS-2019's and/or IAP-66's + Letter authorizing Academic Training (*for J-1 students on AT*)
  - \* A letter from your employer confirming your employment, your job description and the dates of your employment.
- Please note that, if you are near the end of your OPT or AT, you may have difficulty re-entering the U.S. for this purpose.*

#### For H-1B Employees

- Valid H-1B Approval Notice (Form I-797)
- A letter from your employer confirming your employment, your responsibilities and the dates of your employment

### **Important Advice about Bringing Money into the U.S.**

If you plan to bring money (e.g. cash, money order, certified check, travelers' checks, letter of credit) into the U.S., please note the following from the Customs & Border Protection (CBP) website:

"Travelers leaving or entering the U.S. are required to report monetary instruments (i.e. currency or checks) valued at \$10,000 or more on a "Report of International Transportation of Currency or Monetary Instruments" form FinCEN 105" (available at [www.fincen.gov/fin105\\_cmir.pdf](http://www.fincen.gov/fin105_cmir.pdf) or from a CBP officer). "Failure to declare currency in amounts over \$10,000 can result in its seizure."

#### Please Note:

- Do not assume that you can multiply \$10,000 by the number of people in your group and bring that amount of money. The border officer will try to determine who the money really belongs to. If s/he determines that it belongs to one person, s/he will seize it if the total amount exceeds \$10,000.
- Never make false statements to a border officer about money or anything else. The penalty for making false statements to border officers is very severe, including a fine and up to two years of imprisonment.

- If you do not follow the above-mentioned advice and your money is seized, we advise you not to fill out any forms to request that the money be returned to you. To file a request that will be approved requires in-depth knowledge of the relevant regulations and way that such requests are adjudicated. For these reasons, it is much better to hire an attorney.

## **Important Reminder about Your I-94 Card**

When you depart the U.S. for travel to Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Latin America (or Canada and Mexico for 30+ days), you should turn in your I-94 card at the airline counter or Port-of-Entry. If you neglect to turn in your I-94 card and are an F-1 student or J-1 Exchange Visitor, a flag will be placed on your SEVIS record and you will likely have difficulty when you re-enter the U.S.

## **Important Reminder about Your Passport**

As you know, your passport must be valid at all times while you are in the U.S. and traveling outside the U.S. In addition, your passport must have at least SIX MONTHS' validity remaining when you enter the U.S. The only exception to this requirement is for individuals from one of the countries listed at [foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0941104X1.pdf](http://foia.state.gov/masterdocs/09fam/0941104X1.pdf).

Please check the expiration date on your passport and calculate how many months you will have left on the day you plan to enter the U.S. If you will have fewer than six months left and are not from one of the countries listed below, you should renew your passport before you return to the U.S. If you don't renew your passport, you will most likely be denied entry to the U.S.

In addition, your passport should be valid for six months after the expiration date on your U.S. visa stamp. Please check this point as well.

## **Things to Consider about Renewing Your U.S. Visa**

If you are planning to renew your U.S. visa during summer break, we recommend that you read "Applying for a Non-Immigrant Visa" at [www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/visa2.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/visa2.html).

You should also consider whether or not you will have sufficient time to renew your U.S. visa during summer break. Due to background checks, mandatory visa interviews and scrutiny of individuals studying or doing research in "sensitive fields", you may encounter delays in the processing of your visa application. Note: In Fall 2007, two UB students were delayed for months due to background checks so we urge you to consider this point carefully.

If your field of study or research may be considered sensitive (ie. electrical engineering, computer science, biological science, urban planning, etc.), you should obtain a letter from your professor explaining in detail the nature of your studies or research. This letter should be written in simple language so it can be easily understood by non-specialists.

Note: H-1B employees may be able to avoid visa processing delays by contacting the U.S. Consulate ahead of time to see if your H-1B petition has been entered into the Petition Information Management System (PIMS).

