

To: All SEVIS Users
Date: December 1, 2011
Re: SANTA: Holiday Tips for Traveling Students
Number: 1111-06

Comments

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General Information

During the holiday season, many international students will be traveling outside of the United States and returning home. To ensure that nonimmigrants students have an uninterrupted traveling experience, designated school officials (DSOs) should remind them about SANTA:

1. Sign the Form I-20.

A nonimmigrant student should travel with a valid, signed Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status.”

2. Apply for passport or visa renewal in the student’s home country, if necessary.

A nonimmigrant student who has either an expired passport or one that will expire within six months should apply for renewals while at home. A student who holds an expired visa must apply for renewal prior to re-entering the U.S. Students should check the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in their home country to make an appointment once they know their travel dates. A student traveling on expired or soon-to-expire documents may have trouble when seeking re-entry into the United States.

Advise a student traveling to a third country to check the visa requirements for that country before travel.

3. Note that an employed student should bring an employment letter and Form I-766, “Employment Authorization Document,” (EAD) when traveling.

An employed nonimmigrant student should travel with a valid EAD and a letter from the employer verifying employment. This will assist U.S. Customs and Border Protection in verifying the student’s information upon re-entry.

4. Travel with all required documents.

A nonimmigrant student should travel with all required documents but should never place those documents in checked luggage. The required documents include at least the following: a valid, signed Form I-20; a valid passport (good for more than six months, unless otherwise exempt); a valid nonimmigrant visa, if required; and financial information showing proof of necessary funds

to cover tuition and living expenses. Failure to have all required documents may jeopardize a student's ability to re-enter the United States.

5. *Assign an emergency phone number.*

School officials may wish to consider setting up a phone number that nonimmigrant students can call to contact a DSO in the event of an emergency while traveling.

By traveling with SANTA, international students will have an uneventful re-entry and travel experience.