



Embassy of the United States of America  
100 Duke & Young Streets, Kingston, Georgetown, Guyana

### **Ask the Consul Installment 146**

## **I'm a U.S. Permanent Resident (green card holder). How Long Can I Stay in Guyana at One Time?**

This edition of Ask the Consul addresses common questions applicants ask when they intend to travel outside the United States.

### **I'm a U.S. legal permanent resident and I would like to know how long can I stay outside the United States and not lose my status as a resident?**

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), permanent residents are free to travel outside the United States, and temporary or brief travel usually does not affect your permanent resident status. But if it is determined that you did not (or no longer) intend to make the United States your permanent home, USCIS may determine that you have abandoned your permanent resident status. A general guide used is whether you have been absent from the United States for more than one year. Situations where an even more extended unintentional absence occurs may be taken into account, although verifiable and persuasive evidence must be provided to substantiate the unintentional nature of the prolonged absence.

Abandonment of legal permanent residence in the United States may be found to occur in trips of less than a year if it is believed that you no longer intend to make the United States your permanent residence.

### **How do I demonstrate that it was not my intention to abandon my U.S. permanent resident status?**

USCIS may consider a range of evidence in determining whether your intention was to visit abroad only temporarily, including evidence of:

- family and community ties in the United States;
- U.S. employment;
- a U.S. mailing address;
- an active U.S. bank account;
- a valid U.S. driver's license;
- property or business ownership in the United States;
- U.S. income tax returns filed as a U.S. resident; and
- any other significant and verifiable evidence to establish the temporary nature of your absence.

**I came to Guyana and I stayed here longer than one year, but I do not want to lose my green card. What can I do?**

If you traveled and stayed outside the United States longer than one year, you may consider applying for a returning resident visa (SB-1) at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. An SB-1 applicant will be required to establish eligibility for an immigrant visa, including a medical examination. Please refer to the U.S. Embassy website for details at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov>.

**I traveled to Guyana and my green card was lost or stolen, or has expired. What can I do to return to the United States?**

If your green card was lost or stolen, or has expired, you must personally apply for a Boarding Foil at the U.S. Embassy. A Boarding Foil will allow you to travel back to the United States and renew your green card while in the United States. Requirements include completion of an I-90 form and a written statement explaining what happened to the green card. One 5mm x 5mm passport photograph is also required. If your green card was lost or stolen in Guyana, you will also need to submit a police report.

**Note:** These responses provide only a broad guideline and are not comprehensive. Each case must be considered independently. For further details, please refer to the following websites <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov> and/or [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

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*“Ask the Consul” is a bi-weekly column from the U.S. Embassy answering questions about U.S. immigration law and visa issues. If you have a general question about visa policy please email it to us at [AskGeorge@state.gov](mailto:AskGeorge@state.gov). We select questions every other week and publish the answers in Stabroek News and on our website at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/ask-the-consul.html>. Information about visas and travel can be viewed at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov>, <http://travel.state.gov>, and at <http://www.dhs.gov>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to*

*prepare their own documents and avoid third-party advice. U.S. Consular rules change frequently and non-US government advisors often provide inadequate or inaccurate information. Other than the questions we select, we DO NOT respond to questions sent to Ask the Consul. Please contact the visa inquiries unit (email [visageorge@state.gov](mailto:visageorge@state.gov) or call 225-7965 between 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday) if you have questions about a specific case.*