



BACKGROUND

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DHS, CBP ANNOUNCE INTERIM FINAL RULE FOR ESTA FEE

WASHINGTON—U.S. Customs and Border Protection today announced an interim final rule that amends DHS regulations to require travelers from Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries to pay operational and travel promotion fees when applying for an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) beginning September 8, 2010.

A fee of \$4.00 will recover the costs incurred by CBP of providing and administering the ESTA system and is in addition to the mandatory \$10 travel promotion fee established by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, enacted as Section 9 of Public Law 111-145, the United States Capitol Police Administrative Technical Corrections Act of 2009. The total fee for a new or renewed ESTA will be \$14.00.

All payments for electronic travel authorization applications must be made by credit card or debit card when applying for or renewing an ESTA at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. The ESTA system currently accepts only the following credit/debit cards: MasterCard, VISA, American Express, and Discover. Your application will not be submitted for processing until all payment information is received.

DHS published a notice of the interim final rule in the Federal Register today and will accept comments through October 8. Collection of the fees will begin for ESTA applications filed on or after September 8.

ESTA is an electronic travel authorization that all nationals of VWP countries must obtain prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea to the United States under the VWP. This travel authorization has been mandatory since Jan. 12, 2009.

ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel. Once approved, authorizations are generally valid for multiple entries into the U.S. for up to two years or until the applicant's passport expires or other specific circumstances give rise to a need to reapply, whichever comes first. Under the new interim final rule, travelers with an approved ESTA will not need to pay the ESTA fees when updating an ESTA application. However, travelers with new passports and re-applying for an ESTA will need to pay the ESTA fees.

Citizens interested in commenting on this rulemaking—identified by docket number USCBP-2010-0025—may submit written comments by visiting the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> and following the instructions for submitting comments or by mail at: Border Security Regulations Branch, Office of International Trade, Customs and Border Protection, (Mint Annex), Washington, D.C. 20229.

The VWP is administered by DHS and enables eligible nationals of 36 designated countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. Additional information regarding the VWP is available at http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/business_pleasure/vwp/ For more information about ESTA, please visit www.cbp.gov/ESTA.

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.