



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

If You Experience Problems With Your Arrival in the U.S.

FACT SHEET

United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is an agency within the Department of Homeland Security. Our job is to keep America's borders safe and secure while encouraging legitimate travel and trade. We must keep terrorists and their weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of laws designed to protect our citizens, border, and commerce. To accomplish this, CBP officers must screen all arriving people, goods and vehicles to make sure they meet all requirements for entry into the United States.

Authority to search

The Congress of the United States has authorized CBP to enforce all homeland security-related laws and laws of other federal agencies at the border and to conduct searches and examinations necessary to assure compliance with those laws. CBP's broad authority therefore allows us to conduct searches of people and their baggage, cargo, and means of transportation entering the United States.

The laws and regulations we enforce include (but are not limited to):

- Admissibility of aliens
- Importation of agriculture, plant, and animal products
- Importation of goods, animals and produce
- Transportation and reporting of currency and other monetary instruments
- Exportation of weapons and items subject to defense trade controls

What to expect during a CBP examination

The CBP officer may request specific, detailed information about your travel, may inspect your baggage, or may conduct a personal search.

If you are subject to inspection, you should be treated in a courteous, dignified, and professional manner. However, please keep in mind that this is a law enforcement environment, and travelers who are intent on breaking the law will attempt to find out what the officer is doing in order to avoid detection. For this reason, our CBP officers may not answer specific questions about an examination that is underway. You may always ask to speak with a CBP supervisor.

Why you may be chosen for an inspection

You may be subjected to an inspection for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:

- Your travel documents are incomplete, or you do not have the proper documents or visa;
- You have previously violated one of the laws CBP enforces;
- You have a name that matches a person of interest in one of the government's enforcement databases; or
- You have been selected for a random search.

A search may not be made on any discriminatory basis (e.g., solely based on race, gender, religion, ethnic background).

Collection of personal information

CBP collects information about people traveling into and out of the United States. This includes basic biographic data, travel documents and their unique identifiers, where the traveler is staying in the U.S., and the planned purpose for the traveler's visit. This information may be collected from a traveler at a port of entry, or, in the case of international air and sea travel, it may be collected before a traveler's arrival in or departure from the U.S. This information is used to determine

the admissibility of aliens and to effectively and efficiently enforce U.S. laws at the border. CBP also collects pertinent data about businesses, vehicles, aircraft, and vessels related to the laws we enforce.

CBP receives and shares this type of information as appropriate with other federal, state, and local agencies. CBP may query its record systems to ensure compliance with U.S. customs, immigration, agriculture, and other federal laws. For example, our border enforcement systems provide officers with access to information on outstanding watches and warrants; stolen vehicles, vessels or firearms; license information; criminal histories; and previous federal inspections.

Privacy protection

CBP stores all data we collect in secure computer systems on a secure network. CBP is committed to protecting travelers' personal data consistent with U.S. laws. We have privacy protections in place to properly safeguard this data. We also have policies in place to prevent misuse and those policies are regularly evaluated and updated to ensure continued security and protection.

Customer service contacts

1. Department of Homeland Security Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP)

DHS TRIP provides a single point of contact for individuals who experience repeated referrals for security screenings or who believe that they have been denied boarding or entry into the United States because of inaccurate or incorrect information about them in law enforcement records, or because they have been confused with someone who is a concern to U.S. authorities. For more information on TRIP or to submit an inquiry, please see the DHS TRIP website at: <http://www.dhs.gov/trip>.

If you are uncertain as to the source of the information or the agency responsible for maintaining the information causing your travel concern, then you should begin your inquiry with DHS TRIP.

2. Customer Service Center

If you know you were stopped or delayed because of a previous incident involving CBP or one of its legacy components (Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Border Patrol, or U.S. Customs Service) but believe that this matter should no longer be a factor in your clearing customs and immigration, you may

ask CBP to review and possibly amend your records. If you want to ask why you were stopped, then you may ask CBP through its Customer Service Center.

CBP's Customer Service Center responds to travelers' general or specific questions or concerns about a CBP examination. You can contact us in one or three ways:

- **Telephone:** at or (877) 227-5511 for U.S. callers during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time;
- **Online:** through the "Questions" tab at <http://www.cbp.gov.xp.cgov/travel/customerservice>; or
- **Mail:** by sending a letter to CBP Customer Service Center (Rosslyn VA), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20229.

When you contact the Customer Service Center for a written response, you should provide in writing: your full name, address, date of birth, and a copy of the photo page of your passport (or other photo identification if you do not have a passport). In addition, you should provide as detailed an explanation of the problem and why you think it should no longer be a concern and your records should be amended.

3. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (PA) Requests

If you have concerns about being stopped or delayed and would like CBP to provide you with a copy of the records in its possession that pertain to you, then you may submit a request to CBP at the following address:

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Attn: Mint Annex Building, FOIA Division
Washington, DC 20229

You should provide your full name, address, date of birth, and any other personal identifying information you believe might be helpful in locating records related to your inquiry or resolving your concern. After receiving your request, we will research the matter, and respond with copies of those records, which may be disclosed. Please note that neither the FOIA nor the PA is intended to provide a mechanism for asking questions of CBP. FOIA and PA requests are intended to provide access to certain records under the control of the agency from which you request them. If you have questions concerning, for example, the reason why an action was taken, then you should contact DHS TRIP or CBP's Customer Service Center.