



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: Border Crossing Tips

SOURCE: CBP

U.S. Customs and Border Protection reminds travelers planning trips across the border into the United States to make sure they have approved travel documents and offers tips to make an easier entry process when traveling back into the U.S.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, implemented on June 1 requires U.S. and Canadian citizens, age 16 and older to present a valid, acceptable travel document that denotes both identity and citizenship when entering the U.S. by land or sea.

CBP strongly encourages travelers to obtain a radio frequency identification (RFID)-enabled travel document such as a U.S. Passport Card, Enhanced Driver's License/Enhanced Identification Card or Trusted Traveler Program card (NEXUS, SENTRI or FAST/EXPRES) to expedite their entry and make crossing the border more efficient.

WHTI-compliant, RFID-enabled documents help reduce the time it takes to process travelers at the border. No personal identification information is stored on the RFID chip embedded in the cards – only a series of ones and zeros that points to information in a secure CBP database. We encourage travelers to store their cards in the protective sleeve provided with the document to protect them from being read without their knowledge.

WHTI is the joint Department of State-Department of Homeland Security plan that implemented a key 9/11 Commission recommendation to establish document requirements for travelers entering the United States who were previously exempt, including citizens of the U.S., Canada and Bermuda.

CBP also reminds U.S. lawful permanent residents that the I-551 form (green card) is acceptable for land and sea travel into the U.S.

Traffic volumes at ports of entry are expected to be heavier during the holiday season and all travelers are reminded of a few simple steps they can take to have a more efficient entry process:

- **Tip #1** – Travelers should familiarize themselves with the “Know Before You Go” section of the CBP Web site to avoid fines and penalties associated with the importation of prohibited items. ([Know Before You Go](#))
- **Tip #2** – Travelers should prepare for the inspection process before arriving at the inspection booth. Individuals should have their approved travel documents available for the inspection and they should be prepared to declare all items acquired abroad.
- **Tip #3** – Members of the traveling public should consult the CBP website site to monitor border wait times for various ports of entry. Information is updated hourly and is useful in planning trips and identifying periods of light use/short waits. During periods of heavy travel, border crossers may wish to consider alternative, less heavily traveled entry routes.
- **Tip #4** – Travelers should plan to build extra time into their trips in the event they cross during periods of exceptionally heavy traffic.
- **Tip #5** – Know the difference between goods for personal use vs. commercial use. For more details, visit the CBP Travel page. ([Travel](#))
- **Tip #6** – Do not attempt to bring fruits, meats, dairy/poultry products and firewood into the United States from Canada without first checking whether they are permitted.
- **Tip #7** – Understand that CBP officers have the authority to conduct enforcement examinations without a warrant, ranging from a single luggage examination up to and possibly including a personal search. Even during the holiday travel season, international border crossers should continue to expect a thorough inspection process when they enter the U.S. from Canada.

The United States has been and continues to be a welcoming nation. U.S. Customs and Border Protection not only protects U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents in the country but also wants to ensure the safety of our international travelers who come to visit, study and conduct legitimate business in our country.

Our dual mission is to facilitate travel in the United States while we secure our borders, our people and our visitors from those that would do us harm like terrorists and terrorist weapons, criminals and contraband.

For more information, please visit the WHTI Web site. ([Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative](#))

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 the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.