

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Customs and Border Protection Offers Flexibility to Departing Visa Waiver Program Travelers

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced today that Visa Waiver Program travelers may be granted Satisfactory Departure from the United States if they apply for a 30-day extension of their admission period for reasons related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

According to CBP, the extension grants flexibility to Visa Waiver Program travelers who have difficulty returning to their countries due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions, flight cancellations or illness. Travelers who are granted satisfactory departure will have an additional 30 days to depart the United States after their lawful period of admission concludes.

Visa Waiver Program travelers may seek satisfactory departure by contacting their local Immigration offices.

Travelers should be prepared to provide their passport number when submitting their request.

Travelers generally must apply for satisfactory departure before their current period of admission expires. Grants of satisfactory departure are made at the discretion of the reviewing CBP Officer.

Travelers who remain in the United States beyond their lawful period of admission lose their eligibility to travel under the Visa Waiver Program and may be subject to additional penalties under U.S. law.

The Visa Waiver Program enables eligible nationals of 39 countries to travel to the United States for business or tourism for stays of up to 90 days without a visa. Visa Waiver Program travelers generally are not eligible to extend their stay or change their status after arriving in the United States. Under current regulations, however, CBP in its discretion may grant periods of satisfactory departure of up to 30 days if an emergency prevents the departure of a Visa Waiver Program traveler.