

# International Travel Guidance and Corporate Travel Policies



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# INTRODUCTION



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## INTRODUCTION

- Meltzer Hellrung combines an innovative service model, proprietary technology, and a creative immigration team
- **200+ corporate clients:** Global 200, Fortune 500, Venture-backed unicorns
- Recognized in 2023 by Crain Magazine as a top 100 best places to work in Chicago
- Meltzer Hellrung has been ranked in the **Illinois Chambers Spotlight 2025** Guide and recognized as a top law firm handling high-quality work.



Meltzer Hellrung LLC

## **Responsive**

Average Email Response Time:  
4.5 hours

## **Efficient**

Transfer case turnaround: 10  
business days

## **Client-focused**

90+ NPS Scores

## **Program Management**

Account team, regular  
touchpoints

# PRESENTERS



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## **PRESENTERS**

# **MATTHEW MELTZER**

**Co-Founder and Managing Partner**

Specializes in assisting foreign companies to enter the U.S. market and building custom solutions for entrepreneurial and high net-worth clients. Most recently recognized as one of Crain's Chicago Business Notable Leaders in Accounting, Consulting & Law!



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## **PRESENTERS**

# **MATTHEW HELLRUNG**

**Co-Founder and Managing Partner**

Specializes in scaling immigration programs for high-growth clients via immigration policy creation and stakeholder training.



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# Our proprietary immigration program management platform

## Drives process efficiency, transparency, and centralization of all immigration information

### Core Features:

- Dashboards that drive transparency
- Efficient workflow automations that save time
- Extensive immigration reporting capabilities
- Comprehensive knowledge center

The screenshot shows a web dashboard titled "Reports". At the top right, there is a navigation bar with "MY PROCESS REQUESTS", a notification bell, a plus sign, and a user profile for "MAXTRADA". Below the navigation bar are three summary cards: "Active Foreign Nationals" with a count of 133, "Active Companies" with a count of 2, and "Open Cases" with a count of 58. A "CREATE NEW REPORT" button is located to the right of these cards. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "Report Templates" and includes a search bar "Search by Template Name". It lists two templates: "Key filing date check" (Standard, 5 Columns, 0 Filters, Last Run: 07/15/2024 at 04:51 AM) and "Advanced Parole Exp. Date" (8 Columns, 0 Filters, Last Run: 07/07/2024 at 09:27 PM). The right column is titled "Recent Reports" and includes a search bar "Search by Report Name". It lists two reports: "H-1B Lottery Selection Due Date" (From Template, 5 Columns, 0 Filters, Last Run: 07/15/2024 at 04:51 AM, status: Completed) and "Citizenship Eligibility Date" (From Template, 8 Columns, 0 Filters, Last Run: 07/07/2024 at 09:27 PM, status: Completed). A sidebar on the left contains navigation icons for Home, Profile, Users, and Reports.

## **Enhanced Vetting and National Security Screening**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) enhanced vetting of all foreign nationals.

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) - Greater scrutiny of benefits applications in the U.S.
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP) - More thorough review of eligibility for admission at U.S. ports of entry.

Department of State (DOS) - implemented applicant screening procedures at U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide that subject nonimmigrant and immigrant visa applicants to significant additional scrutiny.

- More in-person interviews
- Increased review of applicant social media

Standards and processes are changing rapidly with little advance notice.

# General Travel Recommendations

- Always travel with original immigration documents.
- Maintain a valid visa and passport.
- Update your U.S. address with USCIS within 10 days of moving using [Form AR-11](https://www.uscis.gov/ar-11) - <https://www.uscis.gov/ar-11>
  - Potential criminal/civil violation.
  - Possible denial of entry after travel abroad.
- Prior criminal history, even minor incidents, may affect ability to enter the U.S., even for lawful permanent residents.
  - Consult with counsel

# What is secondary inspection?

- Meltzer Hellrung collateral <https://www.meltzerhellrung.com/what-to-expect-in-secondary-inspection-when-entering-the-united-states/>
- Secondary inspection is when an individual is pulled over for additional questioning at customs
- Anyone can be pulled into secondary inspection, including US citizens
- No right to counsel
- Could take 10 minutes to 5-6 hours
- Officers may ask questions, search devices, perform internet searches, or rely on other governmental databases

# Inspection of Devices

- CBP is authorized to inspect an applicant's electronic devices (cell phones, computers, etc.)
  - This is true of all people entering the US, including US citizens
  - CBP may retain cell phone if you don't provide access
- Travelers are obligated to present electronic devices and the information resident on the device in a condition that allows for the examination of the device and its contents. Failure to assist CBP in accessing the electronic device and its contents for examination may result in the detention of the device in order to complete the inspection
- Generally, no right to counsel at border
- Even attorneys can have devices inspected

# Travel Bans and Restrictions

- **Travel widely reported to include a list of countries that would be subject to either:**
  - a total denial of entry into the United States;
  - severe restrictions on visa issuance; or
  - A “probationary” period in which the listed countries would be required to address specific security related concerns
- **Other Factors that may result in a travel ban**
  - National security
  - Public health emergencies
  - Diplomatic tensions

# Travel Bans and Restrictions

## Best Practices

- Monitor the U.S. Department of State and Centers for Disease Control websites before international travel
- Maintain awareness of the latest developments with respect to the travel ban.
- Consult with counsel if travel is planned from or through countries with existing sanctions or past travel bans
  - e.g., Iran, North Korea, Syria

# Lawful Permanent Residents

- **Always travel with a valid permanent resident card and passport.**
- **For lawful permanent residents, the risks of international travel increase if:**
  - Outside the U.S. for more than 6 months; or
  - If outside of the U.S. for a continuous period of over one year, may be determined to have abandoned permanent residence; or
  - Convicted of certain serious criminal offenses.

# Lawful Permanent Residents

- **Best Practices**

- If traveling internationally for more than 6 months, carry proof of continued ties to the U.S. (e.g., copies of job confirmation letter, lease, tax returns).
- If traveling abroad for more than 1 year, apply for a Reentry Permit prior to departure.
- Renew expired or soon-to-expire permanent resident cards before traveling.

# Nonimmigrants

Should still be admitted if entering for the purpose for which the visa was issued.

- Expect additional questions/scrutiny.

Each entry is evaluated separately and prior admission to the U.S. does not guarantee future admission.



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# Nonimmigrants

## Best Practices:

- Ensure that the visa to be used for admission will be valid on the date of reentry.
- Applicant should also be in possession of a passport with at least 6 months of remaining validity.
- Carry copies of supporting documents relevant to the specific nonimmigrant status
  - e.g., Form I-797, employment verification letters or documentation confirming school attendance
- Contact counsel before traveling if applicant has recent immigration or criminal issues.
- Check I-94 for correct information upon entry. Errors are not typically malicious.

# International Travel if a New Visa Required to Reenter the U.S.

If the current U.S. visa has expired or if changing to a different nonimmigrant status, a new visa application is generally required before returning to the U.S.

## Best Practices:

- Apply well in advance; expect interviews and longer wait times.
- Bring detailed documentation proving eligibility and nonimmigrant intent (if applicable).
- Contact counsel to determine current visa appointment processing times .
  - Expect delays to lengthen, especially in high-demand posts.
- Consider taking advantage of the range of [services](#) that Meltzer Hellrung offers related to consular visa processing.

# Challenges with visa appointments

- Department of State now releases expected appointment wait times in months, not days
- Staffing cuts may lengthen wait times at consulates
- Department of State is transitioning appointment systems which can often create delays and confusion
- DS-160 now requires disclosure of social media handles.
  - **DOS requires 48 hours to review social media with AI tools**
- Changing adjudicatory standards at the consulates
- Best Practices
- Schedule far in advance
- Ensure DS-160 is consistent with prior applications and any I-129 petition
- Have application reviewed by counsel
- Plan on staying in foreign country at least one week past interview

# Visa Waiver Program and B-1/B-2 Visitor Visas

- Traveling on the [Visa Waiver Program](#) (VWP) or a B-1/B-2 visitor visa comes with strict limitations on the activities that the foreign nationals may undertake, and the length of time allowed they are allowed to remain in the United States.
- Foreign nationals admitted pursuant to the VWP may travel to the U.S. for up to 90 days for tourism or business visitor purposes.
- VWP entrants are generally precluded from extending their stay or changing their nonimmigrant status.

# Visa Waiver Program and B-1/B-2 Visitor Visas

## Best Practices:

- Strictly avoid activities outside those permitted as a business visitor or tourist (e.g., no work or study).
- Foreign nationals applying for admission to the U.S. should have proof of return plans, financial means of self-support, and ties to their home country.
- Individuals from VWP eligible countries who have traveled to North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, or Yemen will be ineligible to travel under the VWP.
- Overstays can severely jeopardize future entries and precludes future VWP eligibility.

# “Cap-Gap” Students (Changing Status from F-1 to H-1B)

International travel is technically possible during the cap gap period (i.e. the period before the change of status to H-1B takes effect)

- Must have a valid F-1 visa and the H-1B petition and request for change of status have been approved,

Reminder! Readmission during the cap gap period is at the discretion of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry.

- **Travel abroad while the H-1B petition is pending is not advisable**
  - Negates the cap-gap authorization and, even if the H-1B petition is approved, USCIS will likely deny the application for change of status.

# “Cap-Gap” Students (Changing Status from F-1 to H-1B)

## Best Practices:

- Avoid international travel during cap-gap period unless necessary.
- If the international travel occurs while the H-1B petition is pending, leaving the U.S. will void the cap-gap extension,
  - Plan for a consular visa application and a potentially lengthy stay outside of the U.S.
- If international travel is necessary, consult with counsel and employer before departure to discuss immigration options and timelines for returning to the U.S.

# Other Important Issues!

- Upon admission to the U.S., promptly review the information listed on Form I-94, Departure Record to ensure that the appropriate visa category and period of admission are listed.
- Submit Change of Address Notice to USCIS within 10 days of moving to new address.
- Finally, foreign nationals should be aware that several states, such as Florida, Iowa and Texas, cooperate closely with ICE with respect to immigration enforcement activity.
- If you have any concerns about international travel, consult with your Meltzer Hellrung attorney before making travel plans.

# Maintaining an Effective Global Mobility Program

## Corporate Travel Policies

- Should you revise your travel policy?
- Anticipating travel bans and other restrictions
- Travel Assessments: how to categorize?
- Mandatory vs Opt Out?

## Visa Support Best Practices

- U.S. visa support services
- Other countries



# Domestic Travel

## Considerations

- Foreign nationals are required to carry proof of immigration status
  - Including proof of compliance with the registration requirement (if required)
  - May be required to present proof of status at a CBP interior inspection checkpoint.
- Real ID Effective as of May 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Valid U.S. passport or foreign passport/visa sufficient.
- Should you have a domestic travel policy?

A large, faint, light gray watermark logo consisting of the letters 'M' and 'H' separated by a vertical bar, all enclosed within a thin circular border.

# The Only Constant is Change!

Making plans, checking, double checking

Change in recruiting and international transfer policies?



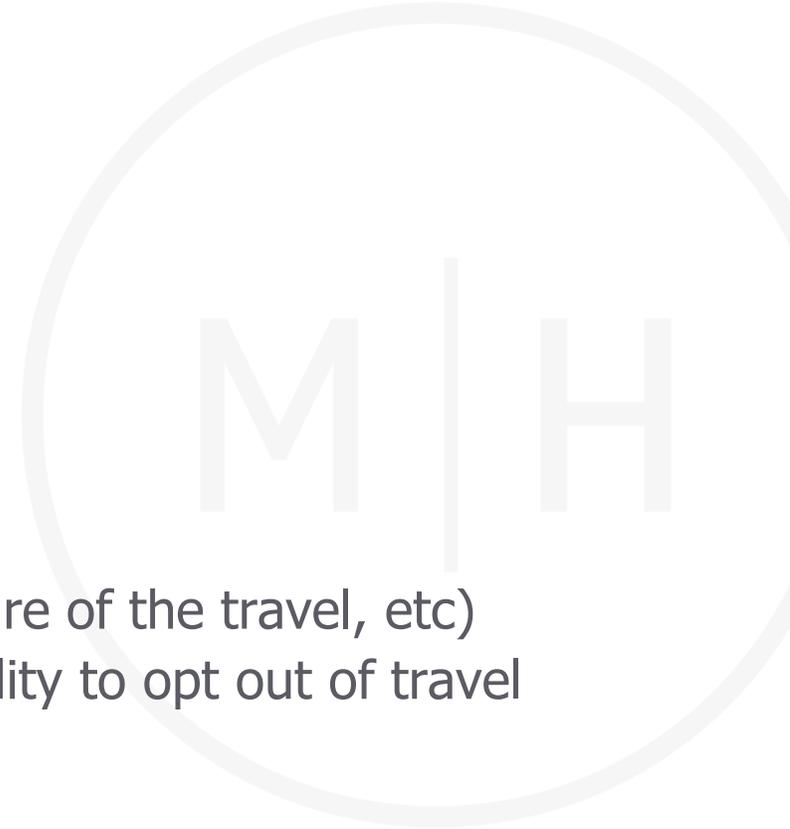
# Corporate Travel Policies

## Should your organization have a policy?

- Company size
- Nature of vulnerabilities (political, cultural, economic)
- Frequency of travel needs

## Policy Options

- No requirements – just guidance
- Blanket bans on required foreign travel
- Assessments by classes (nationality, visa types, roles, nature of the travel, etc)
- Allowing for conditions on mandatory travel versus the ability to opt out of travel
  - Conditions on opt outs



# Corporate Domestic Travel

## Domestic travel

- Difference in locations
  - State cooperation with federal government
  - CBP jurisdiction
- Inquiry of availability of Real ID

**Concern about potential impact on family members**



# Your company should have an electronic device policy

- What kind of devices and what kinds of apps can be on the devices when undertaking international travel?
- How and when to use a VPN?
- Whether devices with sensitive data should be shipped back to the US, rather than carried through customs?
- Awareness of policies of other countries as well?

# Corporate support for visa and travel guidance

## US

- Provide counsel for applying for physical visas
- Make counsel available for travel, even ESTA

## Foreign

- Work with counsel to identify visa needs
- Work with counsel, if recommended, for foreign travel



# QUESTIONS?



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