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One Pager for Special Registration

Overall

The United States has established a "National Security Entry/Exit Registration System (NSEERS)," also known as "Special Registration," which it uses to monitor and keep track of certain foreign nationals who stay in the U.S. for more than 30 days. Foreign nationals who are subject to the Special Registration are to be photographed and fingerprinted at the port of entry. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) now utilizes a more tailored system in which it will notify individual aliens of future registration requirements. Foreign nationals subject to the domestic registration programs are citizens or nationals from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. However, as a matter of discretion, the DHS can subject any non-immigrant to the special registration program. This requirement to register applies only to persons who want to enter the United States for a temporary period of time, such as students or tourists. Persons who have been approved to stay permanently in the United States do not have to follow special registration procedures. Previously registered foreign nationals are to undertake this special registration procedure every time they enter the United States.

Procedures

- Registered upon arrival and departure from the United States
Upon entering the United States, the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Service inspectors will notify the non-immigrant visa holders if they are subject to the special registration procedures. When leaving the United States, foreign nationals who have been previously registered must register their departure in person before an inspecting officer at a designated port of departure and leave from that port on the same day.
- Interviewed at a Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services office
At discretion of the DHS, anyone who has been previously registered at a United States port of entry and who is in the United States may be required to report for additional interviews. The DHS will send a notification to such registrant and request to appear in person on a specific date at a local ICE office.
- Reporting change of address, employer or educational institution within 10 days of such change
Foreign nationals are required to notify the DHS of any change of address, employment, or educational institution within 10 days of such change by submitting the Form AR-11 (SR). When an alien who is monitored under SEVIS notifies the DHS of such change through SEVIS, such change through the SEVIS also constitutes a notification for the purposes of NSEERS registration.

Exemption from the Special Registration

For an alien who has been registered and who makes frequent trips to the United States, based upon a showing of good cause, exigent or unusual circumstances, the Custom and Border Protection (CBP) field office director may exempt the alien from future port of entry registration. If granted, relief from POE registration also shall include relief from NSEERS registration departure control requirement. There are no specific forms to use when requesting relief from the NSEERS requirement from the DHS.

Non-compliance

If an alien is found non-compliance with the special registration rule, the alien is subject to arrest, detention, fines and/or removal from the United States, and any future application for an immigration benefits from the United States may be denied. Decisions for the penalty of non-compliance are to be made on a case-by-case basis.