

# Visa Stamp Delays: US Consulates Publish Increased Wait Times to Schedule Appointments

Article By:

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COVID travel restrictions may be improving, but the most recent update to the Department of State's [Visa Wait Times](#) confirms that there are still very serious, ongoing visa appointment delays resulting from the pandemic.

During peak pandemic times, many US Embassies and Consulates were forced to close entirely or to limit their services to emergency appointments only. Over the past year, many have reopened and resumed processing as expeditiously as possible, but it seems that they are once again overwhelmed by the volume and backlog of applications. Presently, at many US consulates, the wait to secure a US nonimmigrant visa stamping appointment is 100 days or more. In Paris, it's 200 days; in Melbourne, it's 220 days; and in Madrid, it's 124 days.

Whether the hope is to book an appointment before school starts in the fall, to take advantage of the summer season for family vacation, or to travel internationally during the winter holidays, it is as critical as ever to *plan ahead*. If you require an unexpired, valid nonimmigrant visa stamp in your passport to enter the United States, make sure to confirm the validity of your current visa and other immigration documents far in advance of planning any international travel, and to take these significant appointment delays into account. You should also check the validity of visas and immigration documents for family members as well.

Some important things to keep in mind:

- The visa appointment wait times change regularly. Frequently check the visa scheduling website to determine whether earlier appointments become available.
- Many people will be anxious about the long wait times for securing appointments, and will want to appeal to the consulate for earlier appointments. ***There are very limited options for securing earlier appointments.*** The way to request an earlier appointment is to do so in the appointment scheduling system where you scheduled the appointment, requesting an "expedited/emergency appointment." As the name implies, there needs to be a clear, urgent basis for the consular officers to grant an expedited/emergency appointment. These are granted on a limited basis, based on medical and humanitarian grounds. Factors that are often taken into consideration in granting an emergency appointment include: matters of life

and death; a medical or business emergency; and severe corporate financial loss. In order to request an expedited/emergency appointment, you must already have an appointment booked. Typically, there is only *one chance* to request an expedited appointment. If an expedited/emergency appointment request is denied, further requests may not be considered, so make sure the argument is a strong one before submitting an expedite request. Unfortunately, most requests are denied due to staffing and backlog issues.

- Many companies have restrictions or limitations on remote work, especially when performed from another country. Working from another country can trigger tax obligations to that country both for the individual employee and for the entire global organization. Double check with your human resources and leadership teams before making any plans to work from a country other than the one within which you are presently employed.
- Although unlikely, it is always possible that your scheduled appointment will be cancelled or rescheduled. Be prepared for unforeseen delays and always alert your human resources and leadership teams in advance of any international travel, in case your travels don't go as planned and/or you require the assistance of your employer while abroad or in order to return to the United States.

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