



IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY LAW GROUP PLLC

News Alert: State Department Drastically Narrows Visa Interview Waivers – Effective Sept. 2, 2025

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) has announced a major rollback of its visa interview waiver policy, effective September 2, 2025. The new rules sharply reduce eligibility, requiring in-person interviews for most nonimmigrant visa applicants.

▼ What's Changing:

- In-person interviews will be required for nearly all visa categories, including: E-1, E-2, F-1, H-1B, J-1, L-1, O-1, and others not explicitly exempted.
- No waivers will be available for repeat or renewal applicants.
- Applicants under 14 or over 79 must now appear for interviews (previously generally exempted).

▼ What Remains:

- Interview waivers are still available for B-1, B-2, B1/B2, and Border Crossing Card renewals if the applicant:
 - Applies within 12 months of visa expiration;
 - Was at least 18 years old when the prior visa was issued;
 - Applies in their country of nationality or residence;
 - Has never had a visa refused (unless overcome/waived);
 - Has no ineligibilities.
- Waivers also remain for diplomatic and official visa categories (A, G, NATO, TECRO E-1).
- Consular officers may still require interviews on a case-by-case basis.

▼ Implications:

- Expect longer wait times and processing delays at many posts.
- In-person interviews are again the default, even for clean renewals.\
- Consular shopping becomes riskier — B visa renewals must now be done in the applicant's home country to qualify for the waiver.

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