

PUBLICATION

U.S. Visa Systems Down Globally – DOS Continues to Work on a Fix – Expect Delays!

Authors: Robert C. Divine

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The following bulletin was published by the Department of State (which oversees all consulates/embassies), advising of a global glitch that has stopped all U.S. visa issuance worldwide. The issue has not resolved since the alert was first released one week ago. The latest report from Department of State (DOS) officials is that while they are working hard to resolve this, they have no timeframe for a solution, and the solution may not happen for at least another week.

This "glitch" will delay processing for visas and even when the fix occur, there will be delays as consulates and embassies struggle to adjudicate the growing backlog of affected visa applications. We hope the resolution will happen quickly, within the next few days or so, but we cannot know for sure when the fix will be in place, and as the notice says, there will be backlog to straighten out even once the system is back up and running. The Department of State has indicated it will continue to honor requests for emergency/expedited visa interview appointments as soon as the system is working, but there are no guarantees.

We have had clients report cancelled or rescheduled appointments for a few days or weeks later, and have had other clients attend appointments and are waiting for visa issuance, and until we go to make a visa interview appointment for a worker, we can't know for sure if a specific consulate or embassy will have appointments available. We will do all we can to ensure our clients who require urgent admission can get appointments as early as possible, but wanted you to be aware of this ongoing glitch that could affect these interviews.

Please see below for further notices from the Dept. Of State related to this issue. If you have questions or require further assistance, please contact a member of our immigration group.

Department of State Bulletin:

June 17, 2015 State Department Bulletin re Passport, Visa Problems

- **The Bureau of Consular Affairs continues to experience technical problems with our visa systems. The Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) problems we are experiencing are not the same challenges we overcame last summer.**
- **In addition to more than 100 computer experts across the United States working on this problem 24/7, we are pursuing a variety of solutions. Yesterday, around 250 agricultural workers who had visas in the past were issued new visas in Mexico. We anticipate that many more will receive visas this week.**
- **We deeply regret the inconvenience to travelers and recognize that this is causing hardship to those waiting for visas, and in some cases, their family members or employers in the United States.**

Q: What caused this outage? Was it a malicious action or hack?

- There is no evidence the problem is cyber-security related.

- This is not the same problem we had with the CCD last year, which was a problem with the database caused by a software patch. This is a hardware failure, and we are working to restore system functions.

Q: How long before you restore full system functionality?

- Public and private sector experts are working around the clock to correct the visa problem, but we do not expect the system will be online before next week.
- Overseas and domestic passports are being issued.

Q: How many travelers are affected by this outage?

- Most posts were able to handle visa interviews and some visa printing as usual through the end of last week. This week, many posts have had to reschedule visa appointments. We handle an average 50,000 applications daily worldwide. Many applicants do not have immediate travel plans, and will receive visas in time for planned trips. We are prioritizing urgent medical and other humanitarian cases as well as H2A agricultural workers.

Q: Once operational, how will cases be prioritized?

- We are already prioritizing urgent humanitarian cases and temporary agricultural workers. Once the systems are fully operational, we will work as quickly as possible to clear the backlog of pending visa cases.
- We apologize to travelers and recognize that this has caused hardship to some individuals waiting for visas.

Q: What about domestic passports?

- Domestic passport operations are functioning, with some intermittent processing delays. While some of these issues have affected same-day service at our passport agencies, we continue to issue passports to U.S. citizens with urgent overseas travel needs.