

Visa Forms Do's and Don'ts Guide

Please use the following guidelines when completing your visa forms. Some countries require more information or supporting documentation than others. Please check the Visa Requirements link on the USDA International Travel website for specific country requirements.

DO the following when completing visa forms:

- ✓ Carefully check the date order and format (D/M/Y versus M/D/Y) on the form.
- ✓ Make sure you correctly calculate your time abroad if asked on the form (number of days abroad).
- ✓ Make sure you select the correct trip purpose (if applicable) “official business travel” rather than personal or vacation. Provide detailed purpose of trip (e.g. “to attend World Food Aid Conference in Beijing” versus “attend a conference”).
- ✓ Check to make sure you have signed the form in all required places (there may be more than one place to sign the form).
- ✓ Make sure you fill out all fields on the visa form. If a field is not applicable, you should write “not applicable”). Some visa forms have multiple pages or a front and back.
- ✓ Make sure you select the correct type of visa needed – single vs. multiple entries (if applicable) based on your trip details and visa requirements.
- ✓ If the form asks for a duplicate or multiple copies make sure you provide the specified number of copies. Many times if they ask for copies they want original signatures on the copies.
- ✓ Certain countries may require you to sign or print your name on the front and back of your photo, check the visa requirements.
- ✓ Certain countries may require you to provide more than one photo, check the visa requirements for the number of photos needed.
- ✓ Requested “Contact Address” and phone should not be your home phone and address. Please use: USDA, International Travel Section, 1700 Independence Avenue SW, 20250; phone: 202-720-7815.

DON'T do the following when completing visa forms:

- ❖ Do not use acronyms (e.g. use “World Health Organization” not “WHO”, “Forest Service” not “FS”).
- ❖ Don't assume dates. Make sure the dates are the same on your visa form as they are on your other documents (any required letters, travel authorization, etc.).
- ❖ Don't put your home address when the form requires an address, put USDA's address instead.

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- ❖ Don't leave questions blank. If it does not apply, write "not applicable" or "none".
- ❖ Don't submit a form if you're confused or have questions. Ask your Agency Travel Coordinator/Travel Arranger if you have any questions when filling out the visa form.
- ❖ Don't follow up with the embassy directly regarding the status of your visa; contact your Agency Travel Coordinator or Travel Arranger who will ask the International Travel Section (ITS) office.
- ❖ Don't assume the embassy only requires the visa form. Send along any required documents mentioned in the form or visa requirements (examples: where you are staying: "in c/o of American Embassy," copy of onward ticket, etc.).
- ❖ Do not use initials for your name, unless initials are used on your passport.