



DHS Announces Guam-Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Visa Waiver Program

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced today an Interim Final Rule that replaces the current Guam Visa Waiver Program (VWP) with a new Visa Waiver Program for Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This rule also authorizes the department's U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to establish as many as six new ports of entry in the region in order to administer and enforce the Guam-CNMI VWP and to allow for immigration inspections under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The revised Guam-CNMI VWP allows visa-free entry for nonimmigrant visitors from eligible countries to Guam and the CNMI for business or leisure travel, as well as extends visiting time from 15 to 45 days. The program is scheduled to be implemented June 1, 2009. The current Guam VWP and CNMI immigration laws will continue to apply until the implementation date of this regulation.

Travelers seeking admission to Guam under the new program must possess a valid, unexpired machine-readable passport and present a valid and completed CBP Form I-94 and CBP Form I-736, and must not have previously violated the terms of any prior admission to the U.S.

Section 702(a) of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, signed into law by President Bush on May 8, 2008, extends U.S. immigration laws to the CNMI to ensure uniform adherence to long-standing federal immigration policies and to bring the CNMI in line with other U.S. communities. Section 702(b), which is implemented by the interim final rule, establishes a new Visa Waiver Program for Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Eligible countries under the new Guam-CNMI VWP include: Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and the United Kingdom including Hong Kong.

The interim final rule is expected to publish in the *Federal Register* on Jan. 16, 2009. A copy of the rule is currently available at www.dhs.gov.

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