DHS and DOS Establishes Annotated B-1 Visa for Foreign Maritime Workers Applying for the TWIC Program

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WASHINGTON?The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS) announced the creation of an annotated version of the B-1 visa?issued to foreign citizens visiting the United States for business purposes?that will make foreign maritime workers eligible to apply for a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC). The TWIC is a tamper-resistant biometric identification card that maritime workers must obtain in order to gain unrestricted access to secure areas of maritime facilities.

"Strengthening the security of our maritime global supply chain is critical to protecting our nation from evolving threats," said Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano. "This new TWIC process is a critical step toward ensuring that foreign maritime workers can quickly and efficiently obtain the necessary credentials to do their jobs and help grow the American economy."

Under this process, foreign maritime workers who need to acquire a TWIC for the performance of their official duties must provide notice of their need for a TWIC to DOS upon application for a B-1 visa, as well as a letter from their employer indicating that the individual will be required to perform service in secure port areas. Upon receipt of the new TWIC-annotated B-1 visa, each individual will apply separately for a TWIC. As is the case for all visa and TWIC applicants, these foreign maritime workers will undergo rigorous background checks, including checks against the terrorist watchlist, criminal history, and immigrations records.

This new process will apply to the approximately 4,000 to 6,000 foreign workers in U.S. ports who are required to have a TWIC for the performance of their official duties.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) published a TWIC final rule on Jan. 25, 2007, allowing non-citizens to apply for a TWIC provided that they meet one of TSA's eligible immigration categories. Following input from maritime industry stakeholders, DHS and DOS collaborated to create a process allowing essential maritime personnel who fall within the B-1 visa category and require a TWIC to acquire one?designing an annotated B-1 visa to meet the needs of the TWIC Program as well as the maritime community.

For more information, visit www.tsa.gov/twic [2] or http://homeport.uscg.mil [3].

Nonimmigrant Visas:
B-1 Visa [4]
B Visa [5]
Agency:
DHS [6]
DOS [7]

Links:
[1] https://immigration.com/news/b-1-visa/dhs-and-dos-establishes-annotated-b-1-visa-foreign-maritime-workers-applying-twic-prog
[2] http://www.tsa.gov/twic
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