

Your Immigration Documents: What Documents you Need and When Should You Carry Them



Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are allowed to set up random road blocks or board buses and trains within a certain distance from the border and ask questions about citizenship and immigration status. In the Orono/Bangor area we have seen an increase in the number of checks. Because of this, it is important that you understand what documents you are required to have with you and when you need to carry them.

What Document am I required to carry while in the US?

Non-immigrants (F, J, TN, Visitor)-

Identification Card– State ID or driver's license is sufficient to prove identification. Maine Card may suffice but we recommend state issued document. You do NOT need to carry your original passport but we recommend you carry a copy of your passport bio page and the visa page and the entry stamp.

I-20 or DS2019 (F & J)- we recommend you carry an original copy of this document. If you lose it, OIP can issue another one for you.

I-94- if you were issued a paper I-94 card you are required to carry the original. If you only have an electronic I-94 we recommend that you carry a print-out of your I-94 which can be accessed <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>. **Remember, each time you enter the US your I-94 is updated. You should always print and review your I-94 after each entry.**

Dual Intent (H1b)

Identification Card– US driver license or state ID or Mainecard. Passport is NOT required but we recommend you have a copy of your bio page and visa with you.

I-94- if you were issued a paper I-94 card you are required to carry the original. If you only have an electronic I-94 we *strongly* recommend that you carry a print out of your I-94 which can be accessed at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>. **Remember, each time you enter the US your I-94 is updated. You should always print and review your I-94 after each entry.**

Immigrant Visa Holders (permanent residents w/ green card)

You are required to have an ORIGINAL copy of your green card with you at ALL times.

The information above was provided by Jennifer Santiago, Port Director of the Customs and Border Protection Office at the Bangor International Airport.

Who might ask for your documents?

CBP officers, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other Department of Homeland Security Officials. In most cases local police (Bangor, Old Town, Orono, UMaine) will NOT be asking questions about your citizenship unless a crime has been committed. There may be some exceptions to this but in general, the local police are not interested in doing the work of CBP and other DHS agencies.

Do you need to answer CBP questions about your immigration status?

The ACLU website states the following: *the law requires that non-immigrants (F, J, TN, B) provide information about your immigration status if asked. While you can still choose to remain silent or decline a request to produce your documents, people in this category should be aware that they could face arrest consequences.* You can read more about your rights during border checks at the ACLU website.

How to talk to CBP officials: Being stopped and questioned can be embarrassing, humiliating, frustrating, and much more. Some agents may be respectful and some more intimidating. Regardless of how you feel we recommend that you be polite and respectful even if you are exercising your right to remain silent or requesting an attorney (please see ACLU link above for detailed information about your rights as a non-immigrant).

What if a CBP agent gives me information I think is incorrect? We had one report of a student who was given incorrect information about her ability to return to the US while on OPT. If an agent tells you something that is significantly different than what you have been advised by OIP staff members please get in touch with us as soon as possible to review the advice. CBP agents are NOT aware of all of the regulations associated with each visa type. They may say something by mistake or just to intimidate. Check with OIP if something doesn't sound right.

What should I do if I am detained?

If you are detained because you do not have your documents you can do the following:

- Call OIP at 207-581-3437 if it is during business hours. Outside of business hours you can call UMaine Police at 581-4040 and ask them to contact an OIP staff member. We may not be able to respond immediately but we will be in touch as soon as possible.
- Ask the CBP official to look up your I-94 document online or ask if you can email a copy of your I-94 from your phone. DO NOT voluntarily hand over your phone to show a document as this may give them license to review other information. Ask if you can EMAIL a copy to someone in charge.
- Call a friend who can bring you your documents. If your friend is international, remind them to bring their own documents with them as well.

If you are detained for other reasons you may need an attorney.

You can call OIP and someone will refer you to a local attorney or you can call an attorney office directly. There are several immigration attorneys in the area with phone listings. Try to remain calm. It may be a mistake and the attorney can help you sort things out.

What if I have other questions about this or other immigration issues?

If you have any questions at all please contact OIP and make an appointment. There is a lot going on around the country right now and it is sometimes hard to know what might impact your life and what might not or will not. In addition, your families back home are sure to be extra worried which can cause anxiety for you. If you are worried it is best to ask so that we can alleviate your fears.

Please remember: if a Department of Homeland Security agent gives you information that is different from what you are reading here, if they ask you to sign something, or tell you anything else that is questionable, please report it to OIP. Policies and regulations do change and we want to make sure that we are giving you the most up-to-date information. But more importantly, if DHS agents are giving incorrect information we would like to work with our contacts within DHS to remedy the situation.