

Public Affairs Section
U.S. Embassy Berlin
August 13, 2010

NEW FEE FOR ESTA AS OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2010

The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is an electronic travel authorization that all nationals of VWP countries, including Germany, must obtain prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This travel authorization has been mandatory since Jan. 12, 2009.

Starting on September 8, 2010, there will be a fee of \$14 to apply for or renew an ESTA. All payments for the ESTA fee must be made by credit card or debit card. Currently, ESTA accepts the following credit and debit cards: MasterCard, VISA, American Express, and Discover. A third party, such as a relative or a travel agent, may pay the fee on an applicant's behalf.

The \$14 fee includes a \$10 authorization charge established by Congress and a \$4 processing fee to recover costs of administering the ESTA system. The \$10 authorization charge is only incurred if an ESTA application is approved. If the application is denied, only the \$4 processing fee will be charged.

ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel. Specific travel plans are not required to apply for ESTA. An approved ESTA is valid for multiple entries into the United States for two years, or until the passport used for the application expires, whichever is sooner.

Please note: VWP travelers should be aware that there are unauthorized third-parties that charge additional fees for submitting ESTA applications on behalf of the traveler. These third-parties are not endorsed by, or in any way associated with, the United States Government. Use of these services will not result in an expedited ESTA approval. The correct web address to complete an ESTA application is <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>.

The VWP and ESTA are administered by the Department of Homeland Security. Additional information on these programs is available on www.cbp.gov. For more information on travel to the United States using ESTA or applying for a visa, please visit the U.S. Embassy's website at <http://germany.usembassy.gov/visa>.