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## PRACTICE AREAS

### BUSINESS

L-1 Visas

H-1B

H-1B Transfers

Visas

TN Visas (NAFTA)

Special Visas for Other Countries

Australia

Chile / Singapore E-1

E-1 Visas

E-2 Visas

PERM Labor Certification

### HOSPITALS /HEALTHCARE

H-1C Visas

H-1B Visas for Doctors

### FAMILY

Spouse / Fiancee Visas

Permanent Residence for Family  
Within U.S.

Naturalization / Citizenship

### AMNESTY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22 2010

## E-Newsletter

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## Maintaining Immigrant Status

Once you immigrate to the US, there are certain things you must do in order to keep your status as a lawful permanent resident. If you lose your status, you may be required to leave the country, which can negatively impact your ability to return to the US and/or become a citizen.

### 1. Comply with all US Laws

As a green card holder, you are required to follow all US local, state and federal laws, just as if you were a US citizen. Failure to do so could result in losing status, fines and deportation. Committing certain crimes will bar your application for citizenship and result in immediate deportation to your home country.

You also are required to register for a Social Security card upon entering the US. All males between the ages of 18 and 26 must register for the Selective Service. Additionally, you are required to notify the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of an address change within 10 days of moving.

### 2. Be Aware of the Consequences of Traveling Outside of the US

While you are permitted to travel outside of the US as a legal permanent resident, spending extended time outside of the country could impact your status. If you will be outside of the United States for more than one



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year, your permanent resident card will become invalid. Before you leave, you should apply for a re-entry permit by filing an Application for Travel Document. This will allow you to re-enter the US up to two years from the date it is issued.

If you do not apply for the re-entry permit and/or are outside of the US for more than two years, you will have to file for a returning resident visa and may have to appear before an immigration judge to determine if you have abandoned your resident status. If you are found to have abandoned your resident status, you will have to reapply for an immigration visa to enter the US.

It is important to note that you can lose your permanent resident status even if you are outside of the US for less than one year. For example, if you take up a foreign residence or accept employment in another country, you may be found to have abandoned your status. If you have any concerns about the effect your travel outside of the US may have on your status, contact an immigration attorney for legal guidance.

## 3. File and Pay Your Taxes

One of the duties of US citizens and permanent legal residents is to file and pay income taxes. If you fail to do so, you may be found to be out of status. Even if you are out of the country at filing time, you still must file taxes. Additionally, if you file an income tax return as a nonimmigrant, you will be found to have abandoned your legal permanent resident status.

## 4. Keep Your Permanent Resident Card Up-to-Date

Most permanent resident cards expire in 10 years. Those holding conditional resident status must renew their cards after two years. Those who received their cards before they turned 14 must replace the cards once they reach 14 years of age. It is necessary to renew the cards before their expiration date in order to keep your status. Currently, you are permitted to renew your card within six months of the expiration date.

Additionally, if your name, address or other information changes, you must notify the USCIS of the change and update your permanent resident card. If the card is lost, stolen or otherwise damaged, a replacement card should



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be applied for. You are required to keep your alien registration card with you at all times. It serves as your principle identifying document and offers proof that you are legally in the country and entitled to protection as a legal resident.

If you are concerned your status may be in jeopardy or have other questions concerning immigration, contact an experienced immigration attorney in your area.

## Getting Ready To Apply for a Visa

To read and print out a copy of the checklist, please follow the link below.

[Getting Ready to Apply for a Visa](#)

**DISCLAIMER:** This site and any information contained herein are intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. Seek competent counsel for advice on any legal matter.