

US Immigration Alert: New Executive Orders and Mandatory Quarantine

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Batten down the hatches; it is going to be the kind of year for which immigration policy works live. As anticipated, President Joe Biden has not wasted any time in establishing his presence in the Oval Office. Within hours after his inauguration as the 46th President of the United States, President Biden executed seventeen (17) executive orders and proclamations on a broad range of issues, including reversing many policies of his predecessor.

Among the long-anticipated executive orders are the following immigration-related directives:

1. Ending Discriminatory Bans

The [Proclamation on Ending Discriminatory Bans on Entry to the United States](#), effective immediately, reverses Executive Order 13780 and Proclamations 9645, 9723, and 9983. The rules originally prevented certain individuals (first from primarily Muslim countries, and later from largely African countries) from entering the US. Specifically, these rules heavily limited or completely banned nationals from thirteen (13) countries, including Iran, Syria, Yemen, Eritrea, and Venezuela, by prohibiting the issuance of any visitor and/or employment visas. The reversal resumes visa processing and authorizes the clearing of a large backlog of cases.

2. Regulatory Freeze

Additionally, under an [executive order on Regulatory Freeze Pending Review](#), the heads of all executive departments and agencies are required to freeze any new or pending rule that has not yet published in the Federal Register so that the new administration may review over the next sixty (60) days and to decide the fate of each new or pending rule.

Concerning the many rules currently on hold pending this review, our team is closely monitoring how the agencies will handle a large array of immigration and employment-related rules, including the Department of Labor's final rule intended to strengthen wage protections for foreign workers seeking temporary or permanent employment, as well as the modification of registration requirements for petitioners seeking to file H-1B Cap petitions creating a wage-based selection process for H-1B registrations.

3. Quarantine Requirement

Lastly, the [Executive Order aimed at Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel](#), requires a mandatory quarantine for all persons, regardless of citizenship, upon entry to the US from any foreign country. This requirement is in addition to the [new COVID-19 testing requirement](#) that becomes effective on January 26, 2021.

Similar to travelers entering Canada, international travelers entering the US will need to receive a

negative COVID test within the seventy-two (72) hour period before boarding a flight to the US *and* must self-isolate upon arrival for a fourteen (14) day period or a reduced period as follows: (1) **Ten days** if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring; or (2) **7 days** if the individual can produce a negative COVID-19 test result after day 5 of their quarantine.

These are just the first set of immigration-related executive orders under the new administration, and we are expecting another round of such initiatives next Friday. It should also be noted that we anticipate the introduction of a bill that would allow work authorization for dependent H-1B spouses (H-4), although it has not yet been introduced.

Stay tuned to our blogs for the latest!