



## **IMMIGRATION ALERT**

### **Reminder: Machine-Readable Passport Required for Visa-Free Travel**

As of October 26, 2004, foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States as business visitors or tourists without a B visa stamp (under the so-called Visa Waiver Program or "VWP") must have a machine-readable passport ("MRP"). If the foreign national does not have an MRP, then he or she must obtain a non-immigrant visa in his/her current (non-machine-readable) passport.



The Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") indicates that the inspecting officer at the port of entry (a Customs and Border Protection or "CBP" officer) may grant a one-time exemption to admit a foreign national to the United States without an MRP. In that case, the officer will issue a letter explaining the U.S. entry requirements and will annotate the passport to reflect the grant of the one-time exemption.

Only nationals of certain countries are eligible to participate in the VWP. The VWP countries are: Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

For more information on the MRP requirement, go to [www.immstar.com](http://www.immstar.com) and click "Immigration Updates" and then "Immigration News" to view the Alert entitled "Machine Readable Passport Requirement on Hold for 21 Countries."

Seyfarth Shaw's Business Immigration Group provides periodic information alerts about noteworthy developments in the business immigration field. The information that we provide is of a general nature and should not be interpreted as legal advice applicable to a specific factual situation. If you have questions about the information contained in this Immigration Alert or would like to know more about Seyfarth Shaw's Business Immigration Group and our inbound and outbound visa processing capabilities, please visit our website, [www.immstar.com](http://www.immstar.com), or contact one of the Business Immigration Group Partners: Jim King ([jking@sevfarth.com](mailto:jking@sevfarth.com)) in Atlanta; Russell Swapp ([rswapp@sevfarth.com](mailto:rswapp@sevfarth.com)) or Dyann DeVecchio ([ddelvecchio@sevfarth.com](mailto:ddelvecchio@sevfarth.com)) in Boston; Ric Fischer ([Ffischer@sevfarth.com](mailto:Ffischer@sevfarth.com)) in Chicago; or Cris Weals ([cweals@sevfarth.com](mailto:cweals@sevfarth.com)) in DC. If you would like to receive our Immigration Alerts, please contact Sarah Compton via e-mail at [scompton@sevfarth.com](mailto:scompton@sevfarth.com). Thank you.



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