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Immigration Law Updates

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A Sign of Tough Economic Times: H-1B Visas for FY2010 Still Available

In sharp contrast to what has occurred over the past years with H-1B visa availability, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reported that as of May 4, 2009, only 42,000 H-1B petitions had been received toward the Congressionally mandated cap of 65,000 for Fiscal Year 2010, which begins on October 1, 2009.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will continue to accept H-1B petitions for Fiscal Year 2010 until the cap is exhausted. H-1B visas are reserved for foreign nationals who are coming to the U.S. to work in a "specialty occupation," defined as a position for which a bachelor's or higher degree or equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position.

For more information, please contact our law firm.

Driving in Michigan on a Foreign Drivers License

Recently, I have received several inquiries as to whether a person is allowed to drive in Michigan on a foreign drivers license. Foreign nationals may drive in Michigan provided that they have been issued a commercial or non-commercial license from a country that has a reciprocity agreement or treaty with the United States. The Michigan Secretary of State maintains a list of countries whose driver's licenses are recognized by Michigan. An international driving permit is not required if a person holds a license issued by one of the list countries.

The following, while not exhaustive, is a list of the some of the countries whose drivers licenses are recognized by the State of Michigan:

Canada	Chile	Hong Kong	Jordan
Mexico	China (Taiwan)	India	Korea
Brazil	Czech Republic	Ireland	Laos
Costa Rica	Denmark	Israel	Lebanon
Argentina	Egypt	Italy	Netherlands
Australia	France	Jamaica	New Zealand
Belgium	Greece	Japan	Philippines
Russian Federation	Singapore	South Africa	Spain
Sweden	Thailand	United Kingdom	Venezuela

For a complete list, please contact our law firm.

Please bear in mind that many countries have their internal requirements for maintaining a drivers license which usually includes a residency requirement. Therefore, a foreign national present in the U.S. for an extended period of time will eventually need to apply for a Michigan driver's license.

Michigan Enhanced Drivers Licenses Available and Accepted by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP)

The Michigan Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association has received confirmation from the CBP that they are now accepting Enhanced Drivers Licenses at our U.S. border crossings, as complying with the directives of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). The WHTI requires travelers returning to the U.S. by land or sea from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda or the Caribbean to have a passport, passport card or other federally approved document to enter the U.S.

The Michigan Secretary of State began issuing Enhanced Drivers Licenses in late April 2009. The following is a list of Michigan Secretary of State offices that are able to issue Enhanced Drivers Licenses or ID cards in Southeast Michigan:

Clinton Township SUPER!Center 37015 S. Gratiot Avenue Clinton Township, MI 48036	Oakland County SUPER!Center 1608 N. Perry Street Pontiac, MI 48340	Detroit New Center SUPER!Center 3046 W. Grand Blvd. #L650 Cadillac Place Detroit, MI 48202
SE Macomb County PLUS Office 24040 Harper Avenue St. Clair Shores, MI 48080	Livonia Area SUPER!Center 17176 Farmington Road Burton Hollow Plaza Livonia, MI 481502	SE Oakland County PLUS Office 26196 Greenfield Road Oak Park, MI 48237

For more information on this topic, please contact our law firm.

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