

# FLYING GUIDE

AOPA PILOT GUIDES  
2021

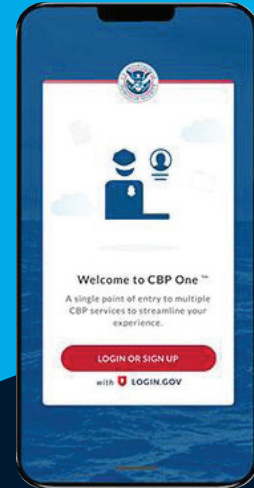
## CROSS Borders



[aopa.org/destinations](https://aopa.org/destinations)

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### **CBP ONE:**

Pilots are encouraged to utilize the CBP One mobile app, available in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. While features are still being rolled out, this app will eventually be a single portal for CBP services.

### **CBP MOBILE PRIMARY:**

Many CBP locations are now using a system known as Mobile Primary, which allows officers to screen and process crew and passengers using a mobile app on their government-issued smartphones. This allows screening to occur plane-side, allowing for quicker processing. While the app uses photos taken of crew and passengers, the photos are only used for comparison with ID photos already on file with CBP.

## IMPORTANCE TO MEMBERS

Are you ready to trade the winter weather for some warm sunshine? Or do you want to see some of the world's most beautiful natural landscapes in Canada? Cross Border Flying is not as scary as you think, but you must understand the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) requirements and procedures to make your trip safe and enjoyable.

Your destination country may have additional requirements. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, various countries imposed travel restrictions and requirements that dramatically impacted GA travel to and from many locations. Please visit **AOPA's website**<sup>1</sup> for specific requirements for your destination: **Bahamas**<sup>2</sup>, **Caribbean**<sup>3</sup>, **Canada**<sup>4</sup>, **Mexico**<sup>5</sup>, and **Central America**<sup>6</sup>.

## CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Click **here** for a checklist.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR FLIGHT

Cross-border flying requires some planning. You will need to make sure you have all necessary paperwork and documents and be familiar with U.S. Customs Border Protection (CBP) requirements as well as your destination country requirements.

### STEP 1 - USER FEE DECAL

You must pay an annual CBP user fee (\$29.96) and display the provided decal to enter the U.S. You should **buy the decal online**<sup>7</sup> and allow a few weeks for delivery. For decal questions, send an email to **decals@cbp.dhs.gov**.

The decal should be displayed on the outside of the aircraft, within 18 inches of the normal boarding area and where it is visible when the door(s) are open.

### ? | WHAT IF

### STEP 2 - TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

The Pilot in Command (PIC) must ensure all travelers have on board:

- A valid U.S. passport
- Non-U.S. Citizens must have a valid DHS-Approved travel document

For a complete listing and questions on document requirements for air travel, visit **CBP Website**<sup>10</sup>

### + | IN ADDITION

U.S. Department of State website: **Travel.State.Gov**<sup>11</sup> provides additional information, including destination information.



## WHAT IF

### WHAT IF A DECAL IS NOT AVAILABLE BY THE TIME OF MY FLIGHT?

If the physical decal is not available for the inspection, you must produce a receipt or purchase history from **DTOPS**<sup>8</sup>, the website where you purchase the decal.



## IN ADDITION

### IN ADDITION, PIC MUST HAVE A CURRENT:

- Pilot certificate with an English proficient endorsement
- Valid medical certificate, including BasicMed where accepted
- Restricted radiotelephone operators permit<sup>9</sup>.

## DEPARTING FROM THE UNITED STATES

Now that you have everything you need for your cross-border flying and you are ready to depart.

### STEP 1 - VALIDATE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

It is important that the traveler matches the travel document (passport, alien registration number, etc.), that the travel document matches the data input in the Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS) manifest, and that the document appears valid for travel before submitting the eAPIS manifest to CBP.

#### | WHAT IF

### STEP 2 - SUBMIT ELECTRONIC ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION SYSTEM (EAPIS)

All pilots crossing the U.S. border, in either direction, are required to use CBP's eAPIS to provide crew, passenger(s), aircraft, and trip information. eAPIS manifest submissions can be transmitted through the web portal (<https://eapis.cbp.dhs.gov><sup>12</sup>) or any other CBP-approved electronic data interchange system such as **FlashPass**<sup>13</sup>.

eAPIS must be filed at least 60 minutes before departing the U.S., but you can file as far in advance as you wish, giving the option to provide information for the return trip before leaving home.

AOPA's Air Safety Institute has a free online course, "**Understanding eAPIS—A Pilot's Guide to Online Customs Reporting**"<sup>14</sup> that guides pilots step-by-step through the online reporting process.

Additional tips can be found in **eAPIS Frequently Asked Questions**<sup>15</sup> and in **CBP Private Air APIS Guide**<sup>16</sup>.

#### | I CANT FIND

### STEP 3 - RECEIVE CONFIRMATION AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN THE CLEARANCE RESPONSE

After an eAPIS manifest has been submitted, a confirmation email receipt ("Notification of Receipt of Transmission") from APIS-NoReply@cbp.dhs.gov is sent to the submitter's email address on file. When you receive your confirmation receipt email, you must follow any and all instructions contained therein. If the email confirmation receipt is not received, contact the CBP port associated with your flight..

Private aircraft aircraft may depart from any U.S. port or place.

#### | FILE



## WHAT IF

### WHAT IF A TRAVELER HAS TWO PASSPORTS?

If a traveler has more than one passport, be sure the passport being carried matches the travel document data in the eAPIS manifest. If the traveler is a U.S. citizen, U.S. passport must be used. And don't forget to check the expiration date.



## I CANT FIND

### I CAN'T FIND MY AIRPORT CODE OF DEPARTURE

Enter the ICAO airport code corresponding to your last domestic CBP port of departure. If the airport code is not found, chose the airport code closest to your departure site. If you're not leaving from that CBP airport location, enter details of departure location below in the field titled, "Actual Departure Location Description".



## FILE

### FILE ICAO FLIGHT PLAN

Use of an ICAO flight plan is required if the flight will enter international airspace, whether IFR or Defense VFR. While an ICAO flight plan and an FAA flight plan are similar in many ways, there are some important differences. Your flight plan should include the estimated time of ADIZ penetration, many online flight planning systems can calculate this time for you.

Please view this short **AOPA video**<sup>17</sup> for additional information.

## STEP 4 – SECURE PERMISSION TO DEPART

Once the eAPIS manifest has been processed, the receipt message will instruct you to proceed with the departure flight. Unless CBP or another DHS agency contacts you, you are cleared to go!

### ? | WHAT IF

## RETURNING TO / ARRIVING INTO THE UNITED STATES

You had a great time, but it's time to come home. Follow these steps to ensure a smooth and safe arrival.

### STEP 1 – LOCATE AN AIRPORT OF ENTRY (AOE)

There are different types of CBP airport classifications and operations. Contact the **CBP at a AOE**<sup>18</sup> ahead of time to better understand hours of operation, local policies, local needs, etc. The types of AOE are described below.

#### INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

International Airports are open to all aircraft for entry and clearance at no charge by Customs. However, charges may be assessed by the airport. One-hour advance notice of arrival is required, normally accomplished by telephone call.

#### LANDING RIGHTS AIRPORTS AND USER FEE AIRPORTS

“Permission to land” from CBP is required. Prior to departure from a foreign port or place, the pilot of a private aircraft must receive a message from CBP that landing rights have been granted for that aircraft at a particular airport. Landing rights and user fee airports typically require 24 to 48-hours advance notice of arrival. Pilots should be aware that the fees at user fee airports can be significant.

### ? | MY REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

#### CBP DESIGNATED AIRPORTS

When arriving from areas directly south of the U.S., general aviation aircraft must land at a CBP Designated Airport. Designated airports are also one of three CBP classified airports listed above and pilots must comply with all applicable landing and notice of arrival requirements.



## WHAT IF

### WHAT IF I HAVE TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY LANDING IN THE U.S.?

If an emergency landing occurs in the U.S. after departing, the pilot must report arrival by telephone, or most convenient means, to the nearest CBP office when possible, to adjust or cancel the outbound eAPIS manifest. Afterhours: call 1-800-X-SECTOR.

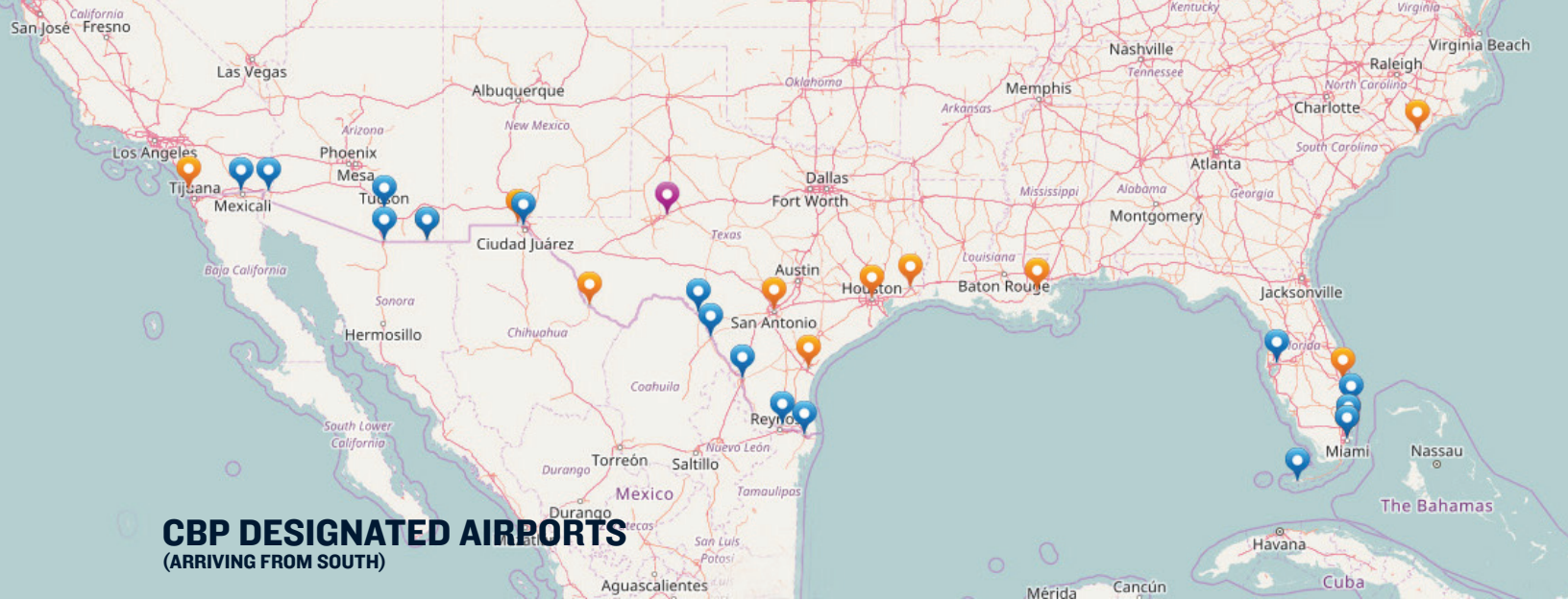


## MY REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

### CAN MY REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO LAND CAN BE DENIED?

Yes. There are five reasons landing rights can be denied:

1. insufficient staff,
2. insufficient facilities,
3. operator has a negative CBP history,
4. federal rules and regulations won't be adhered to, and/or
5. CBP has deemed it necessary to deny landing rights to an aircraft.



**CBP DESIGNATED AIRPORTS**  
(ARRIVING FROM SOUTH)

KBRO	Brownsville, Tex	Brownsville International Airport	International Airport
KCXL	Calexico, Calif	Calexico International Airport	International Airport
KDRT	Del Rio, Tex	Del Rio International Airport	International Airport
KDUG	Douglas, Ariz	Bisbee-Douglas International Airport	International Airport
KELP	El Paso, Tex	El Paso International Airport	International Airport
KFLL	Fort Lauderdale, Fla	Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport	International Airport
KEYW	Key West, Fla	Key West International Airport	International Airport
KLRD	Laredo, Tex	Laredo International Airport	International Airport
KMFE	McAllen, Tex	Miller International Airport	International Airport
KMIA	Miami, Fla	Miami International Airport	International Airport
KOLS	Nogales, Ariz	Nogales International Airport	International Airport
KTPA	Tampa, Fla	Tampa International Airport	International Airport
KTUS	Tucson, Ariz	Tucson International Airport	International Airport
KPBI	West Palm Beach, Fla	Palm Beach International Airport	International Airport
KNYL	Yuma, Ariz	Yuma International Airport	International Airport
KDNA	Santa Teresa, N. Mex	Dona Ana County International Jetport Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KBPT	Beaumont, Tex	Jack Brooks Regional Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KCRP	Corpus Christi, Tex	Corpus Christi International Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KDGL	Douglas, Ariz	Douglas Municipal Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KFPR	Fort Pierce, Fla	St. Lucie County Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KFXE	Fort Lauderdale, Fla	Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KHOU	Houston, Tex	William P. Hobby Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KILM	Wilmington, NC	Wilmington International Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KMSY	New Orleans, La	Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KNEW	New Orleans, LA	Lakefront Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KOPF	Miami, Fla	Opa-Locka Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KPRS	Presidio, Tex	Presidio-Lely International Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KSAT	San Antonio Tex	San Antonio International Airport.	Landing Rights Airport
KSDM	San Diego, Calif	Brown Field	Landing Rights Airport
KTMB	Miami, Fla	Miami Executive Airport	Landing Rights Airport
KMAF	Midland, TX	Midland International Airport	User Fee Airport

## STEP 2 – VALIDATE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

It is important that the traveler matches the travel document (passport, alien registration number, etc.), and the travel document matches the data input in the Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS) manifest before submitting the eAPIS manifest to CBP.

### ? | WHAT IF

## STEP 3 – SUBMIT ELECTRONIC ADVANCE PASSENGER INFORMATION SYSTEM (EAPIS)

All pilots crossing the U.S. border either way are required to use CBP's online Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS) to provide crew, passenger(s), aircraft, and trip information. eAPIS manifest submissions can be transmitted through the web portal (<https://eapis.cbp.dhs.gov><sup>19</sup>) or any another CBP-approved electronic data interchange system.

eAPIS must be filed at least 60 minutes before departing for the U.S, but you can file as far in advance as you wish, giving the option to provide information for the return trip before leaving home. It is recommended, however, that pilots wait to submit until they are confident the details are accurate in order to avoid having to repeat the process.

See **Step 2 under the Departure section** for additional information.

### ? | DO I NEED TO

## STEP 4 – RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF EAPIS RECEIPT OF TRANSMISSION

After an eAPIS manifest has been transmitted, an email receipt (“Notification of Receipt of Transmission”) from **APIS-NoReply@cbp.dhs.gov** is sent to the submitter's email address on file. If the email receipt is not received immediately, contact the port of entry.

## STEP 5 – SECURE PERMISSION TO LAND AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN THE APPROVAL EMAIL

**Operating conditions and requirements vary with each specific AOE.** You need to make applicable arrival arrangements (securing permission to arrive, securing overflight exemptions, etc.) with the **CBP AOE**<sup>20</sup>, as necessary. CBP officer availability is based upon workload and may be altered to coincide with aircraft schedule changes and resource constraints.

1. Call U.S. CBP **before departure** at least one hour before your planned U.S. arrival time.
2. Be familiar with: clearance location, regulated garbage and maximum number of souls on board.

*continued next page*



### WHAT IF

#### WHAT IF A TRAVELER HAS AN ALIEN REGISTRATION CARD NUMBER?

An alien registration card (green card) must be submitted as the primary travel document in lieu of the passport.



### DO I NEED TO

#### DO I NEED TO SUBMIT EAPIS IF I AM ARRIVING FROM ST. THOMAS TO ATLANTA?

Yes. Although St. Thomas is in the U.S. Virgin Islands, a trip from St. Thomas to Atlanta requires filing via eAPIS. A trip from Mexico to St. Thomas also requires an eAPIS submission. However, a trip from Atlanta to St. Thomas doesn't require an eAPIS submission.



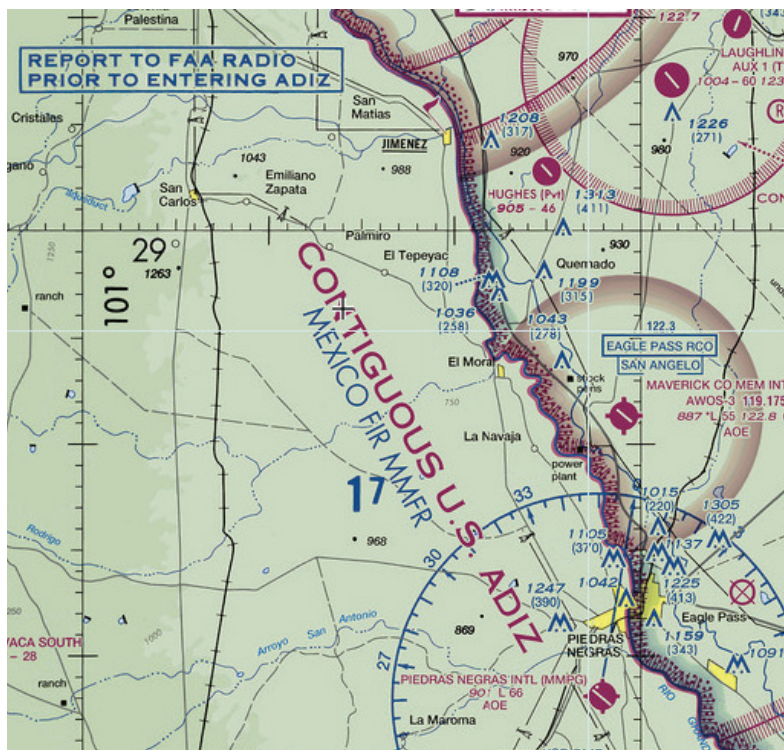
### CAN I?

#### CAN I CALL CBP TO SECURE PERMISSION TO LAND AFTER DEPARTURE (WHILE AIRBORNE)?

No. 19 CFR 122.22(b)(6) clearly states that permission to land must be secured prior to departure. This is to ensure that aircraft do not encounter situations where landing rights are denied, but they are unable to divert to a location outside U.S. airspace. It also ensures that CBP has sufficient time for vetting of the flight manifest.

3. Receive approval email from [GA-NoReply@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:GA-NoReply@cbp.dhs.gov) and follow any and all instructions contained therein. The approval email will contain several items:

1. Permission to land with aircraft, location, date, and time
2. Specific officer messages and instructions
3. A PDF attachment describing general arrival information and guidelines
4. A PDF attachment containing a General Aviation Airport Fact Sheet (if available for your airport)



### STEP 6 – FLY SAFELY AND NOTIFY CBP OF CHANGES

If the flight is going to be more than a few minutes early or late for the original arrival time, notify CBP of the new time. (Note that different ports have different tolerances, so be sure to check with your specific destination.). If air traffic delays/changes occur once the aircraft is enroute (e.g. adverse weather, emergencies, and distress situations), the pilot's first priority is to maintain a safe flight. If workload allows, contact CBP at your arrival destination with the updated time. CBP has no aviation radio; an in-flight call or Flight Service Station (FSS) relayed message may be needed.

Should your destination airport change, you should attempt to contact CBP at the new destination airport prior to arrival as advanced permission is required. Failure to obtain advance permission from CBP to alter the airport of destination may result in penalty action. When able, you also need to contact CBP at the original destination to advise of them of your change in plans.



## FILE

### FILE ICAO FLIGHT PLAN

Use of an ICAO flight plan is required if the flight will enter international airspace, whether IFR or Defense VFR. While an ICAO flight plan and an FAA flight plan are similar in many ways, there are some important differences. Your flight plan should include the estimated time of ADIZ penetration; many online flight planning systems can calculate this time for you.

Please view this short AOPA video<sup>22</sup> for additional information.



## STEP 7 – REPORT TO U.S. CUSTOMS AND FOLLOW PROCEDURES


Report immediately to CBP when arriving into the U.S. Should no inspecting officer be present, the pilot should report his/her arrival to CBP by telephone or the most convenient means. As the PIC, you are responsible for holding any merchandise or baggage unopened and on the aircraft until either a CBP officer arrives or gives instructions. Passengers and baggage may be removed to protect property, for the safety of crew and passengers, or for contacting CBP.

## STEP 8 – IF DIRECTED COMPLETE U.S. CUSTOMS AND DECLARATION FORM (6059B) AND COOPERATE WITH INSPECTION

Citizens returning to the US are sometimes required to complete U.S. Customs and Declaration Form 6059B (at the discretion of the CBP officer). The head of a family may make a joint declaration for all members residing in the same household and returning to the U.S.

You may make an oral declaration as to articles acquired abroad if they do not exceed the duty-free exemptions allowed. Please see **CBP's instructions**<sup>24</sup>.

This Space For Official Use Only


**U.S. Customs and Border Protection**

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**Customs Declaration** FORM APPROVED OMB NO. 1651-0009  
19 CFR 122.27, 148.12, 148.13, 148.110, 148.111, 19 USC 1498; 31 CFR 5316

Each arriving traveler or responsible family member must provide the following information (only ONE written declaration per family is required). The term "family" is defined as "members of a family residing in the same household who are related by blood, marriage, domestic relationship, or adoption."

- 1** Family Name  
First (Given) \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_
- 2** Birth date Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_
- 3** Number of Family members traveling with you \_\_\_\_\_
- 4** (a) U.S. Street Address (hotel name/destination) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) City \_\_\_\_\_ (c) State \_\_\_\_\_
- 5** Passport issued by (country) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6** Passport number \_\_\_\_\_
- 7** Country of Residence \_\_\_\_\_
- 8** Countries visited on this trip prior to U.S. arrival \_\_\_\_\_
- 9** Airline/Flight No. or Vessel Name \_\_\_\_\_
- 10** The primary purpose of this trip is **business**: Yes  No
- 11** I am (We are) bringing
  - (a) fruits, vegetables, plants, seeds, food, insects: Yes  No
  - (b) meats, animals, animal/wildlife products: Yes  No
  - (c) disease agents, cell cultures, snails: Yes  No
  - (d) soil or have been on a farm/ranch/pasture: Yes  No
- 12** I have (We have) been in close proximity of **livestock**: Yes  No   
(such as touching or handling)
- 13** I am (We are) carrying **currency or monetary instruments** over \$10,000 U.S. or foreign equivalent: Yes  No   
(see definition of monetary instruments on reverse)
- 14** I have (We have) **commercial merchandise**: Yes  No   
(articles for sale, samples used for soliciting orders, or goods that are not considered personal effects)
- 15 RESIDENTS**—the total value of all goods, including commercial merchandise I/we have purchased or acquired abroad, (including gifts for someone else but not items mailed to the U.S.) and am/are bringing to the U.S. is: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**VISITORS**—the total value of all articles that will remain in the U.S., including commercial merchandise is: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Read the instructions on the back of this form. Space is provided to list all the items you must declare.

**X** I HAVE READ THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM AND HAVE MADE A TRUTHFUL DECLARATION.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_\_

CBP Form 6059B (11/16)

**U.S. Customs and Border Protection Welcomes You to the United States**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is responsible for protecting the United States against the illegal importation of prohibited items. CBP officers have the authority to question you and to examine you and your personal property. If you are one of the travelers selected for an examination, you will be treated in a courteous, professional, and dignified manner. CBP Supervisors and Passenger Service Representatives are available to answer your questions. Comment cards are available to compliment or provide feedback.

**Important Information**

**U.S. Residents**—Declare all articles that you have acquired abroad and are bringing into the United States.

**Visitors (Non-Residents)**—Declare the value of all articles that will remain in the United States.

**Declare all articles** on this declaration form and show the value in U.S. dollars. For gifts, please indicate the retail value.

**Duty**—CBP officers will determine duty. U.S. residents are normally entitled to a duty-free exemption of \$800 on items accompanying them. Visitors (non-residents) are normally entitled to an exemption of \$100. Duty will be assessed at the current rate on the first \$1,000 above the exemption.

**Agricultural and Wildlife Products**—To prevent the entry of dangerous agricultural pests and prohibited wildlife, the following are restricted: Fruits, vegetables, plants, plant products, soil, meat, meat products, birds, snails, and other live animals or animal products. Failure to declare such items to a Customs and Border Protection Officer/Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Specialist/Fish and Wildlife Inspector can result in penalties and the items may be subject to seizure.

**Controlled substances, obscene articles, and toxic substances are generally prohibited entry. The importation of merchandise into the U.S. that infringes intellectual property rights may subject travelers to civil or criminal penalties and may pose serious risk to safety or health.**

The transportation of currency or **monetary instruments**, regardless of the amount, is legal. However, if you bring into or take out of the United States more than \$10,000 (U.S. or foreign equivalent, or a combination of both), you are required by law to file a report on FinCEN 105 (formerly Customs Form 4790) with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Monetary instruments include coin, currency, travelers checks and bearer instruments such as personal or cashiers checks and stocks and bonds. If you have someone else carry the currency or monetary instrument for you, you must also file a report on FinCEN 105. Failure to file the required report or failure to report the total amount that you are carrying may lead to the seizure of all the currency or monetary instruments, and may subject you to civil penalties and/or criminal prosecution. **SIGN ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THIS FORM AFTER YOU HAVE READ THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOVE AND MADE A TRUTHFUL DECLARATION.**

Description of Articles (List may continue on another CBP Form 6059B)	Value	CBP Use Only
<b>Total</b>		

**PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:** An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection and a person is not required to respond to this information unless it displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for this collection is 1651-0009. The estimated average time to complete this application is 4 minutes. Your response is mandatory. If you have any comments regarding the burden estimate you can write to U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Regulations and Rulings, 90 K Street, NE, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20229.

CBP Form 6059B (11/16)

## DOCUMENT CHECK

During inspection, CBP officers will validate the accuracy of the eAPIS manifest. You may also be asked questions on:

- Your citizenship
- The nature of your trip
- Anything you are bringing back to the U.S. that you did not have when you left

Upon request, the pilot must present for inspection:

- Valid airman's certificate or a pilot's certificate or license
- Medical certificate (if applicable)
- Aircraft registration certificate
- Aircraft airworthiness certificate



## REMEMBER YOU STILL NEED

## BAGGAGE INSPECTION

For general aviation flights, baggage is considered the belongings or merchandise of the pilots and passengers. If instructed, baggage will need to be placed on the exam station and opened. After the inspection is completed, it is the responsibility of the individual to repack and close the baggage.

It is the pilot's responsibility to assist in opening aircraft and baggage compartments. While extensive inspections may sometimes be needed, they are not commonplace and it should be understood by the inspecting officer and the operator that the PIC may not be capable of providing access to certain parts of the aircraft without the assistance of an authorized maintenance technician.

## ? | WHAT IF

## AIRCRAFT INSPECTION

Most inspections are carried out in a routine manner. However, certain situations may arise for the CBP officer to conduct in-depth inspections. During inspection, if contraband is found, the aircraft can be confiscated.

## AUXILIARY POWER UNIT (APU)/ GROUND POWER UNIT (GPU)

CBP no longer requires the full shut down of certain aircraft types during inspection. For aircraft equipped with an APU exhaust located on the fuselage 8 feet or higher from the ground, the APU may remain powered – at the GA operator's discretion – and any electrical systems served by the APU (navigational, comfort, safety, etc.) may remain powered as well. However, for GA aircraft with an APU exhaust configured less than 8 feet off the ground, the APU must be powered down before conducting the Radiation Isotope Identification Device (RIID) scan.



## REMEMBER

### REMEMBER YOU STILL NEED

Remember, you still need to have on board all other documents the FAA requires, including restricted radiotelephone operators permit and radio station license<sup>25</sup>. Call FCC helpline if any assistance is needed.

### **RADIATION ISOTOPE IDENTIFICATION DEVICE (RIID)**

All internationally arriving general aviation aircraft will be scanned for illicit radiological/nuclear materials. The CBP officer will scan the exterior and interior of the aircraft using the RIID. Passengers and crew may be required to disembark the aircraft prior to screening. The scanning procedure should take between 5-15 minutes, depending on aircraft size.

### **CABIN AND BAGGAGE AREA**

During the inspection, depending on the size of aircraft and confinement of the cabin, the pilot may be asked to leave the passenger cabin compartment to ensure officer safety.

### **OPENING ACCESS PANELS AND COMPARTMENTS**

The PIC is responsible for the airworthiness of the aircraft. Certain panels and compartments, if opened, make the aircraft no longer airworthy unless closed by a qualified airframe and power plant mechanic. If the CBP officer finds it necessary to investigate areas behind inspection panels, inside engine cowling, or behind instrument panels, the CBP will obtain a qualified mechanic to do the removal and replacement of the panels.

### **CUSTOMS DUTY**

Individuals entering the U.S. should declare all items acquired abroad that were purchased or gifts, consolidate receipts and be prepared to pay duty for items that exceed the personal exemption limit. For information on exemptions and the importation of typical tourist items, please consult **CBP website**<sup>26</sup>.

### **AGRICULTURE**

Depending on the region or country from which the aircraft is arriving, some food such as fruits, meats or other agricultural products may be allowed. For more information, see **USDA website**<sup>27</sup> on acceptable and prohibited items.

### **CURRENCY**

There is no limit to the amount of currency one can carry across the border. However, you must report negotiable monetary instruments (i.e. currency or endorsed checks) valued at \$10,000 USD or more on a "Report of International Transportation of Currency or Monetary Instruments" **form FinCEN 105**<sup>28</sup>. Undeclared currency that exceeds the \$10,000 threshold is subject to seizure. For more information, see **CBP website**<sup>29</sup>.

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

It is illegal for certain items to be transported or in the possession of individuals when crossing the U.S border.

## **U.S. CUSTOMS TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **OVERFLIGHT EXEMPTION**

A border overflight exemption allows general aviation aircraft to overfly the first designated AOE when arriving into the U.S. from below the 30th parallel in the eastern U.S., and below the 33rd parallel in the western U.S. This covers all flights from the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America, and French Polynesia. All criteria set forth on the border overflight exemption approval must be met to use it for the flight. If utilizing a border overflight exemption, it should be listed in remarks section 18 on the ICAO flight plan, i.e. "Border Overflight Exemption approved per CBP". Without it, the flight must land at the first designated AOE.

For overflight application requirements and procedures, please contact CBP at **GAsupport@cbp.dhs.gov**.

Illegal contraband includes counterfeit items, drug paraphernalia and certain technologies. These items will be seized and the individual will be subject to fines, penalties, and possible arrest. Please see the **CBP website**<sup>30</sup> for the current list of prohibited or restricted items.

#### **INTERNATIONAL REGULATED GARBAGE**

Regulated garbage is all waste material that is derived in whole or in part from fruits, vegetables, meats, or other plant or animal (including poultry) material, and other refuse of any character whatsoever that has been associated with any such material. Regulated garbage is not allowed to be imported, except from Canada.

Not all airports are capable of accepting galley refuse and garbage from international arriving aircraft (except from Canada). A list of airports approved by The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to handle garbage removal can be found on **USDA website**<sup>31</sup>.

#### **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

The pilot of an aircraft destined for a U.S. airport shall report immediately, to the quarantine station at or nearest the airport at which the aircraft will arrive, the occurrence, on board, of any death or ill person among passengers or crew. For more information on CDC Quarantine Stations and other Public Health and Center for Disease Control related issues, visit **CDC website**<sup>32</sup>.

#### **PETS**

Arriving into the U.S. with pets requires additional clearance procedures and are subject to health, quarantine, agriculture, or wildlife requirements and prohibitions. Pets taken out of the U.S. and returned are subject to the same requirements as those entering for the first time. For more information, contact Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) **Import and Export: Animal and Animal Products**<sup>33</sup>. See also APHIS information on **Pet Travel**<sup>34</sup>.

#### **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS**

Prior to departing the U.S., registration with CBP of firearms is recommended when traveling on any general aviation aircraft. To do this, you must obtain a Certificate of Registration (**CBP Form 4457**<sup>35</sup>) from CBP for each, which can be presented upon reentry in the U.S. Any operator originating outside of the U.S. with plans to enter the U.S. must convey carriage of weapons or firearms when making notice of arrival/landing rights with the CBP port of arrival.

#### **HUNTING AND FISHING TROPHIES**

Game and trophies from other countries must enter through a designated **Fish and Wildlife port of entry**<sup>36</sup>. For questions regarding the importation of plant or animal wildlife products, and how to obtain a permit, please consult **Fish and Wildlife Service**<sup>37</sup> before entering the United States.

## **U.S. CUSTOMS TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **PRECLEARANCE FOR GENERAL AVIATION**

A preclearance inspection is essentially the same inspection a traveler would experience at a U.S. port of entry, but is completed on foreign soil. All travelers meeting the normal documentary requirements for entering the U.S. on private and chartered aircraft will be inspected. General aviation aircraft are authorized to preclear out of two foreign destinations - Shannon, Ireland, and Aruba.

Please see **CBP Preclearance of General Aviation Summary Guide**<sup>39</sup> for program eligibilities and request procedures.

### **VISA WAIVER PROGRAM (VWP)**

The **Visa Waiver Program**<sup>40</sup> (VWP) enables most citizens or nationals of participating countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without first obtaining a visa, when they meet **all requirements**<sup>41</sup>. The traveler must have a passport issued from a **VWP participating country**<sup>42</sup>.

In the General Aviation context, a VWP Signatory Carrier is an unscheduled operator (of commercial and/or private aircraft) authorized to transport certain passengers to the United States without first obtaining a visa for a period of up to 90 days. To determine VWP Signatory Carrier Status, CBP officers may refer to the **VWP Signatory Carriers List**<sup>43</sup>, but should also accept a copy of your VWP approved and signed contract (**CBP Form I-420**<sup>44</sup>). To apply for a VWP Signatory Status, visit **CBP website**<sup>45</sup>.

### **ESTA**

To travel without a visa on the VWP, travelers must have authorization

through the **Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)**<sup>46</sup> prior to boarding a U.S. bound VWP signatory carrier.

### CUSTOMS BONDS

A CBP bond is required for all commercial operations, including non-scheduled GA. The bond is similar to an insurance policy that is obtained through a surety company, that guarantees payment to CBP if restitution for a fine, penalty or forfeiture is not resolved by the operator. Minimum amounts for the limit of liability may vary from port to port for activities such as entry and clearance. For most general aviation passenger flights, the International Carrier Bond will be required (**CBP Form 301**<sup>47</sup>, activity code 3). There are several additional bonds for a variety of commercial activities. CBP recommends that you carry a copy of the bond aboard the aircraft to simplify its verification.

### U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (USVI)

The U.S. Virgin Islands, as an Insular Possession, and currently the only pre-inspection location for general aviation, have slightly different requirements for CBP.

Aircraft arriving in the USVI from a place other than the United States are treated the same as an aircraft arriving in the United States from a foreign area. Operators are required to furnish a notice of intended arrival, transmit eAPIS and comply with CBP entry and clearance procedures.

Aircraft leaving the USVI for a place other than the U.S. are treated the same as an aircraft leaving the U.S. for a foreign area, therefore an outbound eAPIS transmission is required.

Aircraft on flights from the U.S. to the USVI are treated the same as an aircraft on a flight within the U.S., therefore considered domestic.

Aircraft departing from the U.S. Virgin Islands and arriving in the U.S. are arriving in the U.S. from a foreign area. Operators are required to following the instructions for arriving in the U.S. provided earlier in this guide. Aircraft cannot be moved from the USVI until CBP Agricultural Specialists (CBPAS) have had the opportunity to inspect the aircraft, crew, and passengers and provide clearance for departure.

When a flight that was inspected by CBP in the USVI arrives in the U.S. from the USVI, the aircraft commander must be able to give evidence of the inspection to CBP on request. CBP at the port of entry within the U.S. still holds the right to board the aircraft for inspection.

### GUAM, AMERICAN SAMOA AND NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Guam, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands are U.S. Territories and Possessions, therefore general aviation operators must comply with CBP regulations and procedures.

When arriving into Guam, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands from a foreign port or place, U.S. CBP procedures for entry and clearance must be arranged through a local ground handling agent. The operator must also submit arrival eAPIS through their normal process.

When departing from Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands to one of the 50 U.S. states, the aircraft must arrive at a CBP approved airport for international trash removal under USDA specifications.

### FAQ'S

You may find additional questions and answers on **AOPA website**<sup>1</sup>.

# U.S. CUSTOMS OUTBOUND CHECKLIST

## PREPARING FOR YOUR FLIGHT

- User Fee Decal - Pay an annual CBP user fee and must have a Decal or receipt/order history
- Travel Documents - Have travel documents for international travel
- A valid U.S. passport
- Non-U.S. Citizens must have a valid DHS-Approved travel document
- Pilot Certificate with an English proficient endorsement
- Valid medical certificate (BasicMed where accepted)
- Restricted radiotelephone operators permit and radio station license

## DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES

- Validate travel documents: eAPIS data must match travelers and their travel documents
- Submit eAPIS
- Receive eAPIS confirmation
- Secure permission to depart

## EMERGENCY LANDING IN THE U.S.

- Report to the nearest CBP office by telephone when possible and adjust or cancel the outbound eAPIS manifest: afterhours call 1-800-X-SECTOR

## AIRCRAFT/FLIGHT CHECKLIST OUTBOUND

- Be familiar with destination travel requirements
- Verify equipment requirements, e.g. Mode C transponder, two-way radio, survival gear, etc.
- Must have all required paperwork for the aircraft, including radio station license
- Have all publications and charts for your flight
- File an ICAO flight plan
- Activate your flight plan before leaving the U.S.
- Must receive a discrete transponder code from FSS for VFR flights 15 minutes before penetrating the ADIZ
- Close your flight plan

# U.S. CUSTOMS INBOUND CHECKLIST

## ARRIVING INTO / RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES

- Locate a AOE - Be familiar with the U.S. Customs procedures at the Airport of Entry (AOE) you intended to land
- Validate travel documents: travelers, travel documents, and data in eAPIS all must match
- Submit eAPIS
- Receive eAPIS confirmation
- Secure permission to land - Call U.S. CBP **before departure** at least one hour before your planned U.S. arrival time
- Fly safe and notify CBP of changes - do your best to inform CBP if you are arriving more than 15 minutes early or late
- Report to U.S. Customs and follow procedures

## EMERGENCY LANDING IN THE U.S.

- Report to the nearest CBP office by telephone as promptly as possible: afterhours call 1-800-X-SECTOR
- Keep all baggage and passenger in a segregated place

## U.S. CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

- Complete U.S. Customs and Declaration Form 6059B
  - Cooperate with inspection
  - Document check
  - Baggage inspection
  - Aircraft inspection
  - Customs duty
  - Agriculture
  - Currency
  - Prohibited items
  - International Regulated garbage
  - Health requirements
  - Pets
  - Weapons and firearms
  - Hunting and fishing trophies

## AIRCRAFT/FLIGHT CHECKLIST INBOUND

- Verify exit procedures and requirements for your departure country
- File an ICAO flight plan
- Activate your flight plan before arriving the U.S.
- Must receive a discrete transponder code from FSS for VFR flights 15 minutes before penetrating the ADIZ
- Close your flight plan

## LINK INDEX

1. <https://www.aopa.org/travel/international-travel>
2. <https://www.aopa.org/travel/international-travel/bahamas>
3. <https://www.aopa.org/travel/international-travel/caribbean>
4. <https://www.aopa.org/travel/international-travel/canada>
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