Volume III - Getting Started

This volume provides a quick navigational overview, summarizes the requisites, and describes the basic functionalities of the E-Filing system. Primarily, this guide addresses the following topics:

- E-Filing Web Instructions
- E-Filing Requisites
- Using My Forms
- Starting a New Form
- E-Filing Form Features
- Forms Checklist
- Concurrently E-Filing Forms
- System Timeouts

E-Filing Web Instructions

E-Filing USCIS application can only be done through the official USCIS website at www.uscis.gov. The USCIS charges no additional access or downloading fees for filing its forms electronically.

- From www.uscis.gov, click on E-Filing link.
- At the "Introduction to E-Filing" page, carefully read the provided instructions on the procedures for submitting an application to the USCIS.

E-Filing Requisites

Before accessing the system, perform the following tasks:

1. Click on the links to and read the general E-Filing Guidance on the Introduction to E-Filing web page.

2. Read the form-specific E-Filing instructions for the application you will be filing.

   o Access Forms Currently Available for E-Filing link on the Introduction to E-Filing web page. Determine if you are eligible to e-file your application by reading the classification-specific eligibility requirements for your application type. You will **NOT** be eligible if you are:
     - Applying for a waiver of the filing fee; or
     - Requesting that your case be expedited (with the exception of Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing).

   o Read the appropriate volume(s) of the E-Filing Reference Guide for further guidance on E-Filing form-specific applications.

3. Verify that your computer meets the following requirements:

   o Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 5 or higher).

   o Netscape (version 4.7 or higher) or Internet Explorer (version 5.0 or higher).

   o A printer to print your PDF copy of the application and Confirmation Receipt notice or a floppy disk to save these files.

4. Register for your E-Filing user account. (See Volume IV. User ID and Password for directions on setting up a User Account.)

5. Have on hand all required information (e.g., your immigration, personal documents, or credit card, debit card, or bank account and routing number to pay the filing fee, if applicable) before starting your session.

   o You must read the instructions in the paper-based OMB version of the form you plan to e-file to identify any additional or necessary supporting documentation. Please access the USCIS Forms and Fees web page for these instructions.

Using My Forms

Access your User Account by entering in your User ID and password. This brings you to the "My Forms" page, which allows you to:

- Select a form to begin completing.
- Save the last 20 forms you have partially completed but have NOT submitted.

My Forms allows you to view, edit, or delete forms that have been saved but <u>not</u> submitted to the USCIS.

Under My Forms, you will see the:

- List of forms available to be completed and submitted to USCIS;
- Date you last worked on each form; and
- Status of each form, showing either **Pending** or **Action Needed**.

  - If the status is **Pending**, the form is saved, but not yet submitted. You may select "View/Edit/Delete" to view, update, or delete a "Pending" application.
  - If the status is **Action Needed**, the payment for your form may not have processed completely. DO NOT RE-FILE. You MUST select "View/Edit/Delete" for more information on the status of your form.

> If a form has been successfully submitted, it **CANNOT** be recalled. Refer to Volume XVII. Troubleshooting on how to submit corrections for these forms.

> Successfully submitted forms will NOT be listed in your My Forms list.

Starting a New Form

To start a new form:

- Select a form to complete by using the drop-down menu on the My Forms screen. Upon the form type selection, you will be taken to an instructions page.
- Make sure to read through the instructions provided and then click on <Begin Application> to begin completing the form.

At the beginning of every form:

- The system will require you to select whether you are filing as an "Individual," a "Qualified Attorney," or "Organization Representative."
  a) If "Individual" is selected, the system will bring you to the first page of the selected form to begin completing.
  b) If "Qualified Attorney" or "Organization Representative" is selected, a G-28 – Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative form, will be provided after completion of the primary form. Refer to Volume XIV. E-Filing Form G-28 for guidance on completing the G-28.

E-Filing Form Features

The E-Filing system has several built-in features designed to help you complete and E-File your applications, which include:

- Required Fields;
- Error and Warning Messages;
- Context Sensitive Help Feature;
- Text Boxes; and
- Dropdown Boxes.

Required Fields

Required Fields are marked with an **asterisk (*)**. You MUST submit all information marked with asterisks for an application to be processed.


Examples of Required Items

Regardless of whether a field is required or not, you should complete all the form fields that apply to you. Failure to do so may result in processing delays or even application denials.
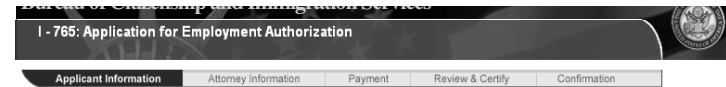
Context Sensitive Help

Certain field captions are highlighted and underlined in blue. These are links to the **Context Sensitive Help** feature, which provides definitions of terms and clarifies the information being requested for the field from which the Context Sensitive Help is linked.
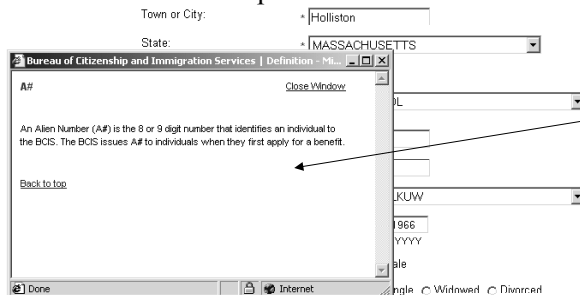
Context Sensitive Help Feature

Error and Warning Messages

Error and warning messages assist you in the proper completion of a form.

The system generates an **Error Message** if a required field is left blank:

- Error messages appear on the screen in **red**.
- You will NOT be allowed to proceed to the next form page or submit the application until the error is corrected.

The system generates a **Warning Message** if a non-required field is left blank:

- Warning messages appear on the screen in **blue**.
- You are warned that a field *may possibly* need to be filled in (e.g., based on the information you have already provided or based on circumstances that may be applicable to you).

You are able to submit your application without providing information in non-required fields. However, unless the blank data fields do not apply to you, failure to comply with these messages may result in processing delays or possibly denial of your application.

Dropdown Box

A **Dropdown Box** is provided to limit your answer to only those listed, valid response items accepted by USCIS. The values within the dropdown list are standard system values that are acceptable by the system. The following are representative data fields with standard system dropdown list values:

- Country names;
- USCIS locations;
- Immigration and non-immigration classifications; and
- Eligibility status.
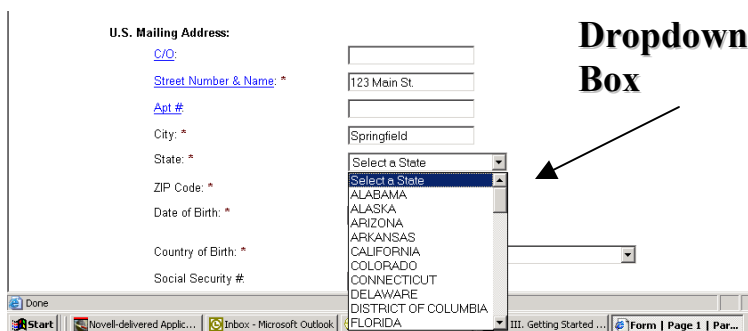
Text Box

A **Text Box** allows for data entry of responses to a question. The below outlines how the system applies the use of the text box.

- Provides the same amount of data entry space as the space provided on the OMB paper-based form version.
- Provides a **Continuation Sheet** if your response is too long to fit in the Text Box space provided on the PDF generated OMB form version.
  - Continuation Sheet(s) will be automatically generated by the system and submitted as part of your application.
  - The system will generate an error message stating that you have exceeded the space limitations if no Continuation Sheet exists for a particular Text Box response.

> You can provide additional information on a separate piece of paper and mail this with your supporting documentation when you exceed E-Filing form space limitations

Forms Checklist

Once you have completed your E-Filing application(s) and prior to paying for the application(s), a Forms Checklist is provided to:

- List your completed but non-submitted applications and the associated fee(s); and
- Link to application(s) that are available for Concurrent E-Filing.
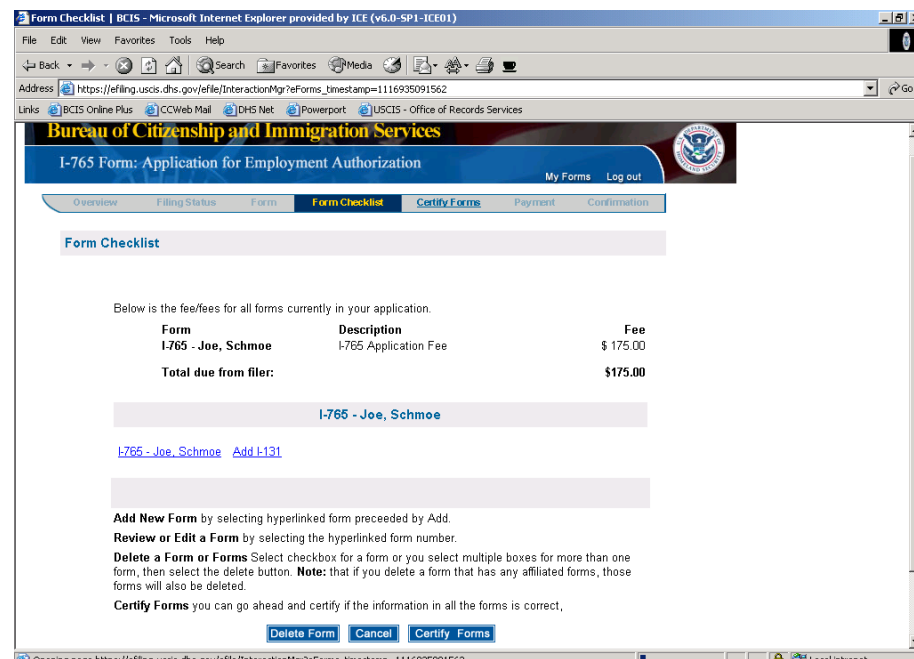
Concurrently E-Filing Forms

The system allows for multiple related applications (i.e., concurrently e-filed forms) to be submitted at the same time. You can concurrently e-file only those form type(s) that appears on you Form Check list page with a preceding <Add> link.

The benefits of concurrently E-Filing forms include the ability to:

- Pay all fees at one time;
- Submit related applications at one time and to a single processing location instead of separately to multiple locations; and
- Receive a single confirmation that all your applications have been submitted through the E-Filing system.

To concurrently E-File an application, click on the **Add** link to select another form to complete and submit with your primary application. The selected form(s) will be grouped together into one E-Filing submission.

To delete a concurrently E-Filed application, select the checkbox next to the form you wish to delete, and click on the **Delete** button at the bottom of the screen.
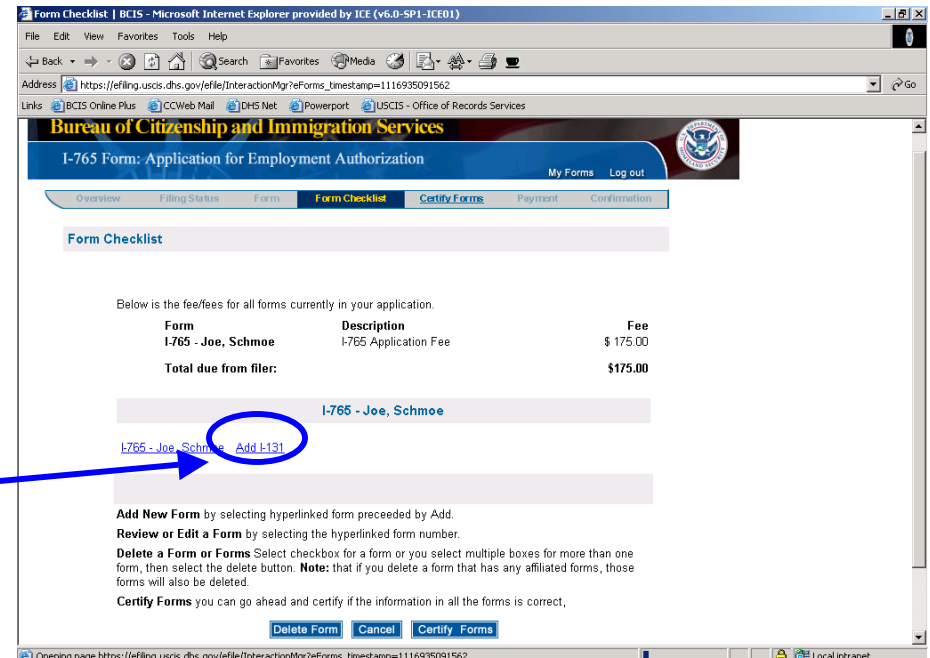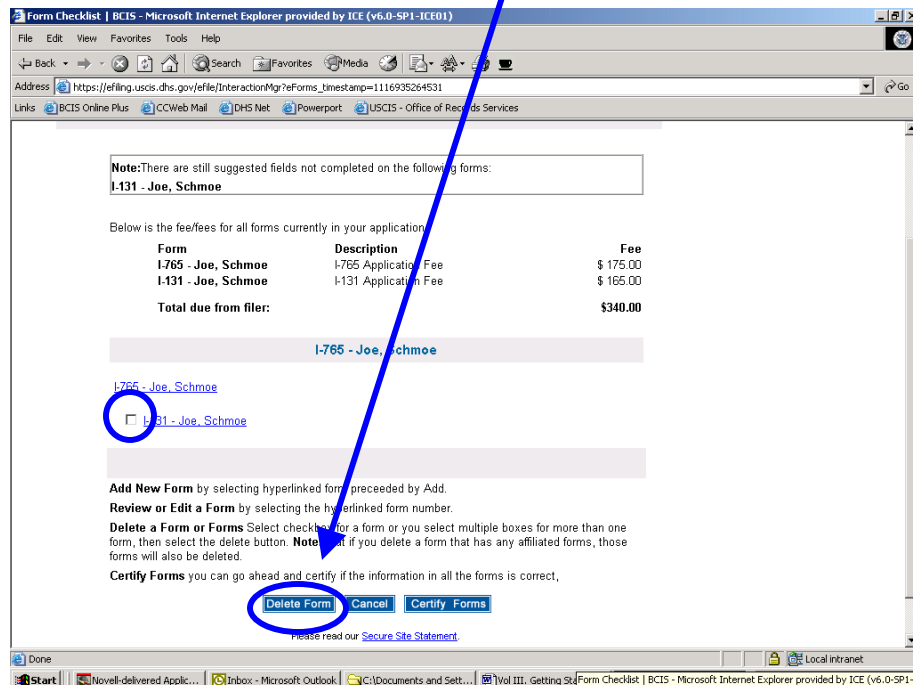
Session Timeouts

Your E-Filing session may "timeout" at times for one of the following reasons:

- You entered the E-Filing system from a bookmarked page that wasn't at the beginning of the E-Filing system.
- Your computer was idle or inactive for more than 20 minutes after logging into an E-Filing session. Your progress is automatically saved at the last page that was fully completed. You can access the My Forms page to re-assess your partially completed application once you have logged in properly with your E-Filing User ID and password.

To access the system, login using your E-Filing User ID and password at https://egov.immigration.gov/efile/.

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