

Tips to Help Make Your Visa Interview a Success

Wait times for a visa interview can be several weeks or longer in many countries, especially during peak travel times. We recommend you begin the process immediately **after you have registered** to attend Pittcon. You will take your Registration Confirmation with you to the visa interview as proof of your intentions to attend Pittcon. **Registration opens September 1, 2010.** If for any reason your visa is declined, the registration fee will be refunded, if the refund is requested before February 28, 2011.

Getting a visa can be easy if you are prepared. The first step will be to schedule an interview. The interview typically takes less than five minutes, and the questions you will be asked will be related to confirming your travel plans and ties to your home country. Before you go to the interview, become familiar with the details of Pittcon so that you will be able to easily answer any questions pertaining to Pittcon dates, location, purpose, etc.

- **Request a letter of invitation for Pittcon as soon as possible.** After you have registered to attend Pittcon, you may request a letter of invitation to attend Pittcon by completing the request form on the International Visitors page under the Attendee Services tab on the Pittcon website, www.pittcon.org/. Please be sure to complete all the required information on the form to expedite the process. Depending in which country you live, obtaining a letter of invitation may not be a requirement to get a visa; however, it may help to facilitate the process.
- **Schedule an appointment with your embassy.** Schedule your visa interview as soon as possible, as it can take several weeks or longer to get an interview. If you requested a letter of invitation, be sure to take it with you to your visa interview. The letter will be stamped with an official Pittcon seal to prevent duplication.
- **Travel with an official embassy delegation.** Traveling with a delegation organized by your local embassy can improve your chances of receiving visa approval. Many embassies organize official delegations through their commercial sections. If you are interested in joining a delegation, contact your local embassy to ask if the commercial trade specialist is organizing a delegation.
- **Verify fees and requirements.** Go to http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html to find out about visa fees and the methods of payment accepted by the embassy or consulate. This website also contains information regarding other requirements such as photographs.
- **Be sure to complete all official documents.** Completely answer all the questions on the forms. Do not use "NA (not applicable)". If the answer is in the negative, use "no", "nil", or "none".
- **Show proof of "strong ties" that bind you to your country of residence.** The Consular Officers conducting visa interviews look for proof that you will return to your country. Evidence of "strong ties" includes proof of business ownership or employment, home ownership, and social and family relationships.
- **If you have previously traveled to the United States, provide documentation (airline boarding pass for example) demonstrating that you have returned to your country on time.** Show proof you returned within the time frame you stated. For example, use an airline ticket stub/boarding pass that shows your return flight or meeting materials showing you attended a business conference.
- **Include any materials such as the Reference Guide, Pittcon brochure, Preliminary Program, Short Course catalog, or copy of emails you may have received from The Pittsburgh Conference to prove Pittcon is a legitimate conference and exposition.**