



HAND IN HAND THE DOMESTIC EMPLOYERS NETWORK

What Domestic Employers and Immigrant Domestic Workers Should Know About Air Travel

Immigration enforcement at airports is creating new risks for immigrant travelers—including on domestic flights.

Many domestic workers travel to visit family, attend important events, or take vacations. Others—particularly **nannies and home care workers**—are often asked to accompany employers on vacations, family visits, business trips, or other travel.

Recent reports indicate an increase in immigration enforcement at airports across the country, making it more important than ever for immigrant domestic workers, their employers, and families to understand the risks and prepare before traveling.

An ordinary trip can become an immigration enforcement encounter without warning.

Disclaimer: This resource provides general information and is not legal advice. Every person's immigration history and legal situation is different. If you have concerns about traveling, consult a qualified immigration attorney before making travel plans.

What We Know

Immigrant-rights organizations have reported:

- TSA is sharing passenger information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- ICE has arrested people at U.S. airports, including domestic flights.
- Even if someone has traveled safely before, today's risks may be different because of changes in immigration enforcement and information sharing.

A domestic flight does **not** guarantee protection from immigration enforcement.

According to the [National Immigration Law Center](#), people may face risk even when they:

- Have traveled without problems before;
- Have a pending immigration application;
- Hold temporary immigration status; or
- Have an old immigration matter they believe has already been resolved.

Every person's situation is different, and legal rights in airports are fairly complicated. Before traveling, consider speaking with a qualified immigration attorney who can assess your individual circumstances.

Who May Face Higher Risks?

While every case is different, immigration attorneys advise extra caution for people who:

- Are undocumented.
- Have an old deportation or removal order—even one they did not know existed or that was issued years ago.
- Previously held temporary immigration status that has expired or been terminated.
- Have a pending immigration application, including asylum, adjustment of status, or another immigration benefit. **A pending application does not necessarily protect someone from arrest or detention.**
- Have certain criminal arrests or convictions, even if a case was dismissed or resolved.
- Have DACA or another form of Deferred Action.
- Are uncertain about their immigration history or current legal status.

If you or the worker you employ are unsure about how immigration history could impact travel, consult an immigration attorney before flying.

If You're an Employer Asking a Domestic Worker to Travel

Some domestic workers—especially nannies and home care workers—travel as part of their jobs. Employers should recognize that a worker may face immigration risks, even when traveling together. **At this time, employers should *not* ask workers who face any risk of detention to travel with them.**

If you are considering asking a worker to accompany you or your family:

- Never pressure a worker to travel if they express a safety concern.

- Offer alternative modes of transportation, such as a car, bus or train. Although no form of transportation is absolutely risk-free, air travel has become particularly risky at this time.
- Never pressure a worker to disclose their immigration status.
- Discuss potential risks before booking flights or making travel commitments.
- Encourage workers with concerns to speak with a qualified immigration attorney before traveling.
- Understand that previous travel without problems does **not** necessarily mean travel is safe today.
- Be prepared to change travel plans or job expectations if a worker determines that flying is not safe after receiving legal advice.
- Establish clear agreements about work expectations during travel.
- Create an emergency plan together.
- Keep contact information for legal counsel and local rapid-response organizations.
- Agree in advance on what the employer will do if the worker is questioned, separated, or detained.
- When possible and safe, remain with the worker and [document what happens without interfering with law enforcement](#).
- Contact legal support immediately if a worker is detained.
- If you are an employer with a disability or someone who needs assistance to travel or complete daily activities, make sure you have a backup caregiver or care plan in place in case your employee is detained while traveling. Our [Emergency Planning Guide for Homecare Employers](#) can help you prepare.

No worker should have to choose between personal safety and keeping their job.

Preparation Cannot Eliminate Risk but it Can Help You Respond.

If you or the worker you employ have decided to travel, take the following steps to be prepared before going to the airport:

- Consult with a trusted immigration attorney.
- Share your itinerary with someone you trust.
- Memorize the phone numbers of an attorney and at least one emergency contact.
- Carry physical copies of important immigration or court documents recommended by your attorney.
- Identify the rapid-response network or immigrant-rights organization serving both your home community and your destination.
- Make a plan for children, medication, caregiving responsibilities, pets, work responsibilities, and other urgent needs in case you do not return as expected.

- Consider leaving important documents and emergency contact information with someone you trust.
- Arrange temporary caregiving or guardianship arrangements for your children.

Preparation cannot prevent enforcement, but it can add layers of protection for the person who is detained and their families if something unexpected happens.

Your Personal Information: Privacy Risks

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is providing passenger information to ICE, allowing immigration officers to identify some travelers at the airport.

All travellers should consider taking steps to reduce unnecessary access to electronic devices:

- Print your boarding pass and carry paper copies of essential travel documents.
- Back up your devices and install current software and security updates.
- Sign out of email, social media, and other sensitive accounts.
- Temporarily disable fingerprint or facial recognition and use a long, unique passcode.
- Remove sensitive files, photos, messages, contacts, or apps you do not need while traveling.
- Power your phone and laptop completely off before going through security.
- Speak with a qualified immigration attorney about your individual risks and legal rights.

These precautions cannot guarantee that your devices will not be searched, but they may reduce unnecessary exposure of personal information.

What To Do if You are Stopped: Stay Grounded. Ask What Is Happening. Know Your Rights.

If you or your employee are stopped:

- Try to remain calm and avoid physical resistance.
- Ask which agency the officers represent.
- Ask whether you are free to leave.
- Say that you wish to remain silent or [hand them a red card](#).
- If you or the worker has a disability, carry a [disability accommodations card](#) and hand it to the officer.
- Do not sign anything before speaking with an attorney.
- Do not provide false information or false documents.

Airport encounters can involve TSA, ICE, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), or other law-enforcement agencies. [Learning your rights](#) before traveling can help you respond more confidently.

Additional Resources

[Community Alert: Immigration Arrests at Airports](#)— National Immigration Law Center

[Know Your Rights: Enforcement at the Airport](#)— ACLU

[How to Keep ICE Agents Out of Your Phone at the Airport](#) —The Intercept

[Hand in Hand's Sanctuary Homes Webpage with National and Regional Resources](#)

Join the Movement

[Sign up to attend trainings](#), and receive information about Hand in Hand's immigrant rights work.

This resource provides general information and should not be taken as legal advice. For legal advice about your individual situation, consult a qualified immigration attorney.