



An FFL Tip Sheet for Processing NICS Checks for Non-U.S. Citizens/Aliens



All Aliens, no matter the status, must have the following two items:

1. A valid ICE-issued form of identification; and
2. A valid alien number* (which will be provided to question #15 on the ATF Form 4473.)

Immigrant Alien or Legal Permanent Resident Alien (LPR)

Description

- Granted permanent residence in the United States
- Must carry evidence of their status
- Status, in majority of cases, is granted for life

Identification

- Identification card will indicate "Permanent Resident"
- Identification card will have either an AR#, USCIS#, or A#
- AR#, USCIS#, or A# will be 8 or 9 numeric digits in length
- 90 days proof of residency is no longer required

Quick ATF Form 4473 Check

- Question #11L (Alien admitted with nonimmigrant visa?)—will respond with "No"
- Question #14 (Country of Citizenship)
- Question #15 (Alien Number)—8 or 9 numeric digits in length

NICS—National Instant Criminal Background Check System
ICE—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
FFL—Federal Firearms Licensee
AR#—Alien Registration Number
A#—Alien Number
LPR—Legal Permanent Resident Alien
USCIS#—United States Citizenship and Immigrations Services Number
CBP—United States Customs and Border Patrol
Form I-94—Arrival and Departure Record

Non-Immigrant Alien

Description

- No intention of abandoning residence in another country
- Granted access to the United States for a specific purpose and for a temporary period of time

Identification

- Identification will be either a valid Visa or Employment Authorization Card
- May have both an A/AR# and I-94# but must use the I-94# for NICS purposes
- I-94# is 11 numerical digits in length
- A printout from the CBP Web site is now an acceptable form of proof for an I-94#
- 90 days proof of residency is no longer required
- Not all non-U.S. Citizens need a valid exception (example: a valid hunting license), just those admitted under a Visa

Quick ATF Form 4473 Check

- Question #11L (Alien admitted with nonimmigrant visa?)—can be "No" or "Yes"
- Question #12 (fall within any of the exceptions listed?)—only populate if #11L is "Yes." Can respond with "No" or "Yes"
- Question #14 (Country of Citizenship)
- Question #15 (Alien Number)—11-digit I-94 number
- Question #20c (exception documentation)—populate if #12 is "Yes"

*NICS Contracted Call Center user—be sure to tell the NICS Operator which type of alien number you are providing, either an AR# or I-94#. It is imperative this information be captured correctly in the NICS. An incorrect number could adversely impact the results of the NICS check.

*NICS E-Check users—be sure to choose the link in the upper right hand corner of the "Search" screen that states "For Non-U.S. Citizen Searches." This allows the FFL to enter their customer's AR# or I-94# in the denoted area.



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Is your customer a Non-United States Citizen?

No

Yes

Do they have ICE-issued documentation containing an A#?

*NICS Contracted call Center users—be sure to tell the NICS Operator which type of alien number you are providing, an AR# or I-94#.

*NICS E-Check users—be sure to choose the link in the upper right hand corner of the "Search" screen that states "For Non-U.S. Citizen Searches." This allows the FFL to enter their customer's AR# or I-94# area denoted area.

No

Yes

Stop!

Do not process. This information is required before proceeding.

Are they an Immigrant Alien or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR)

Yes

Description

- Granted permanent residence in the United States
- Must carry evidence of their status
- Status, in majority of cases, is granted for life

Identification

- Identification card will indicate "Permanent Resident"
- Identification card will have either an AR#, USCIS#, or A#
- AR#, USCIS#, or A# will be 8 or 9 numeric digits in length
- 90 days proof of residency is no longer required

Quick ATF Form 4473 Check

- Question #11L (Alien admitted with nonimmigrant visa?)—will respond with "No"
- Question #14 (Country of Citizenship)
- Question #15 (Alien Number)—8 or 9 numeric digits in length

No

Are they a Non-Immigrant Alien?

Yes

No

Stop!

Reassess your customer as these are rare instances. If they have an unusual status, such as a refugee, you should process their check as an Immigrant Alien. They likely have been issued an AR#, A#, or USCIS#.

Description

- No intention of abandoning residence in another country.
- Granted access to the United States for a specific purpose and for a temporary period of time.

Identification

- Identification will be either a valid Visa or Employment Authorization Card
- May have both an A/AR# and I-94# but must use the I-94# for NICS purposes
- I-94# is 11 numerical digits in length
- A printout from the CBP Web site is now an acceptable form of proof for an I-94#
- 90 days proof of residency is no longer required
- Not all non-U.S. Citizens need a valid exception (example: a valid hunting license), just those admitted under a Visa

Quick ATF Form 4473 Check

- Question #14 (Country of Citizenship)
- Question #15 (Alien Number)—11 digit I-94 Number

Have they been admitted to the United States under a Visa?

Yes

No

Quick Form 4473 Check
Question #11L (Admitted with Visa)—"Yes"

Yes

Exceptions

No

Question #12 (Visa Exception)—"Yes"
Question #20c (Exception documentation)

Stop!

Do not process. This information is required before proceeding.

Quick Form 4473 Check
Question #11L (Admitted with visa) —"No"

*NICS—National Instant Criminal Background Check System
*ICE—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
*FFL—Federal Firearms Licensee
*AR#—Alien Registration Number
*A#—Alien Number
*LPR—Legal Permanent Resident
*USCIS#—United States Citizenship and Immigrations Services Number
*CBP—United States Customs and Border Patrol
*Form I-94—Arrival and Departure Record