



*Department of Commerce*  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Foreign Investors and Foreign Retirees**

**Question: Am I required to hold an umbrella permit in order to remain in the CNMI?**

**Answer:** No you are not. You are allowed to maintain your status as long as you have a valid CNMI investor or retiree permit. However, prior to the expiration of your permit (which should be prior to November 28, 2011), you will have to apply for a CNMI-only E2 nonimmigrant investor visa with the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) in order to maintain your investor or retiree status. Please visit their office which is located in the TSL Plaza Building along beach road in Garapan, Saipan or their website at <http://www.uscis.gov> for more information.

**Question: As a holder of a foreign investor or foreign retiree umbrella permit, am I entitled to live and maintain my status in the CNMI until November 28, 2011?**

**Answer:** No you are not. Umbrella permits are conditional in nature and will only be valid through November 28, 2011 if you maintain compliance with the requirements of the issuance of the permit. For example, if your regular CNMI-issued investor permit expires on April 30, 2011, in order for you to qualify to maintain your CNMI permit status through November 28, 2011, you are still required to renew your permit with the Department of Commerce by paying a prorated application fee that extends your permit through November 28, 2011 only if you maintain compliance with the permit requirements.

However, if you wish to live and maintain your investor or retiree status in the CNMI beyond November 28, 2011, you will have to apply for a E2 CNMI visa with the USCIS.

**Question: Am I required to wait until November 2011 prior to applying for a E2 CNMI visa?**

**Answer:** No you are not. Foreign investors and retirees are free to immediately apply for a E2 CNMI visa with the USCIS.

**Question: I am an existing foreign investor or foreign retiree but was only issued a temporary umbrella permit on or prior to November 27, 2009. When can I expect to receive an actual and longer term permit (identification card)?**

**Answer:** The Department of Labor will have actual permits printed and ready for distribution by January 4, 2010.

**Question:** **I am a new foreign investor or retiree who was issued an umbrella permit but not a regular CNMI permit prior to November 27, 2009. Am I going to receive two permits?**

**Answer:** Yes. You should have an umbrella permit and a regular CNMI investor or retiree permit (ID card) that will be available for pick up by January 4, 2010. Please visit Commerce's Foreign Investment Office at that time for status of your permit.

**Question:** **I did not pick up my umbrella permit by the November 27, 2009 deadline. Can I still pick up my umbrella permit from Commerce?**

**Answer:** No you cannot. If you failed to pick up your umbrella permit prior to November 28, 2009, you have essentially forfeited your opportunity.

**Question:** **Am I mandated to hold an umbrella permit? What is its purpose?**

**Answer:** No. The purpose of the umbrella permit is to provide for a conditional permit which gives you the option to renew with the CNMI or converting to an E2 CNMI visa prior to November 28, 2011.

**Question:** **I do not have an umbrella permit, and I would like to maintain my status here in the CNMI. What do I do now?**

**Answer:** To have legal status in the CNMI, you will need to have on hand a current CNMI Entry Permit – issued prior to November 28, 2009. Assuming that all you have is a current CNMI permit that will be expiring, you will need to convert immediately to a E2 CNMI-Only Visa.