

Announcement of the Creation of a Lightering Visa Classification

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Starting on September 5, 2024, the Department will begin implementing two new visa classifications for noncitizens seeking to transit the United States to join a vessel engaged in foreign trade and undertaking lightering activities for a period not to exceed 180 days. Lightering is the ship-to-ship transfer of liquid cargo. The new visa classification permitting transit to join a lightering vessel is the C-4 visa.

The new visa classification permitting crewmembers to perform lightering activities is the D-3 visa. Additionally, applicants may be eligible for a combination C-4/D-3 visa. Unlike C-1 and C-1/D visa holders whose stay in the United States cannot exceed 29 days, C-4, D-3, and C-4/D-3 visa holders are allowed to stay in the United States for a period not to exceed 180 days.