If you are on H 1B and your employer has been talking about starting (or already started) your green card process, you have probably seen the headlines and felt that little stomach drop.

Because yes, the US government announced a change that, in certain situations, **pauses the PERM step**. Not for everyone. Not forever. But for some employers, it can seriously slow things down.

And when your whole long term plan is built around “PERM, then I 140, then extensions, then eventually I 485”, delays are not just annoying. They change the math.

Let’s walk through what was announced, who it hits, why it is happening, and what you should do if you are an H 1B worker at one of the targeted companies.

What’s PERM

PERM *Permanent Labor Certification*. It is the process the employer usually must complete before they can file an employment based immigrant petition (most commonly **Form I 140**) for a foreign worker under categories like EB 2 and EB 3.

PERM is basically the government saying:

- Employer, prove you tried to hire qualified US workers for this job.
- Prove the job requirements are normal for the role and not tailored to a specific person.
- Prove you will pay at least the required wage.
- If all that checks out, the government certifies the labor application.

That “labor application” is the **ETA Form 9089**, filed with the Department of Labor.

PERM is not a visa. It does not give you work authorization. It does not directly give you immigration status.

But it matters because in most cases it is the gate you have to pass through before the rest of the green card sponsorship can move forward.

The PERM suspension

The administration, through the Department of Labor, announced that it will **temporarily pause (suspend) processing of PERM applications connected to certain employers** (Microsoft, Adobe, Cognizant, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro, HCL Technologies, and Capgemini.) that are under heightened government scrutiny for issues tied to labor practices.

This is not a blanket shutdown of PERM for everybody.

It is more like a targeted brake. Some filings keep moving. Some are put in a holding pattern while the government does extra review, or while related investigations or compliance actions play out.

Depending on the employer and the situation, this can look like:

- PERM applications not being processed for a period of time
- PERM applications being delayed far beyond normal timelines
- More audits and more requests for proof
- Extra review of recruitment steps and job requirements
- Sometimes, the employer being blocked from using the PERM system until certain things are resolved

Why the government is doing this

Officially, the point is pretty straightforward: **protect the US labor market and prevent abuse**.

PERM is supposed to be a real test of whether there are qualified US workers available for the role. The government has long argued that some employers treat PERM recruitment like a checkbox. Post ads, reject US applicants for questionable reasons, then file for the sponsored worker anyway.

The suspension and extra scrutiny are meant to do a few things:

- Increase compliance and deter bad behavior
- Stop repeat offenders from filing new cases without consequences
- Reduce fraudulent or “pre selected” recruitment practices
- Push employers to keep cleaner documentation and more realistic job requirements

From the worker’s perspective, it can feel unfair. Because a lot of H 1B employees did nothing wrong. They just happen to work at an employer that got flagged.

But that is basically the logic behind the policy.

Will a PERM suspension affect my H 1B status?

Usually, **your H 1B status is not automatically harmed** just because PERM is paused or delayed.

PERM is a green card step. H 1B is a nonimmigrant work status. They are connected in strategy, but they are not the same thing.

That said, there are a few real world ways it can affect you.

1. It can block your green card timeline

If the employer cannot move PERM forward, you cannot get to I 140, and you cannot progress toward the later stages. That might push your plans back by months. Sometimes longer.

2. It can affect your ability to extend H 1B beyond 6 years

This is the part most people actually care about.

Many H 1B workers rely on green card filings to keep extending H 1B time beyond the normal 6 year maximum.

In general terms, the two common extension strategies are:

- **PERM (or an I 140) filed early enough** to qualify for certain one year extensions in later years
- **An approved I 140** to qualify for three year extensions in many situations

If PERM is delayed, you might miss the timing window you were counting on. Not always. But it is a risk.

So no, PERM suspension does not cancel your H 1B. But yes, it can create a downstream problem if you are close to your max time.

3. Travel and job changes feel riskier

Even if your current H 1B is valid, a delayed or uncertain green card process can change the way you think about:

- changing employers
- moving to a new role
- traveling internationally
- taking time off between jobs

Not because it is illegal. More because your long term plan becomes less predictable.

What happens to PERM cases already filed?

This depends on what kind of “pause” is happening.

Some cases might still be in the system but move extremely slowly. Some might get audited. Some might be held without a clear timeline.

Also, keep in mind that PERM processing is not instant even in normal times. It can already take a long while. A targeted

pause can stretch that into something that feels endless.

What should H 1B workers do right now? (Preparation checklist)

If you are at a company that might be impacted, do not panic. But also do not sit on your hands.

Here is what preparation looks like in real life.

1. Get your timeline on paper

Write down:

- H 1B start date and current end date
- How much time you have left before you hit 6 years
- Recapture time (if you have traveled outside the US, that may help)
- Whether any green card steps have started, and the dates

Just having this in one place reduces stress. And it helps you make decisions faster.

2. Ask your employer for clear status updates

You are allowed to ask, politely but directly:

- Has PERM started yet, or is it planned?
- If started, what step are we in? Prevailing wage, recruitment, filing, audit?
- Are we affected by the PERM pause, and what does the company believe will happen next?
- Are alternative strategies being considered?

You do not need to be confrontational. But you do need clarity.

3. Organize your personal immigration documents now

If things become time sensitive later, you do not want to be scrambling.

Keep digital copies of:

- All I 797 approval notices
- Passport ID page and all US visa stamps
- I 94 records

- Prior EADs (if any)
- Paystubs and W 2s
- Employment verification letters
- Diplomas and transcripts

Even if you never need them, it is one of those “future you will thank you” things.

4. Consider whether changing employers is realistic (and when)

Some H 1B workers decide to move to an employer with a cleaner, faster green card pipeline. That can be a valid choice. But timing matters.

If you are close to your 6 year limit, a move might help or hurt depending on what has already been filed for you and what the new employer can do quickly.

Also, if you already have an approved I 140 someday, portability options can exist later. If you do not, you may be starting over.

So think carefully. Not emotionally. Just math.

5. Keep your job description and work location consistent

One thing that often triggers scrutiny in these systems is inconsistency.

If your worksite location, duties, or reporting structure is shifting a lot, that can complicate PERM and later filings. Try to keep your records consistent, and flag changes early internally so your company can document properly.

6. If you are close to maxing out H 1B time, plan early

If you are within, say, 12 to 18 months of your max time, you want a plan that is not based on best case processing.

Even if everything works out, you want options ready.

Common myths floating around (that you should ignore)

“If PERM is suspended, my H 1B is cancelled”

Not automatically. H 1B validity is based on your approved petition and maintaining the terms of employment.

“Everyone’s PERM is paused now”

No. The announcement is targeted. Many employers are still filing and getting cases processed.

“I should stop working because my green card is delayed”

No. PERM delays do not change your ability to work if you are in valid H 1B status.

So, will the PERM suspension affect your status?

For most people, the honest answer is:

- **Your current H 1B status usually stays fine.**
- **Your green card timeline may slow down.**
- **If you are counting on PERM and I 140 timing to stay in the US long term, you should treat this as a serious planning issue.**

Not a crisis. But not nothing either.

If you work at a targeted company, the best move is to get your dates straight, get clarity from your employer, keep your documents tight, and make decisions early instead of when you are already running out of runway.