

US-VISIT UPDATE



January 16, 2009

DHS REMINDS INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS THAT CBP BEGINS IMPLEMENTING NEW US-VISIT REQUIREMENTS ON JANUARY 18

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reminded international travelers today that beginning Jan. 18, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will implement new US-VISIT procedures that require additional non-U.S. citizens to provide digital fingerprints and a photograph upon entry to the United States.

Effective Jan. 18, 2009, the following additional non-U.S. citizens will be required to provide biometrics when entering or re-entering the United States by air, sea or during secondary inspection at a land port of entry:

- Lawful permanent residents of the United States;
- Persons entering the United States who seek admission on immigrant visas;
- Persons entering the United States who seek admission as refugees and asylees;
- Canadian citizens who are currently required to obtain a Form I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record) upon entry or require a waiver of inadmissibility to enter the United States (this excludes most Canadian citizens entering the United States for purposes of shopping, visiting friends and family, vacation or short business trips);
- Persons paroled into the United States; and
- Persons applying for admission under the Guam Visa Waiver Program.

Collection and verification of biometric identifiers upon entry protects travelers by making it virtually impossible for anyone else to attempt to use their biometrically linked travel documents (such as a permanent resident card), if their documents are stolen or duplicated.

US-VISIT biometric collection requirements apply to most non-U.S. citizens, with limited exemptions, entering the United States regardless of country of origin or whether they are traveling on a visa or by air, sea or land. Non-U.S. citizens under the age of 14 and over the age of 79 are exempt from US-VISIT procedures, as are certain other individuals admitted under specific categories. The Final Rule is available for viewing at http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/laws/gc_1229618480915.shtm

CBP will continue to closely monitor processing times, commonly referred to as wait times, at all ports of entry. CBP will review staffing levels to ensure the best possible alignment of resources in order to protect the nation while facilitating legitimate trade and travel. The safety and security of our nation is the agency's highest priority.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's border at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

US-VISIT provides biometric identification services to entities throughout the U.S. government. Since US-VISIT began in 2004, DHS has used biometric identifiers to prevent the use of fraudulent documents, protect visitors from identity theft, and stop thousands of criminals and immigration violators from entering the country.