



**Homeland
Security**

Fact Sheet

THE GOALS OF US-VISIT ARE TO:

- Enhance the security of our citizens and visitors
- Facilitate legitimate travel and trade
- Ensure the integrity of the immigration system
- Safeguard the personal privacy of our visitors

HOW IT WORKS: ENTRY

- Many of the entry procedures in place today remain unchanged and are familiar to international travelers.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers will review travel documents, such as a visa and passport, and ask questions about the visitor's stay in the U.S.
- The new, inkless digital "fingerscanner" is easy to use. The visitor will be asked to put one and then the other index finger on a glass plate that will electronically capture two fingerprint scans.
- Visitors also will be asked to look into a camera and their picture will be taken.
- The enhancements to the entry procedures add minimal time to the process – only seconds in most cases.

EXIT:

- The exit procedures at airports and seaports will be phased in, becoming operational in 2004.
- Early in 2004, US-VISIT will pilot a departure confirmation system that involves automated, self-service kiosks where visitors with visas will be asked to scan their travel documents and repeat the digital "fingerscanning" process on the inkless device. Attendants will be available to assist with the process

- The exit confirmation will be added to the visitor's travel records to demonstrate compliance and record the individual's status for future visits to the United States. Visitors who depart from airports or seaports with the kiosks in place will be expected to confirm their departure.

ENHANCING SECURITY

- Digital "fingerscans" will be checked against a database of known and suspected terrorists.
- The addition of biometric identifiers, such as digital "fingerscans", makes our security system more effective than names databases alone.
- Biometric identifiers also protect our visitors by making it virtually impossible for anyone else to claim their identity should their travel documents be stolen or duplicated.
- By combining these entry and exit processes, and by securely storing the travel records, we can account for visitors who require a visa for travel to the U.S.

FACILITATING TRAVEL

- US-VISIT procedures are designed to be easy. The enhanced entry procedures at airports and seaports add minimal time – in most cases only seconds – to the immigration process, which typically takes 60-90 seconds without US-VISIT procedures.

RESPECTING PRIVACY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Travel data will be securely stored, and is made available only to authorized officials and selected law enforcement agencies on a need-to-know basis.
- Studies are underway to ensure that the US-VISIT process will not adversely affect the environment.

US-VISIT: TIMING AND DELIVERY

- The Department of Homeland Security is aggressively working to meet the Congressional end-of-year deadline to have in place a program that strengthens security through identity verification and expedites travel for legitimate visitors while respecting their privacy and our environment.

- The Department of Homeland Security is also on track to meet the Secretary's deadline to implement technology at the primary inspection locations that will collect and verify biometric information (digital "fingerscans" and photos) of foreign nationals who are required to obtain a visa to enter the United States.
- The entry enhancements to the immigration process – capturing digital "fingerscans" and photos -- will be operational in 115 airports and 14 major seaports by early 2004.
- Exit procedures will be phased in at air and seaports in 2004.
- Entry and exit enhancements at land borders will be phased in throughout 2004 and 2005.
- The US-VISIT program received \$380 million for FY 03 and has been appropriated \$330 million for FY 04. A spending plan must be submitted to the GAO and appropriations committees for approval before funds are obligated.

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