



**Homeland  
Security**

# Fact Sheet: U.S. Land Borders

## **US-VISIT: GOALS**

- Enhance the security of U.S. citizens and visitors
- Facilitate legitimate travel and trade
- Ensure the integrity of the immigration system
- Safeguard the privacy of visitors to the U.S.

## **US-VISIT: AN OVERVIEW**

US-VISIT is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security because it enhances security for our citizens and visitors while facilitating legitimate travel and trade across our borders.

US-VISIT is a continuum of security measures that begins before an individual enters the United States and continues through arrival and departure from the United States. It incorporates eligibility determinations made by both the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State.

Using biometrics such as digital, inkless fingerscans and digital photographs, the Department of Homeland Security is able to determine whether the person applying for entry to the United States is the same person who was issued the visa by the Department of State. Additionally, the biometric and biographic data are checked against watchlists, improving the Department of Homeland Security's ability to make admissibility decisions as well as the Department of State's ability to make visa determinations.

Should the traveler seek to adjust status or extend his/her stay, US-VISIT would be updated with any modifications to the individual's status.

US-VISIT entry procedures are currently in place at 115 airports and 14 seaports. This year, US-VISIT will be expanded to the 50 busiest land ports of entry.

## **US-VISIT: LAND BORDERS**

- The law requires that an automated entry-exit program be implemented at the 50 busiest land ports of entry by December 31, 2004, and at all ports of entry by December 31, 2005.
- The 50 busiest land ports of entry process 94 percent of the foreign visitors who enter and exit the United States through land borders. A list of the 50 busiest land ports of entry can be found in Appendix A.
- US-VISIT currently applies to most foreign nationals who apply for admission into the United States pursuant to a nonimmigrant (temporary) visa. Visitors who are waived visa requirements are not subject to US-VISIT at this time.
- Today, most visitors with visas who cross our land borders are referred to secondary inspection for processing. After January 1, 2005, this secondary inspection will include US-VISIT processing, collecting two index fingers scanned on an inkless device and a digital photograph. This will allow the CBP officer to match the visitor's information against the information collected by the Department of State at visa issuance. We expect US-VISIT procedures will take roughly 10-15 seconds during the secondary inspection process as they do today at air and sea ports.

### **Applicability to Mexican Citizens**

- The Department of Homeland Security is committed to developing a solution for the processing of Border Crossing Card (BCC) holders.
- Most Mexican citizens who travel to and from the United States regularly may apply for a multi-use travel document, B1/B2 Visa/BCC also known as a "laser visa", which serves as either a BCC or a B1/B2 visa. Mexican citizens who use the travel document only as a BCC will not initially be subject to US-VISIT processing during primary inspection inasmuch as their biometric data (fingerscans and photographs) is captured during the BCC issuance process. This is an interim solution for the land border while the Department explores the long term solution to record the entry and exit of persons crossing our land ports of entry.
- When admitted under the BCC program, Mexican citizens may stay in the United States for up to 72 hours and travel within the "border zone" (within 25 miles of the border in Texas, California and New Mexico, and 75 miles of the border in Arizona). Approximately 6.8 million Mexican nationals today utilize a BCC to make approximately 104 million crossings per year when using the card as a BCC card only.

- Prior to issuing a BCC to a Mexican citizen, the Department of State conducts biographic and biometric checks on the individual. The fingerscans and photograph of the Mexican citizen are then embedded into the BCC. A holder of a BCC is inspected to determine that he or she is the rightful bearer of the document when crossing through a U.S. port of entry.
- As the next phase of US-VISIT is implemented at southern land ports of entry by the end of 2004, if a Mexican citizen chooses to use the BCC as a B1/B2 visa (traveling outside the “border zone” and/or staying longer than 72 hours in the U.S.), he or she will undergo US-VISIT processing at the land border secondary inspection areas.
- In certain circumstances, Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers may have reason to believe the person presenting the BCC is not the person to whom it was issued. At that point, the individual would be sent to secondary inspection to determine if there are any problems with the BCC, which could include running the BCC through a biometric reader or processing the person through US-VISIT.
- Readers for BCC’s will be deployed at the 50 busiest land ports of entry by the end of June 2004. The intent in the future is to meld the BCC biometric check with the US-VISIT biometric database.

#### **Applicability to Canadian Citizens**

- Since most Canadian citizens are visa exempt, they are currently not subject to the US-VISIT process.
- Canadian citizens who are required to obtain a visa in order to be admitted to the United States will be enrolled in US-VISIT upon entry.

#### **US-VISIT: USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

- The Department of Homeland Security is continuing to work with the U.S. Department of State, building on the biographic and biometric collection that is already underway at U.S. consulates around the world. By October 2004, all 211 visa-issuing posts overseas will be collecting biometric data from visa applicants.
- Land ports across the northern and southern borders present a unique challenge. The Department of Homeland Security is working in partnership with the private sector to identify the optimum set of solutions for land border processing.
- We are currently looking at ways to use technology to facilitate travel and collect entry and exit data. To that end, we are planning to test Radio Frequency (RF) technology at select primary entry and exit lanes of the 50 busiest land border crossings. These plans are not part of the statutory mandate for December 31, 2004.

## **US-VISIT: FACILITATING LEGITIMATE TRAVEL AND TRADE**

- The land border solution will be designed to be fast and easy, but also secure. Both the President of the United States and the United States Congress mandated that border security enhancements not adversely affect legitimate travel and trade. The Department is committed to meeting that mandate.

## **US-VISIT: RESPECTING PRIVACY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

- US-VISIT has published a Privacy Impact Assessment that ensures that personal information is used appropriately, protected from misuse and improper disclosure, and destroyed when no longer needed. This will be updated as necessary.
- Personal data will be securely stored and is made available only to authorized officials and selected law enforcement agencies on a need-to-know basis to help protect the nation against those who intend harm to U.S. citizens or visitors and to ensure integrity in our immigration system.
- US-VISIT will comply with all environmental laws and regulations.

## APPENDIX A

### 50 Busiest Land Ports of Entry (By FY-02 Estimated Crossings)

Rank	Land Port of Entry	State
1	San Ysidro - San Diego	CA
2	Laredo-Lincoln –Juarez	TX
3	Calexico	CA
4	Hidalgo	TX
5	Paso Del Norte - El Paso	TX
6	Otay Mesa - San Diego	CA
7	Laredo AF - Convent Street	TX
8	Lewiston-Queenston Bridge	NY
9	Rainbow Bridge - Niagara Falls	NY
10	San Luis	AZ
11	Nogales East	AZ
12	Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) El Paso	TX
13	Ysleta - El Paso	TX
14	Douglas	AZ
15	Gateway – Brownsville	TX
16	Calexico East -Imperial Valley	CA
17	Detroit Ambassador Bridge	MI
18	Peace Bridge – Buffalo	NY
19	Detroit Tunnel	MI
20	Pharr	TX
21	Del Rio	TX
22	B&M – Brownsville	TX
23	Eagle Pass II	TX
24	Port Huron - Blue Water Bridge	MI
25	Los Tomates – Brownsville	TX
26	Progreso	TX
27	Eagle Pass	TX
28	Sault Ste. Marie	MI
29	Marisposa - Nogales West	AZ
30	Andrade	CA
31	Roma	TX
32	Pacific Highway – Blaine	WA
33	Peace Arch – Blaine	WA
34	Champlain	NY
35	Los Indios	TX
36	Tecate	CA
37	Rio Grande City	TX
38	Massena	NY
39	Calais - Ferry Point	ME
40	Alexandria Bay – Thousand Island	NY

41	International Falls	MN
42	Stanton Street Bridge	TX
43	Presidio	TX
44	Sumas	WA
45	Laredo – Columbia	TX
46	Lukeville	AZ
47	Derby Line	VT
48	Point Roberts	WA
49	Fabens	TX
50	World Trade Bridge - Laredo IV	TX