Abstract

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operates the e3 portal (“e3”) to collect and transmit data related to law enforcement activities to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement Integrated Database (EID)\(^1\) and the DHS Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT), which is being replaced by the Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology System (HART).\(^2\) CBP uses e3 to collect and transmit biographic, encounter, and biometric data of individuals encountered by U.S. Border Patrol (USBP). CBP is updating this Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to notify the public and assess the privacy risks of recent enhancements to the e3 portal to streamline processing and facilitate information sharing with other federal partners.

Overview

USBP agents enforce immigration and customs laws between the ports of entry, detecting, interdicting, and apprehending those who attempt to illegally enter or smuggle individuals or contraband, as well as prevent the entry of terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States. As the primary transactional system used by USBP agents to record encounters, the e3 portal was established to generate immigration enforcement forms, capture signatures from USBP agents and individuals in custody, capture narratives entered by USBP agents, and transmit biographic information for storage in ICE’s EID and biometric information for storage in IDENT and its successor, HART.

USBP agents use e3 to store and transmit biographic information to EID and biometric information to IDENT/HART for processing, identification, and verification of identity of individuals encountered or apprehended by USBP. The e3 portal transmits data in real-time to EID and IDENT/HART and retrieves records from those systems for CBP enforcement action.

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purposes. The e3 portal relies on EID and IDENT/HART to populate all query responses and serves as a method for USBP agents to add or modify information within EID and IDENT/HART.

The e3 suite of applications, which communicate with each other over the CBP network and through EID, enable USBP agents to: 1) record an apprehended individual’s biographic information and seized property; 2) uniquely identify or verify the identity of encountered individuals\(^3\) by capturing and transmitting subject photographs and fingerprints to IDENT/HART in real-time; 3) view and record initial health screening information; 4) conduct screening of noncitizen unaccompanied children, including for trafficking concerns; 5) record information pertaining to border violence and human smugglers; 6) view and record information pertaining to criminal prosecutions (including past criminal history and current case information and charges), build cases for prosecution, and generate documents electronically based on the requirements of a particular court; 7) track and manage various custodial actions; 8) create statistical reports; 9) generate immigration forms for electronic signature; 10) enable USBP first- and second-line supervisors to review the signed immigration documents online; and 11) automate the process of sharing information to notify ICE that CBP is ready to transfer custody of an encountered individual.

**Reason for the PIA Update**

CBP is updating the e3 PIA to document several system changes since the 2020 PIA update. This PIA update describes the use of several new microservices\(^4\) to expedite intake and processing of encountered individuals and new system integrations which enable CBP to capture and share e3 data more expeditiously. CBP has implemented several e3 system changes to include the following functionalities: 1) the collection of additional limited health information (COVID-19 related); 2) various microservices to facilitate processing and identity verification; 3) electronic\(^5\) and digital\(^6\) signatures; 4) the Review and Approval Portal (RAP) to route files electronically between CBP users and share information among and between CBP, ICE, (e.g., immigration forms, medical information) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) (i.e., placement requests for noncitizen unaccompanied

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\(^3\) “Encountered individuals” refers to any individual encountered and taken into custody by U.S. Border Patrol, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

\(^4\) Microservices, also known as microservices architectural, splits large applications into much smaller pieces that exist independently of each other. Each microservice, or piece of an application, performs one process.

\(^5\) Electronic signatures are electronic symbols, sounds, or processes that are attached to or logically associated with a record, which the signer applies with the intent to sign the record.

\(^6\) Digital signatures embed what’s called “Personal Key Infrastructure” (PKI) into the signing process, which serves as a means to identify both the party requesting a signature and the party providing that signature.
children\(^7\)); and 5) the ICE Case Acceptance System (CAS)\(^8\) to facilitate the transfer of certain detainees from CBP to ICE custody.

1. **COVID-19 Survey**

USBP agents attempt to identify whether encountered individuals in CBP custody may have the COVID-19 virus. Agents accomplish this by observing and interviewing individuals while in CBP custody, completing additional COVID-19 questions during the initial medical health screening process, and completing the *CBP Form 2500 – Alien Initial Health Interview Questionnaire*.\(^9\) The information is used by USBP agents to determine appropriate custodial arrangements (such as for juveniles or individuals requiring medical care) and the need for additional medical observation or treatment.

USBP agents may observe and interview encountered individuals and answer the following questions in e3 during the intake process. The information may be completed for an encountered individual (except for individuals subject to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Order Suspending Introduction of Certain Persons From Countries Where a Communicable Disease Exists*\(^10\) who are being immediately expelled pursuant to the CDC Order) with a nexus to an at-risk country:\(^11\)

- Has the encountered individual traveled to/through/from an at-risk country within the last 14 days? Yes/No

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\(^7\) USBP agents refer all noncitizen unaccompanied children from non-contiguous countries, as well as those noncitizen unaccompanied children from contiguous countries who are not able to voluntarily return to their country of origin, to HHS ORR.

\(^8\) See *supra* note 1.

\(^9\) See U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION, PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE CBP PORTAL (E3) TO ENFORCE, DHS/CBP/PIA-012(b) (2020), available at https://www.dhs.gov/privacy-documents-us-customs-and-border-protection for a full discussion of the privacy risks and mitigations regarding the CBP Form 2500. USBP agents complete a standardized medical questionnaire, *CBP Form 2500 – Alien Initial Health Interview Questionnaire*, for individuals in CBP custody, including individuals in custody under the age of 18 as well as any person with a reported, identified, or observed medical issue or concern while in CBP custody. The purpose of CBP Form 2500 is to provide initial identification of medical issues that may require immediate CBP referral to 911/EMS/the local hospital or to identify potential medical issues that may require a more detailed medical assessment by a trained medical professional.


\(^11\) At risk countries are countries identified in the Presidential Proclamations on the Suspension of Entry as Immigrants and Non-Immigrants of Certain Additional Persons Who Pose a Risk of Transmitting Coronavirus Disease with direct nexus to COVID-19. An individual’s specific travel information is requested during processing. USBP Agents are directed to ask encountered individuals if they have traveled to/through/from an at-risk country in the past 14 days.
Does the encountered individual exhibit any symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other flu-like symptoms)? Yes/No

Was the CDC consulted regarding the encountered individual? Yes/No (Any consultation with the CDC is done verbally. No information is transmitted to the CDC.)

Was the encountered individual referred to a hospital for any flu-like symptoms? Yes/No

Was the encountered individual segregated and monitored as a precaution? Yes/No

Was the encountered individual quarantined as per the CDC? Yes/No

Was the encountered individual transferred to ICE? Yes/No

Was the encountered individual released? Yes/No

Was the encountered individual tested for COVID-19? Yes/No

If encountered individual is tested for COVID-19, was the test positive? Yes/No

2. e3 Microservices

Photo Service

The new Photo Service replaces existing e3 photograph and fingerprint retrieval capability to display responsive photographs and fingerprints within e3 user interfaces, forms, and reports. Applications that want to display subject photos and fingerprints can now have a single source for retrieving the data from the original data source. The e3 Photo Service (in conjunction with the e3 NextGen application and e3 Biometrics) retrieves photos and fingerprints through a query and response from the Department of Defense (DOD) Automated Biometric Information System (ABIS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Next Generation Identification (NGI). IDENT/HART displays the photos and fingerprint data in e3 interfaces, forms, and reports. Photo Service automatically retrieves photos and fingerprints from the above sources and displays the consolidated responses within a single unified user interface. This capability allows the USBP agent to evaluate and process photos and fingerprints from an encountered individual without logging into each biometric application above, which enables the USBP agent to quickly identify or verify the identity of the encountered individual. The Photo Service does not create any new access to biometrics not previously approved for USBP agents.

13 For more information about the FBI’s Next Generation Identification (NGI), please see https://www.fbi.gov/services/records-management/foipa/privacy-impact-assessments/interstate-photo-system.
NCIC and NLETS Screening Services (NNSV) Service

USBP agents are required to perform record checks during intake and processing of encountered individuals. The updated NNSV microservice provides e3 users with a single interface for retrieving National Crime Information Center (NCIC)\(^{14}\) data, such as criminal history, vehicle crossing data, and wants and warrants data. In addition, it enables e3 users to retrieve National Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (Nlets)\(^{15}\) data, such as driver’s license data, driver history, and U.S. state wants and warrant data. USBP agents must have access to NCIC and Nlets to see the query/retrieve the results. CBP uses any derogatory information found during these queries to determine how to process the encountered individual, as well as to populate appropriate forms related to the individual. Derogatory data retrieved and matched to an individual in USBP custody is stored in e3.

Medical Service

The Medical Service microservice provides the e3 user with a single interface for viewing and sharing medical health information about individuals in custody. During the intake process, USBP agents use e3 to complete the *CBP Form 2500 – Alien Initial Medical Health Questionnaire* and COVID-19 Survey. The initial medical health information collected and stored in e3 is based on the USBP agent’s observations and responses collected from the individual in custody.

CBP contract medical providers use the WebEOC Electronic Medical Records (EMR)\(^{16}\) board to collect medical health information and document treatments provided to individuals in CBP custody.

Using the Unified Immigration Portal (UIP),\(^{17}\) this Medical Service microservice enables USBP agents using e3 and CBP contract medical providers using the WebEOC EMR board to view the same initial medical health questionnaire (CBP Form 2500). The microservice automatically pushes all newly completed CBP Form 2500s and changes to existing CBP Form


\(^{15}\) Nlets is a private not-for-profit corporation created by the 50 state law enforcement agencies. Nlets is a computer-based message switching system that links together and supports most state, local, and federal law enforcement, justice, and public safety agencies for the purpose of securely sharing and exchanging critical information. Entities using and sharing information through Nlets include states and territories within the United States, the District of Columbia, federal agencies with a justice component, select international agencies, and a variety of strategic partners that serve the law enforcement community. All of these entities work cooperatively to exchange data through Nlets.


\(^{17}\) CBP is currently developing a PIA for the Unified Immigration Portal (UIP), which will be available at https://www.dhs.gov/privacy-documents-us-customs-and-border-protection. The UIP provides agencies involved in the immigration process a means to view and access information from each of the respective agencies from a single view in real time as the information is entered into the source systems.
2500s to e3 or WebEOC EMR via the Unified Immigration Portal. UIP serves as the broker for sharing medical health information between WebEOC EMR, e3, and the CBP Unified Secondary (USEC) systems.¹⁸ This enables both the USBP agent and CBP contract medical provider to access the same data in near real-time.

3. Other Uses of e3 Data

USBP agents use e3 during the intake and processing of encountered individuals. During processing, the USBP agent collects biographic, biometric, past encounter, and criminal history information. This information is then used to generate the required immigration forms.

This section will discuss the use of electronic and digital signatures on e3-generated immigration forms; the review and approval process of these completed immigration forms; as well as the use of ICE’s CAS to expedite the process of notifying ICE when CBP is ready to transfer custody of an unlawfully present individual. Besides the generation and collection of electronic signatures, no new information is collected or shared as a result of these enhanced processes.

**Electronic Signature**

Before electronic signatures were available in e3, USBP agents had to complete the time-consuming process of printing and signing multiple paper-based immigration or enforcement forms. Using the data input into e3 during the intake process, the USBP agent generated and then printed each relevant form for the subject. The subject, USBP agent, and the agent’s first- and second-line supervisor ink signed each hard copy form. For immigration forms, the original signed forms were (and, will continue to be, through the new process) placed in the encountered individual’s A-File. Copies of some immigration forms are provided to the encountered individual and may be provided to ICE or HHS when the individual is transferred from CBP’s custody.

To decrease intake and processing time and increase cost savings, USBP will now use electronic and digital signatures for immigration and enforcement forms. Using a signature tablet, the encountered individual signs the immigration and enforcement forms. The USBP agent, as well as the agent’s first- and second-line supervisors, will sign the immigration forms digitally using the credentials on their PIV cards to affix their digital signature. If the first- or second-line supervisor identifies an error (e.g., name misspelled, incomplete) on the immigration forms, the supervisor will return the immigration forms to the responsible USBP agent. The USBP agent will make the necessary correction using e3, and the encountered individual and USBP agent will sign the corrected immigration forms before repeating the supervisory review process. Electronic and digital signatures allow USBP agents to make corrections to immigration forms without having to

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reprint forms for resiging. These efficiencies reduce the use and cost of paper, printer maintenance, and ink cartridges, as well as the potential for mishandling of sensitive personally identifiable information on hard copy forms. Once electronically and digitally signed, e3 generates the immigration forms in PDF format. The signed immigration forms (in PDF format) are stored in the backend “common object storage” database of the CBP Automated Targeting System (ATS). Other DHS and federal government immigration stakeholders will be able to view these forms through their UIP access permissions.

As noted above, until DHS creates an electronic A-File solution, USBP agents will continue to generate hard copy forms to include in the individual’s A-File by printing hard copies of the electronically and digitally signed immigration forms. As with the current process and depending on the immigration form, the individual may be provided a hard copy, as necessary, of the electronically and digitally signed immigration forms as well.

Review and Approval Portal (RAP)

RAP provides a digital workflow for the review and routing of e3-generated forms. This process enables the USBP agent’s first- and second-line supervisor to electronically review the forms and mark the forms complete. When fully developed, e3 will initiate the process via a web-service call to the Border Enforcement Coordination Network (BECN). RAP will provide the responsible USBP first- and second-line supervisors with the ability to view and comment on the completed and digitally signed forms. USBP first- and second-line supervisors may flag information that is incomplete, inaccurate, or inconsistent and send the form(s) back to the USBP agent for updating, re-signing, and routing back through RAP. The process enables the USBP Supervisor to request additional information. Once completed, hard copies of the completed and signed (contain both electronic and digital signatures) forms are printed and placed in the individual’s A-File.

Case Acceptance System (CAS)

Historically, CBP and ICE have relied on a manual paper and email-based process to transfer custody of individuals. When CBP is ready to transfer custody of an individual CBP will call ICE and send an email with relevant documentation. The ICE agent then decides if ICE can accept transfer of the individual. This is a very time intensive process which requires USBP agents to consolidate information from a variety of systems and, in the case of medical records, requires
CBP to print out medical records from one system, sign them, and then scan them in so the agent can email them to ICE.

CAS was developed by ICE as part of the EID system to streamline the transfer of individuals from CBP custody into ICE custody. CAS does not involve the new transfer of information between CBP and ICE; rather it provides a more efficient transfer and reduction in manual, paper-based processes. CAS is integrated with CBP’s UIP to view forms and information relevant for transfer. CBP users will upload relevant forms into CAS for review by ICE before ICE accepts transfer and custody of an individual.

CAS enables CBP to provide ICE with real-time notifications, upon completion of CBP’s processing of encountered individuals. Once a USBP Agent completes processing in e3, they will flag the individual’s processing as complete, which will let an ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) officer, using UIP, know that there is a new case to review to determine whether ICE should accept the encountered individual into custody. Once an ICE-ERO officer knows CBP has completed a case, the ICE-ERO officer will use CAS to view the applicable records as well as the forms available in UIP. If the ICE-ERO officer determines the case is accepted, custody of the encountered individual is transferred from CBP to ICE, along with a hard copy of all immigration forms which have been placed in the individual’s A-File. CBP and ICE are developing a process where e3 will directly communicate with CAS.

Privacy Impact Analysis

Authorities and Other Requirements

The legal authorities for CBP’s collection, use, maintenance, and dissemination of information within the e3 portal have not changed since the original PIA in 2012 and updated PIAs in 2017 and 2020.21 The Border Patrol Enforcement Records (BPER) SORN22 covers CBP’s collection of information on individuals whom it encounters, apprehends, detains, or removes in relation to border crossings, checkpoint operations, law enforcement actions, and other operations related to the enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act and related authorities. This information may include biographic, biometric, and geolocation data, as well as enforcement-related information. The BPER SORN provides coverage for CBP’s maintenance of records in e3.

Characterization of the Information

CBP uses e3 to collect biographic and biometric data, encounter information, health condition and medication information, information related to border violence, and prosecution-

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21 See supra note 9.
related data obtained from individuals during DHS enforcement encounters. A complete list of these data elements is available in the 2012, 2017, and 2020 e3 PIAs.

The only new PII collected, generated, or retained in association with the updates documented in this PIA are additional limited health information related to COVID-19 and electronic signatures placed on the immigration forms.

**Privacy Risk:** There is a risk of overcollection since USBP will print a copy of the electronically signed forms for the physical A-File, while also storing the electronic version in ATS.

**Mitigation:** This risk is partially mitigated. A hard copy of the electronically and digitally signed immigration forms will reside in both the A-File and online until such time as DHS creates an electronic A-File solution. While this new collection of electronic and digital signatures creates a new, electronic PDF copy of the immigration enforcement forms, it will also reduce the amount of hard copy forms printed, reviewed, discarded due to errors or typos, and re-printed. This minimizes the potential for loss or unauthorized use of personally identifiable information.

**Uses of the Information**

CBP’s use of the information within e3 remains the same since the original PIA publication. CBP continues to process biographic, biometric, encounter, and border violence data through e3 in order to document CBP actions to ensure border security.

The recent enhancements to e3 help decrease the amount of time it takes a USBP agent to process an encountered individual and helps expedite the transfer of custody from CBP. However, the use of the information remains the same. In addition, USBP agents use the CBP Form 2500 and responses to the COVID-19 Survey to document health concerns and information about noncitizen unaccompanied children.

**Privacy Risk:** There is a risk that CBP could use individual health information for a purpose other than determining if additional medical attention is necessary.

**Mitigation:** This risk is partially mitigated. CBP will only share health information, including COVID-19 related information, with entities (i.e., CBP medical contractors, hospital, ICE-ERO, and HHS) who need the information to provide further care for the encountered individual. Additionally, access to e3 is limited to CBP personnel with an operational need to know and is not available to contract medical staff. All CBP personnel are required to complete privacy training which discusses proper uses and sharing of personally identifiable information.

**Notice**

All persons that USBP encounters, including those attempting to enter the United States unlawfully as well as those who are otherwise subject to removal, are subject to data collection
requirements and processes that include providing biometric data and the collection of limited medical health information. Operational and logistical considerations prevent individuals encountered between ports of entry from receiving advanced notice of the data collection. This PIA, as well as the BPER SORN,\textsuperscript{23} HART PIA,\textsuperscript{24} forthcoming UIP PIA,\textsuperscript{25} EID PIAs and related SORN,\textsuperscript{26} provides notice to all persons about these CBP collections.

During the electronic signature process, encountered individuals will be asked to sign immigration documents using a tablet. Encountered individuals will still be provided with the same immigration forms, with the only difference being the collection of an electronic signature instead of an ink signature.

**Privacy Risk:** There is a risk that encountered individuals are not aware that COVID-19 related health information is being collected.

**Mitigation:** This risk is mitigated. Unless the subject is unconscious or unable to provide his or her own medical information, the encountered individual provides all health and medical screening responses to USBP directly. USBP agents screen the individual using the questionnaire and document the encountered individual’s responses at the time of the conducting the initial health screening. The risk is further mitigated by the publication of the PIA update.

**Data Retention by the Project**

There are no changes to data retention as a result of this update. CBP will retain the data it collects in e3 for 75 years. Electronically and digitally signed completed immigration forms are stored consistent with the existing retention schedule for the A-File.

**Privacy Risk:** There is a risk that health information is stored for longer than necessary.

**Mitigation:** This risk is mitigated. CBP continues to store the data used to prepopulate the electronic form in e3 (specifically EID) for 75 years. Storing these records for a long period of time is necessary to provide CBP the ability to view previous health information if it encounters the individual again and may assist in providing future care.

**Information Sharing**

Besides the electronic and digital signatures on the immigration forms, there are no changes to information being shared as a result of this update. USBP has always shared this information with ICE, HHS, and other stakeholders as part of the immigration enforcement process. The only differences are that the signatures will now be captured electronically and copies of the signed PDF immigration forms may be viewed online by CBP and ICE-ERO via UIP.

\textsuperscript{23} See supra note 20.

\textsuperscript{24} See supra note 2.

\textsuperscript{25} See supra note 17.

\textsuperscript{26} See supra note 1.
Privacy Risk: There is a risk that individual health information could be improperly shared outside of DHS.

Mitigation: This risk is partially mitigated. CBP mitigates this risk by limiting the sharing of COVID-19 information to ICE-ERO and HHS only. ICE-ERO personnel with an operational need to know may access the electronic form, which is stored in EID. While not mandatory, a hard copy of the form may be provided to HHS when an unaccompanied child is transferred to HHS care. In addition, as with all medical information about individuals in USBP custody, USBP may share information as needed to provide medical care or with local health authorities if required, consistent with the published BPER SORN.

Redress

There are no changes to redress as a result of this update.

Auditing and Accountability

There is no change to auditing and accountability as a result of this update.

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