

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BEGINS US-VISIT BIOMETRIC EXIT PILOT AT HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

WASHINGTON, March 31 - U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that beginning yesterday, foreign visitors departing from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport are required to follow checkout procedures before departing on their flight. Visitors are asked to provide their two index fingerscans and hold for a photo as part of a pilot program to test and evaluate an automated biometric exit process.

US-VISIT procedures apply to all visitors (with limited exemptions) entering the United States. Most visitors experience US-VISIT's biometric procedures — a digital, inkless fingerscan and digital photograph — upon entry to the United States. Now, if they leave from an airport or seaport that has an exit capability like that of Atlanta, they must also check out.

The exit procedures being piloted at Atlanta require foreign visitors to go through one of the following processes:

- Under one alternative, visitors departing the United States will check out of the country at **exit stations** located within the airport. As with the process the visitors encounter upon entry at airports, their travel documents will be read, their two index fingers will be scanned at the exit station, their digital picture will be taken, and they will receive a printed receipt that verifies that they have checked out. A workstation attendant will be available to assist with visitors' checkout.
- The second alternative still uses the exit station but includes an additional step — verification — at the departure gate. Visitors will be required to present their receipt at the departure gate to confirm that they checked out at the exit station. The workstation attendant will scan the receipt and then ask the visitor to place an index finger on the scanning device. Once the person's identity is matched to the receipt, the workstation attendant will hand back the receipt and the visitor will board the

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*Please forward to colleagues who may be interested in US-VISIT.*

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airplane.

To help the process run smoothly, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers will provide foreign visitors with a card explaining the exit process when they arrive in the United States at one of the airports participating in the pilot. Directional map cards will be distributed by the airlines and signs will be strategically located throughout the airport directing the visitors to the exit stations.

The exit pilot program has been operating for a number of months in Baltimore/Washington International Airport, Chicago O'Hare International Airport, Denver International Airport, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and the Miami International Cruise Line Terminal.

Exit procedures became operational at Newark Liberty International Airport, Luis Muñoz International Airport in San Juan, Puerto Rico, San Francisco International Airport and Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport in January. Exit pilots will begin shortly at Philadelphia International Airport and Los Angeles' San Pedro and Long Beach Seaports.

By testing and evaluating the exit processes, US-VISIT can analyze the benefits and challenges of each in order to develop a system that enhances security while facilitating legitimate travel and ensuring visitors' privacy.

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. The goals of US-VISIT are to enhance the security of our citizens and visitors; facilitate legitimate travel and trade; ensure the integrity of our immigration system; and protect the privacy of our visitors.

US-VISIT entry procedures are currently in place at 115 airports, 15 seaports and in the secondary inspection areas of the 50 busiest land ports of entry. By December 31, 2005, US-VISIT entry procedures will be implemented in the secondary inspection areas of all remaining land ports of entry.

To date, more than 23 million foreign visitors have been processed through US-VISIT without adversely impacting wait times, and more than 500 criminals or immigration violators have

been denied admission to the United States because of US-VISIT.

US-VISIT is helping us demonstrate that we remain a welcoming nation - that we can keep America's doors open and our nation secure. For more information on US-VISIT, or to learn more about exit procedures, please visit the US-VISIT Web site at [www.dhs.gov/us-visit](http://www.dhs.gov/us-visit).

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