May 2008

Fact Sheet
Enhanced Driver's Licenses (EDL)

Overview of Enhanced Driver's Licenses

DHS is pursuing development of alternative documents to meet Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) implementation requirements at land and sea ports of entry. DHS is encouraging states to enhance their driver's licenses and identification documents to satisfy both WHTI requirements and the changes in international land and sea travel document procedures that began on January 31, 2008. These enhanced documents will denote both identity and citizenship, be issued in a secure process, and include technology that facilitates travel.

- DHS believes that enhanced driver's licenses provide travelers with a low cost, convenient alternative for border crossing purposes. Departments of motor vehicles and public safety are well positioned to issue these documents, and DHS will support their efforts.

- Washington State is issuing an enhanced State-issued driver's license today that can be used by travelers during the transition period and will also satisfy WHTI document requirements at land and sea borders. By May 19, 2008 Washington State had already scheduled more than 25,900 appointments for EDL interviews and issued more than 13,800 EDLs. DHS has noted that travelers are presenting Washington-issued EDLs at land and sea ports far beyond Washington State.

- Vermont, New York, and Arizona have signed Memoranda of Agreement and business plans with DHS to issue EDLs. DHS continues discussions with other border states to develop EDL projects, including Michigan.

- DHS has met with Canadian provincial and federal officials to pursue enhanced driver's licenses as an alternative to the Canadian passport. British Columbia (BC) is the farthest along and has issued more than 500 EDLs through a pilot program. Additional provinces are scheduled to issue enhanced driver's licenses and/or enhanced identity cards by the end of this calendar year.

- WHTI stems from a 9/11 Commission recommendation mandated in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. The law requires all travelers, including U.S. and Canadian citizens, to have a secure, verifiable document that denotes both identity and citizenship for entry into the United States.

- WHTI is not strictly about security. To the contrary, WHTI will have considerable facilitation benefits; until the transition period began on January 31, 2008, Customs and

Border Protection (CBP) officers had to inspect many different documents issued by state and local entities when making admissibility determinations at land and seaports.

- Based on DHS testing and its experience with its trusted traveler programs, DHS expects that each application for admission will be more efficient and travelers will move through the primary inspection process more quickly than they do today.

- The EDLs will contain a vicinity Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip and a Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) that will facilitate processing for the holder. The license will also include physical security features that guard against tampering.

REAL IDs and Enhanced Driver's Licenses

- DHS has worked to align REAL ID and EDL requirements. EDLs that are developed consistent with the requirements of REAL ID can be used for official purposes such as accessing a Federal facility, boarding Federally-regulated commercial aircraft, and entering nuclear power plants.

- Although the goal of enhancing identification security is shared by both programs, there are some distinctions. While the REAL ID requires proof of legal status in the U.S., the state issued EDL will require that the card holder be a U.S. citizen. The EDL will also serve as a limited-use international travel document.

- The purpose of REAL ID is to establish minimum standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards to be accepted for official purposes. When presenting a driver's license for official purposes such as accessing Federal facilities, boarding Federally-regulated commercial aircraft, or entering nuclear power plants, it must be a driver's license that is compliant with the REAL ID regulation.

- A REAL ID will not necessarily include RFID technology, whereas an EDL will in order to facilitate border crossing and verification by CBP at a port of entry. REAL IDs are not prohibited from including this technology, but it is not a requirement.

- An EDL will also include an MRZ to allow CBP officers to read the card electronically if RFID is not available. A REAL ID will include machine readable zone (MRZ) technology, though not the international travel document standard MRZ. REAL ID includes a 2D barcode primarily to allow State and local law enforcement to verify that the document is valid.

Radio Frequency Identification Technology (RFID)

- The WHTI document requirements will close a substantial vulnerability. At the same time, WHTI implementation poses operational challenges particularly in the land border environment. To balance effectively the security imperative and the continued facilitation of legitimate trade and travel, DHS decided to expand the use of vicinity Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology.

- RFID technology refers to systems that allow a device to read information contained in a wireless device or "tag" from a distance without making any physical contact or requiring a line of sight between the two. It provides a method to transmit and receive data from one point to another.

RFID Technology in Border Management

- The United States government uses two types of RFID technology for border management—vicinity and proximity. RFID technology has been commercially available in one form or another since the 1970s. It is now part of our daily lives and can be found in car keys, employee identification, medical history/billing, highway toll tags, and security access cards.

- Vicinity RFID means that an RFID-enabled document can be securely and accurately read by authorized readers from up to 20 to 30 feet away.

- Proximity RFID means that an RFID-enabled document must be scanned in close proximity to an authorized reader and can only be read from a few inches away.

- Vicinity RFID technology is a proven means of speeding travelers through land border entry that has been used successfully in DHS trusted traveler programs since 1995--the NEXUS, SENTRI, and FAST programs.

- These trusted traveler programs currently have more than 446,000 participants. Participants benefit from expedited processing, and security is enhanced through the ability to affirmatively identify the individual and conduct admissibility checks.

- In utilizing vicinity RFID technology, DHS adheres to the most stringent requirements for safeguarding personal data. No personal information is stored on the card – only a number, which points to the information housed in secure databases.

RFID in EDLs and Other WHTI-Compliant Documents

- CBP will either maintain the information from the documents in its secure database or ping the secure database owned by the agency that issued the RFID-enabled document, if the agency can meet CBP's performance and response requirements.

- CBP will need real-time access to the biographic and biometric data that allows a CBP officer to make a rapid and thorough admissibility decision when an individual presents the document at the border.

- The RFID chip is read as the vehicle queues for inspection at the border. It signals the database so that biographic information, a photo, and the results of terrorist/criminal checks are displayed to the CBP Officer as the vehicle pulls up to the inspection booth. The CBP

Officer can look at the results quickly and focus on the individuals in the vehicle – better for officer safety and faster processing.

- No Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be transmitted from the card. The chip sends a number that has meaning only to the secure DHS database, where the issuing information is held.

Privacy Protection

In leveraging technologies for border security and facilitation of legitimate global travel, DHS is mindful of privacy concerns, and is committed to adhering to strict privacy standards. As most privacy and security professionals recommend, the vicinity RFID enabled WHTI-compliant documents will incorporate several layers of privacy mitigations.

- The first layer will be that no personally identifiable information will be stored on the card's RFID tag or be transmitted by the card. The card will use a unique identification number which will link to information contained in a secure database. This number will not contain or be derived from any personal information.

- Even though the RFID tag will only contain an identification number, not personal information, additional mitigations will be employed to minimize any privacy issues – these include awareness education and security shielding.

- Because RFID is still relatively new, educating individuals who have a vicinity RFID enabled document – on how to use, carry, and protect the document – is essential and will be aggressively pursued in our public relations campaign as well as directly provided to individuals during the enrollment process.

- Appropriate radio frequency shielding (a Faraday cage) will be available to travelers as an effective way to prevent any issues with skimming and tracking.

- Together, these protections provide a significant level of security and privacy.

- DHS has published a privacy impact assessment on the use of RFID technology that is available to the public on www.dhs.gov.

For More Information

- For more information about Customs and Border Protection's trusted traveler programs and changes in international land and sea travel document procedures, please visit *www.cbp.gov* and click on the "Travel" tab.

- For more information about the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative please visit *www.dhs.gov*.