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CBP Launches Pilot Program to Automate Arrival Form

11/10/2009

Washington - U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced today the launch of a pilot program to automate the arrival/departure form (CBP Form I-94W) for Visa Waiver Program travelers from Auckland, New Zealand to Los Angeles International Airport. The pilot will support the automation of the paper I-94W form for visitors to the United States who travel under the VWP with an approved travel authorization via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization.

The pilot program will be tested on Air New Zealand Flight 6 starting Thursday, November 12 and will last 30 days. Passengers traveling on this flight with an approved ESTA will not need to fill out the paper I-94W form. CBP will evaluate the success of the pilot program and consider expanding the pilot program to additional Air New Zealand flights to Los Angeles during the testing period.

"CBP has received more than 13 million ESTA applications from nationals of VWP countries and compliance continues to grow daily," said CBP Acting Commissioner Jayson Ahern. "With the Form I-94W Automation Pilot Program, we are facilitating the travel and entry process for our VWP visitors from New Zealand and for VWP travelers arriving from other countries in the near future."

Air New Zealand, with the support of the government of New Zealand, volunteered to test the process using their flights into Los Angeles. Air New Zealand Flight 6 was selected because it arrives as a stand-alone flight and will create less confusion for travelers.

Congress required through the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 that DHS develop and implement an automated system to determine, in advance of travel, the eligibility of visitors to travel to the U.S. under the VWP, and whether such travel poses a law enforcement or security risk.

ESTA became mandatory on January 12 for all nationals of VWP countries prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea to the United States under the VWP. VWP travelers need to receive an ESTA approval prior to departing for the United States. This requirement does not affect U.S. citizens returning from overseas or citizens of VWP countries traveling on a valid U.S. visa.

The U.S. VWP currently enables the nationals of 35 countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays up to 90 days without obtaining a visa. VWP travelers currently complete a written I-94W form providing basic biographical, travel, and eligibility information while en route to the United States. VWP travelers now provide this information online prior to departure for the United States with ESTA as well.

ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel, and once approved, generally will be valid for up to two years or until the applicant's passport expires, whichever comes first. Authorizations will be valid for multiple entries into the U.S. CBP recommends ESTA applications be submitted as soon as an applicant begins making travel plans.

For more information about ESTA, please visit the Electronic System for Travel Authorization page. ([Electronic System for Travel Authorization](#))

AILA InfoNet Doc. 09111223. (Posted 11/12/09).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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