



Press Office

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Press Release

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO BEGIN US-VISIT BIOMETRIC EXIT PILOT AT NEWARK LIBERTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

WASHINGTON, DC, JANUARY 19, 2005 – U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that beginning today, foreign visitors departing from Newark Liberty International Airport are required to follow check out procedures before departing on their flight. Visitors are asked to provide their two index fingerscans and hold for a photo as a part of a pilot program to test and evaluate an automatic biometric exit process.

US-VISIT procedures apply to all visitors (with limited exemptions) entering the United States, regardless of country of origin or whether they are traveling on a visa. 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 Newark, they must check out.

The exit procedures being piloted at Newark require foreign visitors to go through one of the following three 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 are 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' check out.
- The second alternative still uses the exit station but includes an additional step – verifying – at the departure gate. Visitors will be required to present the receipt at their 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 the visitor his or her receipt back, and the visitor will board the airplane.
- Another alternative under the pilot program is a biometric check-out process with a hand-held device used by a US-VISIT workstation attendant at the visitors' departure gates. In this process, visitors' travel documents are read, their two index fingers will be scanned, their digital picture will be taken, and they will receive a printed receipt that verifies that they have checked out.

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To help the process run smoothly, foreign visitors will receive a printed card explaining the exit process from Customs and Border Protection when they arrive in the United States at one of the airports participating in the pilot. Also, directional signs are 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.

It begins today in Newark and will begin at the following airports later this month:

San Juan, Puerto Rico (Luis Muñoz Marin International Airport) - January 21
San Francisco, California (San Francisco International Airport) - January 25
Detroit, Michigan (Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport) - January 28

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 17.5 million foreign visitors have been processed through US-VISIT without adversely impacting wait times, and more than 407 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 and 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.

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