



DHS Begins Collecting 10 Fingerprints From International Visitors at Miami International Airport

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Office of the Press Secretary
Contact: US-VISIT Public Affairs, (202) 298-5200
CBP Public Affairs, (305) 810-5151

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced today that it has begun collecting additional fingerprints from international visitors arriving at Miami International Airport (Miami). The change is part of the department's upgrade from two- to 10-fingerprint collection to enhance security and facilitate legitimate travel by more accurately and efficiently establishing and verifying visitors' identities.

"Biometrics have revolutionized our ability to prevent dangerous people from entering the United States since 2004. Our upgrade to 10 fingerprint collection builds on our success, enabling us to focus more attention on stopping potential security risks," US VISIT Director Robert Mocny said.

For more than four years, U.S. Department of State (DOS) consular officers and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers have been collecting biometrics—digital fingerprints and a photograph—from all non-U.S. citizens between the ages of 14 and 79, with some exceptions, when they apply for visas or arrive at U.S. ports of entry.

"Quite simply, this change gives our officers a more accurate idea of who is in front of them. For legitimate visitors, the process becomes more efficient and their identities are better protected from theft. For those who may pose a risk, we will have greater insight into who they are," added Paul Morris, Executive Director of Admissibility and Passenger Programs, Office of Field Operations, CBP.

DHS's US-VISIT program currently checks a visitor's fingerprints against records of immigration violators and FBI records of criminals and known or suspected terrorists. Checking biometrics against the watch list helps officers make visa determinations and admissibility decisions. Collecting 10 fingerprints also improves fingerprint-matching accuracy and the department's ability to compare a visitor's fingerprints against latent fingerprints collected by the Department of Defense (DOD) and the FBI from known and unknown terrorists all over the world. Additionally, visitors' fingerprints are checked against the FBI's Criminal Master File.

On an average day at Miami, more than 10,500 international visitors complete US VISIT biometric procedures. Visitors from the United Kingdom, Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Spain and Germany comprise the largest numbers of international visitors arriving at Miami.

Miami is the next port of entry to begin collecting 10 fingerprints from international visitors. Washington Dulles International Airport began 10-fingerprint collection on November 29, 2007. Thus far, Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Boston Logan International Airport, Chicago O'Hare International Airport, George Bush Houston Intercontinental Airport and San Francisco International Airport have also begun 10-fingerprint collection. Three other ports of entry will soon begin collecting additional fingerprints, including: Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, Orlando International Airport and New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. The remaining air, sea and land border ports of entry will transition to collecting 10 fingerprints by the end of 2008.

Since US VISIT began in 2004, DHS has used biometric identifiers to prevent the use of fraudulent documents, protect visitors from identity theft and stop thousands of criminals and immigration violators from entering the country. US VISIT, in cooperation with CBP, is leading the transition to a 10-fingerprint collection standard. This upgrade is the result of an interagency partnership among DHS, FBI, DOD and DOS.

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