



DHS Announces Customer Service Improvements to Entry Process for International Travelers

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Office of the Press Secretary
Contact: 202-282-8010

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced today the launch of three initiatives – the Global Entry pilot program, the Passenger Service Program, and an expanded Model Ports Initiative – intended to strengthen customer service at U.S. ports of entry.

"Perhaps the single criticism we hear most from international travelers is frustration with the entry process," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "We're committed to a more welcoming environment for the roughly one million foreign travelers arriving at our ports each day. These initiatives will reduce much of the frustration and anxiety we encounter, and make it easier on our frontline personnel to focus even more on actual security and criminal risks."

Global Entry is a customer service and security program designed to expedite the screening and processing of pre-approved, low-risk foreign travelers to the U.S. The pilot starts today at George Bush Intercontinental, John F. Kennedy International and Washington Dulles International airports. Global Entry applicants will voluntarily provide their biographic and biometric information, undergo a background check and complete an interview with a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer. Once accepted, Global Entry travelers can use a kiosk at any of the three pilot airports to verify their identity electronically and make any needed customs declarations. CBP has been accepting applications at www.cbp.gov/travel since May 12.

Under the new Passenger Service Program, CBP Program Service Managers will serve as a dedicated point of contact for identifying and resolving passenger issues. The initiative promotes customer service techniques in officer interactions with the traveling public, and includes joint efforts with the private sector and industry stakeholders to reduce wait times through the use of improved signage and technology. The program will be established at CBP's top 20 Model Ports.

The department also is expanding the Model Ports Initiative to 18 additional airports. Originally established in 2006 as part of the Rice-Chertoff Initiative, Model Ports has enhanced border security with the use of the new technology while streamlining security processes and facilitating travel for legitimate visitors. In addition to brochures and increased signage, a new video, currently available in Spanish, French, German and English, will assist travelers through the customs and immigration process by providing practical information about the entry process and required entry documents and forms.

In a related effort, CBP is providing wait times online at www.cbp.gov for 16 of the busiest international airports and pedestrian wait times for 12 land border crossings in Arizona, California, and Texas.

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