



## US-VISIT

[Entry/Exit Process](#) | [Media Briefings](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Sample Entry Card \(PDF\)](#)

**News:** Homeland Security to begin [Biometric Exit Pilot](#)



### What is US-VISIT?

US-VISIT is part of a continuum of security measures that begins overseas, when a person applies for a visa to travel to the United States, and continues on through entry and exit at U.S. air and seaports and, eventually, at land border crossings. The US-VISIT program enhances the security of U.S. citizens and visitors by verifying the identity of visitors with visas. At the same time, it facilitates legitimate travel and trade by leveraging technology and the evolving use of biometrics to expedite processing at our borders.

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.

### Goals of the program are to:

- Enhance the security of U.S. citizens and visitors
- Facilitate legitimate travel and trade
- Ensure the integrity of the immigration system
- Safeguard the personal privacy of visitors

### Who will be required to enroll in US-VISIT?

At this time, US-VISIT requires that most foreign visitors traveling to the U.S. on a visa have their two index fingers scanned and a [digital photograph \(PDF\)](#) taken to verify their identity at the port of entry. Visas are required for most students, business travelers (depending on their length of stay) and millions of other visitors, regardless of where they live. Currently, US-VISIT will not enroll visitors seeking admission under the [Visa Waiver Program](#). However, by September 30, 2004, US-VISIT procedures will be expanded to include visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program arriving at air and sea ports of entry. It does not apply to U.S. citizens.



Sample  
fingerscan

### Exceptions:

As published in the [January 5, 2004 Federal Register \(PDF\)](#), there are, at this time, limited exceptions to the current enrollment that include:

1. Visitors admitted on an A-1, A-2, C-3, G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1, NATO-2, NATO-3, NATO-4, NATO-5, or NATO-6 visa
2. Children under the age of 14
3. Persons over the age of 79
4. Classes of visitors the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security jointly determine shall be exempt
5. An individual visitor the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Director of Central Intelligence jointly determine shall be exempt

US-VISIT is an important first step in a multi-layered approach to better border security, and we will continue to explore ways to improve the program to ensure we are building the best border security system possible.

## How does US-VISIT work?

US-VISIT begins overseas, at the U.S. consular offices issuing visas, where visitors' biometrics ([digital fingerscans and photographs PDF](#)) will be collected and checked against a database of known criminals and suspected terrorists. When the visitor arrives at the port of entry, we use the same biometrics -- these digital "fingerscans" -- to verify that the person at our port is the same person who received the visa. This type of identity verification helps our U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers make better admissibility decisions and ensures the overall integrity of our immigration system.

## What can I expect when I arrive in the U.S.?

Once at the [port of entry \(PDF\)](#), you will find that many of the procedures remain unchanged and are familiar to you. For example, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer still reviews your travel documents, such as a visa and passport. The officer still asks you questions about your stay in the U.S.

What's new under US-VISIT is that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer now uses the inkless, digital "fingerscanner" to capture two of your "[fingerscans \(PDF\)](#)." You first place your left index finger and then your right index finger on the scanner. The officer also takes your digital photograph. These procedures add only seconds to the overall processing time.

The biographic and biometric data are used to verify your identity against the data captured by the State Department at the time the visa was issued to ensure that you are the same person who received the visa. In addition, your digital picture that was taken at the visa-issuing point is displayed to the CBP officer for visual comparison and confirmation.

Using all these tools, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer will then either admit you or conduct additional inquiries based on the verification results. These procedures reduce fraud, identity theft, and the risk that terrorists and criminals will enter the U.S. undetected.

You may see a [video of the entry and exit process](#) in English or other languages.

## What do I need to do before I exit the U.S.?

A departure confirmation program using automated kiosks is being tested at Baltimore-Washington International Airport and at selected Miami Seaport cruise line terminals. Currently, if you leave from either of these ports, you are required to confirm your departure at the kiosk. You will check out at kiosks by scanning your visa or passport and repeating the simple inkless [fingerscanning process \(PDF\)](#). An attendant will be available if you need help. The exit confirmation will be added to your travel records to demonstrate compliance with the terms of your admission.

US-VISIT officials will evaluate the automated kiosks tests and consider alternatives for departure confirmation throughout 2004.

## When did it go into effect and is it working?

On January 5, 2004, US-VISIT entry procedures were operational at [115 airports and 14 seaports \(PDF\)](#), and we began pilot testing biometric exit procedures at one airport and one seaport. This year, US-VISIT will be expanded to the 50 busiest land ports of entry. For updates on US-VISIT [click here](#).

## How can I be assured that my privacy will be protected?

All data obtained from you is securely stored as part of your travel record. This information is made available only to authorized officials and selected law enforcement agencies responsible for ensuring the safety and security of U.S. citizens and foreign visitors. US-VISIT has developed a [privacy policy \(PDF\)](#), a [Privacy Impact Assessment \(PDF\)](#), and a way for visitors to have their [records reviewed for the purpose of amending or correcting them](#) based on questions concerning accuracy, relevancy, timeliness, or completeness and if you have any questions or concerns you can contact the [privacy officer](#) ([privacyUSVISIT@dhs.gov](mailto:privacyUSVISIT@dhs.gov)).

## How do I do business with US-VISIT?

### US-VISIT PROGRAM PRIME CONTRACTOR ACQUISITION

Solicitation #: HSSCHQ-04-R-0096

[FedBizOpps](http://www.fbo.gov) ([www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov)) is now the sole website for all communications concerning the US-VISIT Program Prime Contractor Acquisition RFP. The RFP is listed under DHS/Direct Reports/Office of Chief Procurement Officer.

### [Prime Contractor Procurement Information](#)

### For more information on US-VISIT

- Frequently Asked Questions, [English](#) and [Spanish](#) (*PDF*)
- Download US-VISIT Brochures (*PDF*), [English](#), [Japanese](#), and [Spanish](#)
- [View the Webcast of Media Briefings](#)
- [Press Inquiries](#)
- Contact US-VISIT ([USVISIT@dhs.gov](mailto:USVISIT@dhs.gov))