



EMAIL BULLETIN

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) CONFIRMS THE  
DECEMBER 31, 2003, LAUNCH OF THE UNITED STATES VISITOR AND  
IMMIGRANT STATUS INDICATOR TECHNOLOGY (U.S. VISIT) PROGRAM**

*30 October 2003*

As reported in previous Tindall & Foster Email Bulletins, the DHS has developed a comprehensive entry-exit data collection and management system called United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (U.S. VISIT), as one link in a planned, comprehensive immigration data collection and tracking system. The DHS is under mandate to implement the U.S. VISIT by December 31, 2003. This week the DHS confirmed that initial phases of U.S. VISIT will be implemented in accordance with the statutory deadline.

**Entry Procedures**

U.S. VISIT is designed to capture biometric identifiers upon a visitor's entry which can be matched against biometric identifiers captured upon his or her exit. As usual, when entering the United States, a visitor will be inspected by a Customs & Border Protection (CBP) inspector who will examine the visitor's documents and ask the visitor questions regarding the nature and length of his or her visit to the United States. In addition to this routine inspection process, upon implementation of U.S. VISIT, the CBP inspector will take a digital photograph of the visitor and obtain the visitor's fingerprints through an inkless process. The visitor's photograph and fingerprints will remain stored in U.S. VISIT and become part of the visitor's permanent immigration record. These entry procedures are scheduled for implementation at 115 airports and 14 major seaports on or before December 31, 2003.

**Exit Procedures**

Under the U.S. VISIT system, visitors will be able to self-register their departures. Exit procedures under the U.S. VISIT program are scheduled for implementation in phases at airports and seaports, with all major airports and seaports equipped for U.S. VISIT "check out" early in 2004. Border posts are slated to be equipped for U.S. VISIT "check out" by December 31, 2005. Once the exit procedures of U.S. VISIT have been implemented, visitors departing the United States will be required to register their departure by providing a new photograph and fingerprints at one of the designated "check out" stations. This system, when fully implemented, will create and maintain permanent immigration records capturing a visitor's immigration history, including short overstays,

which could adversely impact the adjudication of future applications for visas or other immigration benefits.

### **Government Access**

A broad range of governmental departments and agencies will have access to the U.S. VISIT system data and will utilize such data to make determinations with regard to visa issuance, adjudication of benefits applications, security and enforcement action. Departments and Agencies slated to have access to the system include: U.S. Customs & Border Protection, U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service, U.S. Department of State, including all consular posts. Additionally, federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel will have access as needed for law enforcement purposes.