



CBP to Begin Biometric Entry/Exit Testing at Otay Mesa Port of Entry

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SAN DIEGO — U.S. Customs and Border Protection will begin testing new biometric technology at the Otay Mesa pedestrian crossing this week to enhance identification of certain non-U.S. citizens entering and exiting the U.S. CBP uses biometrics in order to accurately verify who arrives in the United States and who leaves. The new technology is being tested to see if it is a solution to help CBP better match entry and exit records along the land border, and to help protect a traveler's identity against theft. The test applies to foreign visitors who are normally subject to fingerprinting when they apply for U.S. visas and other travel documents.

"CBP is committed to developing a system that provides biometric exit data on non-U.S. citizens in a way that does not disrupt air, sea, or land port operations, but, rather secures and facilitates travel and trade," said San Diego Field Operations Director Pete Flores. "This test will help inform on next steps to developing and implementing biometric exit in the land pedestrian environment."

Improved technology for comparing entry and exits along the land border will enhance CBP's ability to secure the border, address immigration overstays, identify persons of interest and improve reporting and analysis of international visitors to the U.S. This technology test is a direct result of recommendations from the 9/11 Commission, and addresses outstanding Congressional mandates to biometrically record the entry and exit of non-U.S. citizens.

The project will be deployed in two phases. Beginning on Dec. 10 certain non-U.S. citizens entering the U.S. will utilize new kiosks equipped with biometric capture technology in the pedestrian lanes to provide a facial photograph and iris images. The second phase will begin in February 2016, with biographic data provided from everyone departing the United States similar to the information provided when departing by air. Certain non-U.S. citizens will also provide their biometrics upon departure during this phase. The test will run through June 2016.

For the entry phase of testing, the existing entry kiosks used by pedestrians at the Otay Mesa border crossing will be temporarily replaced with new kiosks equipped with a camera to take a facial photograph and iris images of certain non-U.S. citizens upon their entry to the United

States. Processing for U.S. citizens will remain the same.

During the exit phase of testing, all travelers will provide their travel documents, such as their passport, passport card, or other RFID-enabled travel document, identical to what they already provide when entering the United States. In addition, certain non-U.S. citizens will provide facial and iris biometrics to compare to their entry record. No biometric data will be requested from U.S. citizens either on entry or exit.

The images taken during the testing will be used for purposes of this limited project only and will not be retained or shared with any other party or system. CBP remains committed to protecting the privacy of all travelers.

CBP's Entry/Exit strategy includes three core pillars: identify and close the biographic gaps and enhance the entry-exit system; perform targeted biometric operations; and transform the entry/exit process through the use of emerging biometric technologies. Currently, CBP relies on biometric screening—digital fingerprints and photos—to secure our borders and ensure that foreign travelers presenting themselves for admission to the United States are who they claim to be. CBP plans to test additional technology in FY2016 to further its goal of capturing entry/exit data to secure and facilitate legitimate travel in a way that does not disrupt operations.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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