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Office of Congressional Affairs
202.344.1760

Pete Ladowicz
Assistant Commissioner

Kim M. Lowry
Deputy Assistant Commissioner,
OCA Appropriations

Branch Chiefs
Vacant
– Budget and Appropriations

Jennifer Sava (Acting)
– Field Operations and Intelligence

Michael Robinson
– Border, Air, and Marine Operations

John Pickel
– Trade & Agriculture

Ben Andrews
– Management, Operations, and
Communications



CBP.gov/Careers

Vigilance
★
Integrity
★
Service to Country

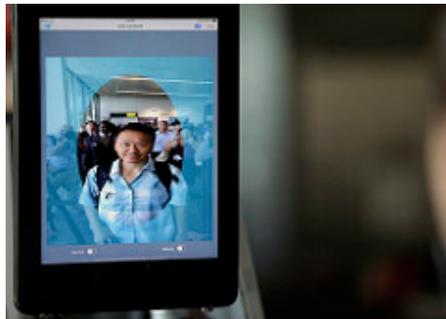
Letter from the Assistant Commissioner: CBP and Biometrics

1 I'm Pete Ladowicz, assistant commissioner for CBP's Office of Congressional Affairs. Biometric technology is part of our everyday world, whether it's unlocking our cell phones with a fingerprint or tracing family trees through DNA. At CBP, biometric technology is helping us make travel more efficient and – most importantly – more secure. It works like this: CBP officers take a picture of a traveler's face, then match it with the photo from the traveler's passport. This process takes less than two seconds and has a matching rate of 99 percent. The result is increased security, faster throughput, and better efficiency—all in all, a better travel experience.

2 But we never lose sight of our privacy obligations. CBP has met with privacy groups, published [Privacy Impact Assessments](#), and worked closely with the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to safeguard the privacy of all travelers. We take this obligation seriously, and will continue to do so as we build our capacity for biometric technology.

2 We also appreciate the support of our airline industry and technology partners, who have played a vital role in helping us implement this Congressional mandate that is so critical to our national security mission.

Two Imposters in Three Weeks Caught by CBP Biometric Verification Technology at Washington Dulles Airport



On only the third day using its new cutting-edge facial comparison biometric system, CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO) at Washington Dulles International Airport intercepted an imposter posing as a French citizen.

On August 22, a 26-year-old man traveling from Sao Paulo, Brazil presented a French passport to the CBP officer conducting primary inspections. The officer used CBP's new facial comparison biometric technology which confirmed the man was not a match to the passport he presented. The CBP officer referred the traveler to secondary for a comprehensive examination. In secondary, CBP officers noted the traveler's behavior changed and he became

visibly nervous. A search revealed the man's authentic Republic of Congo identification card concealed in his shoe.

Less than three weeks later, CBP OFO at Washington Dulles International Airport intercepted a second imposter trying to enter the United States. A 26-year-old woman, who arrived on a flight from Accra, Ghana on September 8, presented a U.S. passport to a CBP officer for admission as a returning citizen. Using the new facial comparison technology, the CBP officer established that the traveler was not a match to the passport and referred her for further examination. A secondary examination confirmed that the traveler was a Ghanaian citizen and an impostor to the U.S. passport.

Using another person's identity document is a serious violation of U.S. immigration laws that could result in criminal prosecution. Inadmissible criminals and other foreign nationals routinely try various ways to enter the United States, and may use stolen, purchased or "borrowed" passports.

"Customs and Border Protection's facial comparison system is highly effective and efficient at detecting impostors," said Casey Durst, CBP's director of the Baltimore Field Office. "CBP's facial comparison system has a match rate of 99% making it extremely difficult for criminals, terrorists or impostors to enter the country using another person's identification and travel documents. This is just one of many ways in which CBP is working to enhance the security of the U.S. while at the same time designing travel processes that are more efficient for the average person."

CBP has been testing facial recognition technology to satisfy its biometric exit Congressional mandate. Currently, CBP is testing biometric exit at 15 major airports across the United States. CBP has also implemented facial comparison technology for arrivals processing at 14 locations. View the list of participating Biometric Exit and Entry airports. The facial recognition verification process takes less than 2 seconds.

For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

CBP Will Perform a Facial Comparison Demonstration at Anzalduas International Bridge

This summer, CBP announced it will conduct a facial comparison demonstration at the Anzalduas International Bridge Port of Entry for vehicle travelers. CBP will deploy a facial comparison system to test and evaluate how the camera captures facial biometrics of vehicle travelers entering and departing the United States. Those images will be compared to photos on file in government holdings.

The technology will be deployed to two inbound and two outbound vehicle lanes at the Anzalduas International Bridge. Any vehicle occupants passing through the lanes with the facial comparison technology will have their photographs taken as part of this demonstration. These lanes will be clearly marked allowing those travelers in vehicles to choose to use the unequipped lanes if they do not want to participate in the demonstration.

As part of this demonstration, CBP will measure and evaluate the camera's ability to capture a quality and biometrically accurate facial image for each occupant position in the vehicle. The test results will inform CBP on future technology deployments.

The demonstration will be in place for up to a year. Travelers are not required to complete any additional CBP processing; as a result, CBP anticipates minimal impact to the traffic flow.

For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

CBP Officers Seize Counterfeit Dolls, Toys with High Lead Levels

In two separate incidents, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations officers working at the International Falls Port of Entry in Minnesota targeted a pair of rail containers before their arrival in Ranier, seizing counterfeit items and toys containing prohibited levels of lead.

The first incident began in July when CBP officers inspected one of the rail containers and discovered merchandise suspected of having lead levels exceeding the acceptable threshold.

Laboratory examination of the toys revealed excessive levels of lead. As a result, on September 7, CBP seized 2,459 die cast transporter carry cases.

The second targeted container was inspected in August. In that container, CBP officers discovered 5,460 fashion dolls bearing copyright protected markings that violate intellectual property rights regulations. As a result, CBP seized those items September 10. The counterfeit dolls have a suggested retail price of \$139,145.

Learn more at CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



Biographic vs. Biometric

Biographic process on departing travelers

A biographic-based entry-exit system is one that matches the information on an individual's passport (or other travel document presented) traveling on flights to, from, or through the United States.

The advanced passenger information received by CBP is checked against lists including the no-fly list, active wants and warrants, the terrorist screening database, and others. These efforts will not change with the introduction of biometric exit.

Biometric process on departing travelers

Using the flight manifest, CBP builds a flight specific photo gallery using photographs from the travel document the traveler provided to the airline. CBP then compares the live photo against the document photo in the gallery to ensure the traveler is the true bearer of the document. If the photo taken at boarding is matched to a U.S. passport, the traveler—having been confirmed as a U.S. citizen—is automatically determined to be out of scope for biometric exit purposes and the photo is discarded after a short time. CBP has been working closely with airline and airport stakeholders to test biometric exit technology and as a result has developed a viable exit solution based on facial recognition. This process improves our security while continuing to support legitimate travel.

Learn more at CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



Biometric Exit Frequently Asked Questions

Why is CBP collecting biometrics?

In 2004, Congress required DHS to develop a biometric entry and exit system. In 2013, Congress transferred the entry-exit policy and operations to CBP. As part of the border security mission, the agency is deploying new technologies to verify each traveler's identity – both upon arrival in, and departure from the United States.

How does this work?

Just before departure, each international traveler's photo is taken, by either CBP-owned cameras or equipment provided by the airlines or airport authority. CBP compares the photo with existing images from passports, visas and other travel documents, as applicable, in a secure environment using the Traveler Verification Service. These images include photographs taken by CBP during the entry inspection, photographs from U.S. passports and U.S. visas, and photographs from previous DHS encounters.

How is my privacy protected if I have my photograph taken?

The photos of U.S. citizens will not be retained. CBP is dedicated to protecting the privacy of all travelers and only uses photographs to verify traveler identities and create a record of entry or exit. Photographs of non-U.S. Citizens may be maintained in secure systems and shared in accordance with the relevant Privacy Act System of Records Notice. The newly captured images will be used to assist the CBP Officer in verifying identity and determining whether the traveler is the true bearer of travel documents.

Learn more at CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

Phone: (202) 344-1760; Fax: (202) 344-2152; E-mail: OCAInquiry@cbp.dhs.gov.

Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](#) webpage for frequently asked questions, news and events, and other CBP resources.