

Week of Muster: September 14, 2009

Topic: Secure Certificate of Indian Status

HQ POC/Office: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) OFO – WHTI Program Management Office
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Message: Advise CBP Officers of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status

- On December 14, 2009, the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), a Canadian federal government agency, will begin to issue the Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) card.
- The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and INAC have worked very closely with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to develop a secure, highly tamper resistant card that includes a machine readable zone – optical character read (MRZ-OCR) and contains multiple layers of overt, covert, and forensic security features.
- The SCIS card is an acceptable stand alone Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) compliant document for entry into the United States at all land and sea ports of entry.
- Four readily identifiable features on the SCIS card are: the Canadian flag at the top left of the card; the words “Indian and Northern Affairs Canada - Secure Certificate of Indian Status” in the title; a clear window area with a secondary photo image that is visible from both sides of the card; and the MRZ-OCR zone on the back of the card.
- Per Canadian Law, First Nations People have the option not to choose the SCIS card that is WHTI compliant. In this case, INAC will issue an SCIS card with no MRZ-OCR zone on the back of the card. Instead, in the space where the MRZ would go will be the wording “NOT VALID FOR BORDER CROSSING INTO THE UNITED STATES”. Any traveler presenting this document would need a WHTI compliant document, such as a passport.
- The CBP has advised the land and sea carriers (cruise, bus and train lines) of the availability of the INAC SCIS card.
- If CBP officers encounter INAC SCIS cards that are counterfeit or being used by imposters appropriate enforcement action will be taken to include seizure of the documents and turned over to the Fraudulent Document Analysis Unit (FDAU).

Attachments