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# CBP and Privacy Groups Discuss Biometric Entry-Exit Mandate

**Release Date:** December 4, 2019

## *Agency reaffirms commitment to protecting traveler privacy*

WASHINGTON — U.S. Customs and Border Protection met yesterday with leading privacy experts to discuss CBP’s implementation of the Congressional biometric entry-exit mandate.

The meeting was the third in an ongoing series of discussions about measures that CBP is taking to protect traveler privacy during the biometric facial comparison process at U.S. ports of entry.

“CBP is committed to keeping the public informed about our use of facial comparison technology,” said John Wagner, Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner of the CBP Office of Field Operations. “We are implementing a biometric entry-exit system that protects the privacy of all travelers while making travel more secure and convenient.”

CBP’s discussions with Congress, privacy groups and industry stakeholders have already yielded important results for the biometric facial comparison process. Among other measures, CBP has:

- Reduced the maximum retention period for new photos of U.S. citizens from 14 days to 12 hours;
- Established stringent business requirements that ensure that airlines and other partners do not retain traveler photos for their own business purposes;
- Worked with business partners to provide travelers with sufficient privacy notice by enhancing signage and announcements at departure gates; and
- Published 10 **Privacy Impact Assessments** ([https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy-pia-cbp030-tvs-november2018\\_2.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy-pia-cbp030-tvs-november2018_2.pdf)) to inform the public of how the agency will collect, use and store personally identifiable information as part of the new biometric process.

CBP is using biometric facial comparison technology to facilitate the entry and exit of international travelers while meeting the Congressional mandate to implement a biometric entry-exit system. By incorporating the technology into the existing travel process, CBP is able to enhance security, facilitate lawful travel and protect traveler privacy.

**AIILA Doc. No. 19120432. (Posted 12/4/19)**

U.S. citizens may opt out of the biometric facial comparison process by notifying a CBP officer or airline representative. Individuals who opt out simply present their passport for visual inspection, as is standard practice at ports of entry today.

To date, CBP and its partners have introduced biometric facial comparison technology at more than 20 U.S. air, sea and land ports of entry. The technology has enabled CBP to interdict more than 200 individuals who illegally attempted to enter the United States by using the genuine travel documents of persons whom they resemble.

CBP is required by law to implement a system to biometrically record foreign nationals' entry to and departure from the United States. The 9/11 Commission determined that implementing such a system is "an essential investment in our national security."

More information about the biometric entry-exit program is available on the CBP [website \(/travel/biometrics/biometric-exit-faqs\)](#).

*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 official ports of entry. CBP is charged with securing the borders of the United States while enforcing hundreds of laws and facilitating lawful trade and travel.*

**Last modified:** December 4, 2019

**Tags:** Biometrics, Travel, Travel Industry Personnel, Policies and Procedures



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