



NEWS RELEASE

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New Biometric Mexican Border Crossing Cards Take Effect on October 1, 2001

WASHINGTON – On October 1, 2001, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will begin implementing the legal requirements for the new biometric Mexican border crossing cards (BCCs). The new DSP-150, also known as the laser visa, has a photo and machine-readable information. Any Mexican national who seeks admission with a BCC will be required to present the new biometric card to an inspector before being admitted to the United States.

The requirement is mandated by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. Holders of the old border crossing cards, Form I-186 or I-586, must replace them with the new biometric, machine-readable, cards (DSP-150). The new card is both a BCC and a B1-B2 visitor's visa.

The procedures for applying for the biometric BCC have been in place since 1998. Department of State (DOS) consular staff in Mexico photograph and fingerprint the applicants, adjudicate the applications, then electronically forward the data to INS, which manages the BCC card production contract. When complete, the cards are returned to Mexico for delivery to the applicant by DOS. The credit card style document is valid for 10 years. Until their new BCCs arrive, otherwise eligible applicants who have been approved for the new BCC will be admitted under a temporary lawful waiver.

Those persons seeking admission to the United States on or after October 1, 2001, must possess one of the following documents:

- The new biometric, machine readable, B1-B2 visa/BCC (DSP-150);
- Either the old, INS-issued non-biometric BCC (Form I-186, I-586) or a pre-1998 DOS-issued version of the BCC. Both must be clipped and have a valid approval sticker, currently expiring December 31, 2001. INS will facilitate entry under a temporary lawful waiver if applicants are otherwise admissible;
- A B1-B2 visa and a BCC combination document issued by DOS before 1998, where the visa is still valid, along with a valid passport; or
- A valid visa and passport.

The DOS has been accepting applications for the new document since April 1, 1998. Persons must call a toll free number in Mexico (listed below) to arrange for an

appointment at a U.S. consulate. At their scheduled appointment, consular staff in Mexico photograph and fingerprint the applicants.

As of September 2001, DOS and INS have adjudicated and processed more than 4 million applications. The posts that are accepting biometric BCC applications are located in Mexico City, Ciudad Juarez, Guadalajara, Hermosillo, Merida, Matamoros, Monterrey, Nogales, Nuevo Laredo, Tijuana, and at the Tijuana and the Mexicali Temporary Processing Facilities.

In Mexico, visa information is available by calling 01-900-849-4949. In addition, visa information is available at no charge on the U.S. Embassy homepage at *www.usembassy-mexico.gov*.

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