



Highlights of [GAO-08-1151T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

U.S. transportation systems and the estimated 4,000 transportation facilities move over 30 million tons of freight and provide an estimated 1.1 billion passenger trips each day. Since 2001 the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has protected these systems and facilities from terrorist attack. One program TSA utilizes is the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, through which a common credential is being developed for transportation workers with access to secure areas. Ultimately planned for all transportation sectors, TSA, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard, is initially focusing the TWIC program on the maritime sector.

This testimony discusses (1) the progress made in implementing the TWIC program and (2) some of the remaining program challenges. This testimony is based on GAO's September 2006 TWIC report, as well as selected updates and ongoing work. To conduct this work, GAO reviewed program requirements and guidance, documentation on the status of the TWIC program, and interviewed program officials from TSA and the Coast Guard.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has previously recommended that TSA conduct additional testing of the TWIC program to help ensure that all key components work effectively. TSA agreed with this recommendation and has taken action to implement it.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-1151T](#). For more information, contact Stephen M. Lord at (202) 512-4379 or lords@gao.gov.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

Transportation Worker Identification Credential: A Status Update

What GAO Found

Since GAO's 2006 report on the TWIC program, TSA and the Coast Guard have made progress in addressing legislative requirements and implementing and testing the program through a prototype and pilot, as well as addressing GAO recommendations related to conducting additional systems testing. Although GAO has not yet evaluated the effectiveness of TSA's and the Coast Guard's efforts, the two agencies have taken the following actions to continue to implement the TWIC program:

- In January 2007, TSA and the Coast Guard issued the first rule in federal regulation to govern the TWIC program, setting the requirements for enrolling maritime workers in the TWIC program and issuing TWICs to these workers. The Coast Guard issued complementary guidance in July 2007 to explain how the maritime industry is to comply with these requirements.
- Enrollment efforts began at the Port of Wilmington, Delaware, in October 2007, and additional enrollments are under way through a contractor. Of the 1.2 million identified TWIC users, 492,928 (41 percent) were enrolled as of September 12, 2008.
- The TWIC program has initiated its TWIC Reader pilot to test card reader technology for use in controlling access to secure areas of maritime transportation facilities and vessels, and assess the impact of their installation on maritime operations. This pilot is expected to inform the development of a second TWIC rule on implementing access controls in the maritime environment.

TSA and the maritime industry continue to face two potential challenges in implementing the TWIC program.

- TSA and its enrollment contractor continue to face challenges in enrolling and issuing TWICs to a significantly larger population than was done during TWIC program prototype testing. TSA and its enrollment contractor now plan to enroll and issue TWICs to an estimated target population of 1.2 million workers by April 15, 2009, compared to 770,000 workers estimated in January 2007. Over 700,000 additional workers (59 percent of projected enrollees) still need to be enrolled in the program by the April 15, 2009 deadline.
- TSA and industry stakeholders will need to ensure that TWIC access control technologies perform effectively in the harsh maritime environment and balance security requirements with the flow of maritime commerce. While testing is underway, the lessons learned of the ongoing tests remain to be distilled and used to inform the development of additional regulatory requirements