

The Global Combat Support System-Air Force (GCSS-AF) will restrict access to the Air Force Portal to only those users with a common access card (CAC) or valid public key infrastructure (PKI) certificate starting 15 Jan 2010 at 0800 CST.

Air Force Knowledge Now (AFKN) began CAC/PKI-restricting access to their site from the Air Force Portal on 5 Jan 2010. AFPC will begin CAC/PKI-restricting access to most of their secure applications from the Air Force Portal on 28 Jan 2010.

GCSS-AF and AFKN are committed to supporting the Warfighter while meeting USAF and DoD PKI/public key encryption (PKE) mandates. The benefits of CAC/PKI restriction include:

- * Members will receive secure worldwide access to information and applications, greater information confidence, peace of mind with regard to the security of their account identity, with fewer usernames/passwords to maintain and remember.

- * The Air Force benefits from easier user/account administration by leveraging the CAC/PKI as the method of self-registration/maintenance. More importantly, the AF enterprise achieves a greater information assurance posture reducing the overall risk to data, networks, and mission systems.

Q: How do I obtain and install a CAC Reader?

A: Several on-line vendors sell CAC readers. Many base exchanges also sell CAC readers. The type of reader you purchase depends on the type of system (desktop or laptop). A USB card reader is a good option for most users. The card reader should come with installation instructions, support information, and necessary drivers.

Q: Now that the Air Force Portal is PKI/CAC restricted, where can I get a copy of the CAC middleware to download?

A: There is a link to download the CAC middleware (ActivClient 6.1) on the Air Force Portal limited access page. This page is accessible by portal ID and password login using the password tab on the portal login page.

Q: I am running a computer with Windows 7 and the CAC middleware is not compatible with Windows 7. What can I do?

A: ActiveClient 6.2 is the version of the CAC middleware that is compatible with Windows 7. The Air Force PKI program office is planning to have a home use version of ActivClient 6.2 available in February 2010. Microsoft Windows 7 does include a native capability to read and use the newest CAC-based PKI certificates without installing smart card middleware such as ActivClient (AC). If you have a fully Personal Identity Verification (PIV) II-compliant CAC, you may be able to use your CAC on a Windows 7 home machine to access web sites without having to install middleware. You can learn more about this option by logging into the limited access page and clicking on the CAC middleware link.

Until ActivClient 6.2 is available, users can also try Lightweight Portable Security (LPS) on a Windows 7 computer (see below) or use a computer with Windows XP or Vista.

Q: I am having difficulty installing the CAC middleware. Is there an alternative?

A: Lightweight Portable Security (LPS) is a free, DoD-approved and publicly available means to access the Air Force Portal and other CAC-restricted sites. LPS boots from a CD, runs only in RAM, installs nothing to the hard drive, and does not require administrative rights. It is a great solution for users with Macintosh, Linux and Windows 7 systems or those using a computer outside the Air Force network. You can download the LPS software and then burn your own CD. Learn more at <http://www.spi.dod.mil/lipose.htm>

Q: Will a CAC reader work with a Macintosh computer?

A: It is possible to use a CAC with your Macintosh. ActivClient is a middleware program used by the DoD to facilitate the cross talk between Windows computers (prior to Windows 7) and your CAC. The version of ActivClient available for download from the Air Force Portal is not compatible with Macintosh systems. ActivClient was offered for the "Tiger" release (MAC OS X 10.4.9) and is not compatible with Leopard or Snow Leopard (the current release of MAC OS X (10.6.1)). This program is available for purchase from the manufacturer, and is not available for download from DoD. The use of this program is NOT required for Tiger, Leopard or Snow Leopard. The following website provides instructions along with screen shots and how to set up your CAC reader for use on your Macintosh if you are using Tiger, Leopard, or Snow Leopard - <http://militarycac.com/apple.htm>

Q: I am a retiree. Can I still access the Air Force Portal without a CAC?

A: Retirees, unless they are employed as a DoD civilian or DoD contractor, are not authorized to have an Air Force Portal Account. AFPC maintains a web site for Air Force retirees at <http://www.retirees.af.mil>. MyPay can be accessed directly at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>

Q: What is the External Certification Authority (ECA) program?

A: The DoD has established the External Certification Authority (ECA) program to support the issuance of DoD-approved certificates to industry partners and other external entities and organizations. The ECA program is designed to provide the mechanism for these entities to securely communicate with the DoD and authenticate to DoD Information Systems. A user with a CAC or entitled to obtain a CAC does NOT need to obtain an ECA. Learn more about the ECA program, to include how to obtain and install an ECA at <http://iase.disa.mil/pki/eca/index.html>

Q: Will my friends and family members still be able to access the Friends and Family Instant Messenger (FFIM)?

A: Access to Friends and Family Instant Messenger (FFIM) is through a separate login page - <https://guest.my.af.mil/faf/FAF/fafHome.jsp>. Login to FFIM will remain userid and password. FFIM accounts all start with guest. A regular Air Force Portal user will be able access Air Force

Instant Messenger (AFIM) with either a CAC login or portal ID/password login. The link for AFIM appears at the top right of the limited access AF Portal page.

Q: How do I register my CAC with the AF Portal?

A: Click "Enable your CAC/ECA Certificate" on the AF Portal login page.

For more information:

AF Portal CAC User's Guide - https://www.my.af.mil/afp/netstorage/CAC_Users_Guide.htm