



**Homeland
Security**

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Press Release

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TSA Public Affairs: (571) 227-2829

U.S. Coast Guard Public Affairs: (202) 372-4620

DHS ISSUES CREDENTIALING RULE TO SECURE ACCESS TO U.S. PORTS

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today announced the issuance of the final rule for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, which enhances port security by checking the backgrounds of workers before they are granted unescorted access to secure areas of vessels and maritime facilities. The rule was posted publicly on TSA’s web site Jan. 1, 2007 and has been delivered to the Federal Register for posting in the coming days.

The rule lays out the enrollment process, disqualifying crimes, usage procedures, fees and other requirements for workers, port owners, and operators. These guidelines allow the industry, government and public to prepare for the implementation of this important security program.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the U.S. Coast Guard held four public meetings around the nation and received more than 1,900 comments regarding the initial draft of this federal rule. Comments were filed by workers, port facility owners and operators, small businesses and others who would be affected by the new program. All comments were carefully considered in the development of the final rule.

The rule is expected to impact more than 750,000 port employees, longshoremen, mariners, truckers and others who require unescorted access to secure areas of ports and vessels. Specific measures include:

- Security threat assessment – TWIC applicants will undergo a comprehensive background check that looks at criminal history records, terrorist watch lists, immigration status, and outstanding wants and warrants. If no adverse information is disclosed, TSA typically completes a security threat assessment in less than ten days.
- Technology – The credential will be a Smart card containing the applicant’s photograph and name, an expiration date, and a serial number. In addition, an integrated circuit chip

will store the holder's fingerprint template, a PIN chosen by the individual, and a card holder unique identifier.

- Eligibility – Individuals lacking lawful presence and certain immigration status in the United States, connected to terrorist activity, or convicted of certain crimes will be ineligible for a TWIC.
- Use – During the initial rollout of TWIC workers will present their cards to authorized personnel, who will compare the holder to his or her photo, inspect security features on the TWIC and evaluate the card for signs of tampering. The Coast Guard will verify TWIC cards when conducting vessel and facility inspections and through spot checks using hand-held readers to ensure credentials are valid. Until card reader technology is tested and a regulation issued on access control, facility owners and operators will not be required to utilize TWIC readers for facility access.
- Cost – The fee for TWIC will be between \$139 and \$159, and the TWIC cards will be valid for 5 years. Workers with current, comparable background checks including a HAZMAT endorsement to a commercial driver's license, merchant mariner document or Free and Secure Trade (FAST) credential will pay a discounted fee, between \$107 and \$127. The exact amount of the fee will be established and published once an enrollment support contract is finalized in early 2007. A subsequent Federal Register Notice will be issued at that time.
- Biometric data – Applicants will provide a complete set of fingerprints and sit for a digital photograph. Fingerprint checks will be used as part of the security threat assessment. Fingerprint templates extracted from the biometric data will be stored on the credential.
- Privacy and information security – The entire enrollment record (including all fingerprints collected) will be stored in the TSA system, which is protected through role-based entry, encryption and segmentation to prevent unauthorized use. Employees of a vendor under contract to TSA known as "Trusted Agents" will undergo a TSA security threat assessment prior to collecting biometric and biographic data of TWIC enrollees. All enrollee personal data is deleted from the enrollment center work stations once the applicant completes the process.

TWIC enrollment will begin in March of 2007, initially at a small number of ports. The implementation will comply with the schedule established in the SAFE Port Act. Additional TWIC deployments will increase and continue throughout the year at ports nationwide on a phased basis. Workers will be notified of when and where to apply prior to the start of the enrollment period in their given area. After issuance of TWIC cards to a port's workers has been accomplished, DHS will at each port establish and publish a deadline by which all port workers at that port will thereafter be required to possess a TWIC for unescorted access.

While developing the regulation for TWIC in the summer and fall of 2006, TSA completed name-based security threat assessments on port employees and longshoremen. These assessments against terrorist watch lists and immigration data sets were an interim measure and did not include the criminal history records check that will be a part of TWIC.

The final rule is available on TSA's web site at www.tsa.gov/twic and more information on port security is available at the U.S. Coast Guard's Homeport site, <http://homeport.uscg.mil>, by clicking on the Maritime Security link.

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