

FACT SHEET: Secure Flight Traveler Pre-Screening

Overview

Secure Flight is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Transportation Security Administration (TSA) traveler pre-screening program that will match limited traveler information against government watch lists to identify known and suspected terrorists, prevent known and suspected terrorists from boarding an aircraft, facilitate legitimate traveler air travel, and protect individuals' privacy. Secure Flight will add data elements that airlines do not currently collect and the airlines will transmit the data no later than 72 hours prior to flight time. If a reservation is made within 72 hours of the flight, the data will be transferred at the time the reservation is made. Secure Flight is intended to improve the monitoring of traveler's identification.

Authority

The 9/11 Commission Report recommended that the TSA take over watch list matching from the airlines. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 codified this recommendation and requires the DHS and TSA to assume from aircraft operators the function of conducting pre-flight comparisons of airline traveler information to federal government watch lists. TSA will implement the Secure Flight program to meet this Congressional mandate. The Secure Flight Final Rule provides the regulatory authority for the implementation of the Secure Flight program.

- Final Rule: Published Federal Register October 28, 2008
- Effective Date: December 29, 2008 + 120 days for airlines to be ready to transmit required data

Privacy

TSA conducted a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and issued a System of Records Notice (SORN).

The General Services Administration (GSA) has an accepted Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) for the E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) that is currently valid and has been signed off by the GSA's Chief Privacy Officer. This new data will fall under that same assessment process which identifies it as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI). All ETS vendors have received Certification and Accreditation and all have Authority to Operate so for ETS, this is business as usual.

Implementation and Associated Timeline:

The Federal Register states that TSA expects the airlines to be ready to transmit the data starting 120 days from the Final Rule date of Dec 29, 2008. The airline data transmission to DHS will be implemented in phases from May to October.

Under the Secure Flight Final Rule, TSA will require airlines to collect and transmit to TSA the following information:



- Full Name which matches the form of ID used for the trip (required)
- Itinerary (required)
- Date of Birth (DOB) (required)
- Gender (required)
- Redress Number (optional)
- Passport # for international itineraries (if available)

Secure Flight has provided the following implementation dates to airlines: By May 15, 2009, domestic airlines must be able to transmit full name and domestic itinerary. By August 15, 2009, domestic airlines must request and collect full name, date of birth, and gender for travelers on domestic flights. For all other airlines and flights, airlines must be prepared to request and collect this information by October 31, 2009.

TSA plans a phased-in implementation approach with each individual airline, so some airlines will implement later than others. To be prepared, ETS vendors and Travel Management Centers (TMCs) are working with the Online Booking Engine (OBE) suppliers and Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) to begin implementation May 15th for Full Name and Itinerary, August 15th for DOB and Gender, and October 31st for Passport #.

Once implemented, airlines cannot issue the boarding pass until the data is transmitted to TSA and TSA responds with authorization to print a boarding pass. Airlines are not required to transmit data for reservations created prior to the implementation timelines, but may voluntarily choose to do so.

E-Gov Travel Program Management Office (PMO) Actions:

GSA's Center for Travel Management (CTM) has been working with TSA and industry (to include: the air carriers, ETS vendors, GDSs, and TMCs) to ascertain how each will meet the new Secure Flight requirements.

The PMO met with the TMC community on February 3, 2009 at the semi-annual TMC Forum and addressed the Secure Flight requirements. Additionally, the PMO worked with the ETS vendors to ensure they are aligned with the implementation of Secure Flight with the airlines. The PMO met with TSA on April 3rd, 2009 to offer support for TSA with the customer community. We have scheduled Executive updates and an industry forum to help educate the federal community on the impacts of Secure Flight.

The PMO has addressed Secure Flight over the last three months with our customers (in user group) to convey awareness and how the ETS and TSS vendors will collect the required data. Continued communication will occur as Secure Flight is prepared for and implemented.

Agency Considerations for Federal Travelers - FAQs

What should Federal Agencies expect?

Standards for data capture have been agreed upon within the industry, and the two primary vendors serving the federal community (the ETS vendors and the TMCs) are finalizing plans to present to their customers. Some have presented to their customer communities, and we anticipate this to be completed in the next several weeks. For the traveler, it is important that the profile is updated with information that aligns to his/her government-issued form of identification. If that is done, then the experience is business as usual.

Are there benefits to Secure Flight?

Secure Flight will streamline and simplify the watch list matching process by moving watch list matching responsibilities currently performed by dozens of airlines to TSA. This will:

- Decrease the chance for compromised watch list data by limiting its distribution
- Provide earlier identification of potential matches, allowing for expedited notification of law enforcement and threat management
- Provide a fair, equitable, and consistent matching process across all airlines
- Offer consistent application of an expedited and integrated redress process for misidentified individuals via DHS's Travel Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP)

How will my travel experience be different when Secure Flight is up and running?

The biggest change for most travelers will be providing additional information when booking a reservation for air travel. Under Secure Flight, airlines will require that travelers provide their full name, date of birth, and gender when making a reservation to travel and will request a traveler's Redress Number and passport information if available.

Secure Flight defines the individual's full name as it appears on the verifying ID held by that individual. Travelers should ensure that the data provided when making the reservation exactly matches the document the traveler will use for identification purposes at check-in. For example, if a traveler wishes to use his driver's license at check in and his license reads, "John C. Doe," his reservation should be made to ensure that his name matches that identifying document.

For the near future, small differences between the traveler's ID and the traveler's reservation information, such as the use of a middle initial instead of a full middle name or no middle name/initial at all, should not cause a problem for the traveler. Over time, travelers should strive to obtain consistency between the name on their ID and their travel information.

Otherwise, the traveler experience under Secure Flight will be the same for most travelers. For those who encounter misidentification, Secure Flight will help prevent watch list name confusion by consolidating the watch list process within TSA and using the DHS TRIP effectively in the watch list matching process. The Secure Flight rule requires that travelers provide additional data to help differentiate a traveler from an individual on the watch list and prevent misidentification.

What about Privacy Impact?

TSA takes the security of personal information very seriously. Secure Flight published a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and System of Records Notice (SORN) to provide detailed information about the program's impact to individuals' privacy and information about the program's privacy approach. No personal information will be collected other than what is necessary and relevant for the purposes of watch list matching. The personal data that Secure Flight will be protected by the highest set of security protocol standards established by the federal government.

Additionally, Secure Flight will dispose of personal information as quickly as possible, in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Government Record Schedules.

TSA has a comprehensive website that is very informative which includes privacy information and a FAQ section, it can be found at: http://www.tsa.gov/what_we_do/layers/secureflight/index.shtm

Will ETS and TMCs populate traveler profiles or is there some other means to assure the reservation contains all the requisite data?

It is anticipated that all ETS and TMC vendors will include this new information in the traveler profile which is integrated into the reservation process and will automatically send the data to the airlines.

What if my traveler profile or reservation does not get updated?

Your reservation and ticket will still be processed, however, you will be required to provide the data at the airport.

Will testing of the process be conducted?

The GSA E-Gov Travel PMO worked with the ETS vendors on executing their configuration management plans. Some have announced their test plans in user group and others are scheduled to do so in April, 2009 user groups.

Individual airlines will be doing their own testing based on their agreed upon schedule with DHS TSA. TSA has not required all airlines to transmit data in May. It is a staggered approach so each airline will test based on when they are required to transmit data.

What is the procedure for emergency or last-minute travel?

Procedure for the traveler when making an emergency or last minute reservation should be business as usual, with the understanding that the Secure Flight data is still required.

What action is taken when a traveler's information is not acceptable?

As is the case today, the traveler must have a valid government ID and if they do not present an acceptable ID their travel will likely be inhibited.

How do we update reservations that are already made?

Your ETS or TMC service provider will offer options to update existing reservations.

What happens if I'm mistakenly identified as a match to the watch list?

For those who encounter misidentification, Secure Flight will help prevent watch list name confusion by using DHS TRIP, the central processing point for redress inquiries. When applying for redress, travelers are asked to fill out a form, provide additional personal information, and provide various forms of identification (e.g., passport, birth certificate, etc.) to help differentiate the traveler from an individual on the watch list. Requests received online will be routed for redress to the appropriate DHS components. Components will review the request and reach a determination about a traveler's status. Secure Flight will use the results of the redress process in its watch list matching process to help prevent future delays for misidentified travelers.

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