



U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
**Transportation Security Administration**  
6595 Springfield Center Drive  
Springfield, Virginia 20598

January 7, 2022

The Honorable Lance Gooden  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gooden:

Thank you for your correspondence dated December 15, 2021, asking for clarification on the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) policies and procedures for protecting the Nation's transportation systems and mitigating national security risks.

I appreciate your concern about this critical matter. TSA is committed to ensuring that all travelers, regardless of immigration status, are pre-screened before they arrive to the airport, have their pre-screening status and identification verified at security checkpoints, and receive appropriate screening based on risk before entering the sterile area of the airport.

I have enclosed responses to the questions raised in your letter. I hope you will find them helpful.

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with me and for supporting TSA's important security mission. We have sent an identical response to the co-signers of your letter. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me personally or our Legislative Affairs office at (571) 227-2717.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David P. Pecoske". The signature is written in a cursive style.

David P. Pecoske  
Administrator

Enclosure

**TSA Response to December 15, 2021, Letter from  
Representative Lance Gooden, et al.**

**1. What policies and procedures are in place to identify and screen Non-US/Canadian citizens who do not have documents issued by the U.S. government or passports?**

TSA has a policy to accept additional forms of identification (ID) when a traveler does not have ID that is included on TSA's acceptable forms of ID list. If an individual does not have acceptable ID, TSA requires two additional forms of ID that have the individual's name, with preference given to Government-issued ID. One of the two forms must have the individual's name and identifying information such as a photo, address, phone number, social security number, or date of birth. These individuals receive additional screening as described in the TSA's Checkpoint and Specialized Screening Standard Operating Procedure.

Additionally, in coordination with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) counterparts, TSA established a process where it will accept certain DHS-issued forms for non-citizens and non-U.S. nationals who do not otherwise have acceptable forms of ID for presentation at security checkpoints. If a non-U.S./Canadian citizen presents one of these forms, the TSA Travel Document Checker (TDC) will look at the DHS-issued document (for example, I-94, I-862) for an alien identification number (A-file) and validate the document in one of two ways:

- The first is by using the CBP One™ mobile application to directly query CBP's databases for a match (at locations participating in the pilot with CBP).
- The second is by calling the TSA National Transportation Vetting Center (NTVC) and providing the A-file for NTVC to directly query CBP's databases for a match. These individuals also undergo additional screening procedures as described in the TSA's Checkpoint and Specialized Screening Standard Operating Procedure.

In all cases where a traveler's identity cannot be verified, the airport's Federal Security Director (FSD) has discretion to determine what level of additional screening is needed. The FSD may decide that there is no level of screening which is acceptable, and then deny the prospective passenger access to the sterile area.

**2. Please specify policies and procedures related to TSA's Secure Flight**

**2a. What personal data is collected, used, distributed, stored, and disposed?**

The Secure Flight system collects Secure Flight Passenger Data<sup>1</sup> from airlines and screens individuals before they access airport sterile areas or board aircraft. This screening is designed to identify known or suspected terrorists or other individuals who may be a threat to transportation or national security, to prevent some identified

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<sup>1</sup> Secure Flight Passenger Data includes the passenger's full name, date of birth, gender, passport number, country of issuance if provided, Known Traveler Number if available, Redress Number if available, and flight itinerary-related information such as airline operator, flight number, and departure/arrival airports, dates, and times.

individuals from gaining access to airports and airplanes where they may jeopardize the lives of passengers, and to ensure that other identified individuals receive additional physical screening before accessing airport sterile areas or boarding an aircraft.

Secure Flight compares passenger and non-traveler information to the No Fly and Selectee List components of the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB) to identify individuals who are known or suspected terrorists. When warranted by security considerations, it also compares this information against other watch lists maintained by TSA or other federal agencies.

Secure Flight follows a records retention schedule, approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), to purge personally identifiable information (PII) as follows:

- PII of persons who are not a potential or confirmed match to one of the watch lists is purged within 7 days of travel.
- PII of potential matches to higher-risk lists is purged after 7 years.
- PII of confirmed matches to higher-risk lists is purged after 99 years.

## **2b. What information is shared with the airline?**

After the Secure Flight system collects Secure Flight Passenger Data from airlines and analyzes it as described above, the Secure Flight system provides a boarding pass instruction to the airline based on the vetting results. Using this instruction, the carrier will take one of the following actions: print boarding/access passes to those who are authorized to receive them, identify individuals for additional screening, or deny individuals boarding or sterile area access.

## **3. Please confirm the number of Non-US/Canadian citizens that have been screened by TSA from January 1st, 2021 through October 31st, 2021.**

Country of citizenship data is not collected during the routine Secure Flight prescreening process or the non-citizen and non-U.S. national document validation process via the TSA NTVC. When looking at the entire non-citizen/non U.S. national population presenting DHS-issued documents for validation through the NTVC since January 1, 2021, the average per day number has been approximately 159 passengers.

- From January 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021, TSA's NTVC processed 45,577 non-citizens and non-U.S. nationals requesting validation of their DHS-issued documents.
- Of the of the 45,577 non-citizens and non-U.S. nationals requesting document validation, the NTVC was able to validate the documentation of 44,957 passengers. Airports conducted screening of these passengers as appropriate and designated based on risk.

TSA collaborated with CBP to use the CBP One™ mobile application to verify non-U.S. national/non-citizen and non-U.S. national passenger documentation.

- From January 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021, TSA has used the CBP One™ mobile application approximately 60,000 times. If documents cannot be validated through the CBP One™ mobile application, an attempt will be made to validate through the NVTVC.

**3a. Please specify the number of Non-US/Canadian citizens TSA successfully screened.**

See above.

**3b. Please specify the number of Non-US/Canadian citizens TSA denied.**

See above.

**4. If proper identification is not available, what documents are sufficient to allow a Non-US/Canadian citizen to clear TSA's checkpoint before proceeding into the sterile area of an airport?**

As mentioned, in coordination with its DHS counterparts, TSA established a process where it will accept certain DHS-issued forms for non-citizens and non-U.S. nationals who do not have otherwise acceptable forms of ID for presentation at its security checkpoints. In this instance, the TSA TDC will look at the DHS-issued document (for example, I-94, I-862) for an alien identification number (A-file) and validate the document either by the CBP One™ mobile application or by the TSA NTVC.

For all travelers, if an individual does not have acceptable ID as listed on TSA's acceptable forms of ID list, TSA will accept additional forms of ID that have the individual's name, with preference given to Government-issued ID. One of the two forms must have the individual's name and identifying information such as a photo, address, phone number, social security number or date of birth. For all travelers who lack acceptable ID, TSA uses the NTVC, which attempts to verify a traveler's identity by using the individual's information along with information from government and commercial databases. All such individuals receive additional screening procedures as described in the Checkpoint and Specialized Screening Standard Operating Procedure.

**a. Please list each document.**

DHS-issued forms that TSA may accept at the checkpoint include the following:

- ICE Form I-200 – Warrant for Arrest of Alien
- ICE Form I-205 – Warrant of Removal/Deportation
- ICE Form I-220A – Order of Release on Recognizance
- ICE Form I-220B – Order of Supervision
- DHS Form I-862 – Notice to Appear
- CBP Form I-94 – Arrival and Departure Form (including a print-out of an electronic record)
- DHS Form I-385 – Alien Booking Record

**5. If the alternate document was provided by a federal agency, has that agency confirmed to TSA the document confirms the identity of the alien and is sufficient documentation to allow them to fly?**

TSA relies on issuing agencies (for example, CBP and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to verify that the person to whom they provide documentation is the person whom the person claims to be. Because these documents are alternatives to acceptable forms of ID, TSA determined that additional screening is warranted before permitting the individual access to the sterile area.

**6. Please share any policies and procedures related to airport Federal Security Director (FSD) responsibility in screening passengers with no identification.**

Once a passenger's identity is verified at the TDC, the passenger receives appropriate screening (standard, expedited, or additional) as described in the TSA's Checkpoint and Specialized Screening Standard Operating Procedure before being allowed into the sterile area of an airport. In all cases where a traveler's identity cannot be established, the airport's FSD has discretion to determine what level of additional screening is needed. The FSD may decide that there is no level of screening which is acceptable and then deny the prospective passenger access to the sterile area.

**7. Is a letter from a non-government organization sufficient for TSA to confirm the identity of a traveler?**

A letter from a non-governmental organization (NGO) is not sufficient documentation for TSA to grant admittance to the sterile area of an airport.

**8. What health screenings are aliens required to undergo prior to boarding a plane to ensure they are not putting other passengers at risk? Who verifies that the screenings have taken place and where is that information logged?**

TSA does not require health screening as a condition of admittance to the sterile area of an airport.

**9. Are airlines made aware of aliens traveling on their flights?**

TSA does not inform airlines of the citizenship status of passengers.

**10. What policies or procedures are in place to coordinate with federal, state and local law enforcement regarding the transportation of illegal immigrants throughout the country?**

TSA's statutory mission is transportation security. If a law enforcement assistance is required (for example, because of an assaultive passenger or because indicators of criminal conduct are observed), TSA obtains the assistance of local law enforcement. Immigration status is not a factor in the TSA screening process. While some special screening procedures require

coordination with law enforcement (for example, when an individual is under law enforcement escort), those processes apply broadly.