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# Statement by Secretary Jeh C. Johnson on Strengthening Travel Security with E-Passports

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For Immediate Release  
DHS Press Office  
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WASHINGTON—Effective today we will begin to require the use of more electronic passports, or e-Passports, by all travelers coming to the United States from the 38 countries that participate in our Visa Waiver Program.

An e-Passport contains the security feature of an electronic chip, which holds all of a passenger’s including name, date of birth and other biographical information. This not only protects privacy and prevents identity theft, but also helps to safely identify a passenger, making travel safer and faster.

Last August, I [announced](#) that the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State would introduce additional or revised security criteria for countries in our Visa Waiver Program, including the use of e-Passports for all travelers coming to the U.S. With the passage late last year of the *Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act*, Congress has mandated that, effective today, all travelers from Visa Waiver countries to the U.S. must have an e-Passport. Travelers who do not have an e-Passport from a Visa Waiver country must obtain a visa to come the U.S.

Our Visa Waiver Program remains a valuable program for lawful trade and travel with our Nation’s most trusted partners, and I am committed to ensuring that it is a secure program as well. The required use of e-Passports is the latest in a series of recent actions that we have taken to strengthen the security of the Program. In the last two years, we have also increased the data collected from travelers from Visa Waiver countries for vetting purposes, and have required increased terrorism and criminal information sharing and increased cooperation on the screening of refugees and asylum seekers with countries in the Visa Waiver Program.

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