



## Overview of Enhanced Driver's Licenses (EDLs)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has worked very closely with the U.S. states and Canadian provinces to develop a secure, highly tamper resistant Enhanced Driver's License (EDL) that includes vicinity radio frequency identification (RFID) capability, a machine readable zone – optical character read (MRZ-OCR) and contains multiple layers of overt, covert and forensic security features.

The EDL is an acceptable stand alone Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) compliant document for entry into the United States at all land and sea ports of entry. The state EDL is only available to United States citizens legally residing in the state of issuance and the provincial EDL is only available to Canadian citizens legally residing in the province of issuance. When the EDL is presented by a United States or Canadian citizen traveler, no other documentation is required for purposes of proving identity and citizenship.

Four U.S. states and four Canadian provinces are currently producing EDLs:

- Michigan
- New York
- Vermont
- Washington
  
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec

## Radio Frequency Identification Technology (RFID)

- The WHTI document requirements close a substantial vulnerability. At the same time, WHTI implementation posed operational challenges particularly in the land border environment. To balance effectively the security imperative and the continued facilitation of legitimate trade and travel, CBP decided to expand the use of vicinity Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology.
- The RFID technology refers to systems that allow a device to read information contained in a wireless device or "tag" from a distance without making any physical contact or requiring a line of sight between the two. It provides a method to transmit and receive data from one point to another.

## RFID Technology in Border Management

- The United States government uses two types of RFID technology for border management—vicinity and proximity. RFID technology has been commercially available in one form or another since the 1970s. It is now part of our daily lives and can be found in car keys, employee identification, medical history/billing, highway toll tags, and security access cards.
- Vicinity RFID means that an RFID-enabled document can be securely and accurately read by authorized readers from up to 20 to 30 feet away.
- Proximity RFID means that an RFID-enabled document must be scanned in close proximity to an authorized reader and can only be read from a few inches away.
- Vicinity RFID technology is a proven means of speeding travelers through land border entry that has been used successfully in CBP trusted traveler programs since 1995--the NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST programs.
- These trusted traveler programs currently have more than 745,000 participants. Participants benefit from expedited processing, and security is enhanced through the ability to affirmatively identify the individual and conduct admissibility checks.
- In utilizing vicinity RFID technology, CBP adheres to the most stringent requirements for safeguarding personal data. No personal information is stored on the card – only a number, which points to the information housed in secure databases.

## RFID in EDLs and Other WHTI-Compliant Documents

- CBP either maintains the information from the documents in its secure database or pings the secure database owned by the agency that issued the RFID-enabled document, provided the agency meets CBP's performance and response requirements.
- CBP needs real-time access to the biographic and biometric data that allows a CBP officer to make a rapid and thorough admissibility decision when an individual presents the document at the border.
- The RFID chip is read as the vehicle queues for inspection at the border. It signals the database so that biographic information, a photo, and the results of terrorist/criminal checks are displayed to the CBP Officer as the vehicle pulls up to the inspection booth. The CBP Officer can look at the results quickly and focus on the individuals in the vehicle – better for officer safety and faster processing.
- No Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is transmitted from the card. The chip sends a number that has meaning only to the secure CBP database, where the issuing information is held.

## Privacy Protection

In leveraging technologies for border security and facilitation of legitimate global travel, CBP is mindful of privacy concerns and is committed to adhering to strict privacy standards. As most privacy and security professionals recommend, the vicinity RFID enabled, WHTI-compliant documents incorporate several layers of privacy mitigations.

- The first layer is that no personally identifiable information is stored on the card's RFID tag or transmitted by the card. The card uses a unique identification number which links to information contained in a secure database. This number does not contain nor is it derived from any personal information.
- Even though the RFID tag only contains an identification number, not personal information, additional mitigations are employed to minimize any privacy issues – these include awareness education and security shielding.
- Because RFID is still relatively new, educating individuals who have a vicinity RFID enabled document – on how to use, carry, and protect the document – is essential and has been aggressively pursued in our public relations campaign as well as directly provided to individuals during the enrollment process.
- Appropriate radio frequency shielding (a Faraday cage) is available to travelers as an effective way to prevent any issues with skimming and tracking.
- Together, these protections provide a significant level of security and privacy.
- CBP has published a privacy impact assessment on the use of RFID technology that is available to the public on [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

## For More Information

- For more information about Customs and Border Protection's Trusted Traveler Programs and changes in international land and sea travel document procedures, please visit [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) and click on the "Travel" tab.
- For more information about the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative please visit [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov). or [www.GetYouHome.gov](http://www.GetYouHome.gov).