

Fingerprint scanner tested on foreigners leaving Atlanta

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Federal authorities are testing a mobile device to scan fingerprints from a sample of foreign air travelers as they depart from the United States through Atlanta's airport.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers began using the devices last week to scan some foreign passengers on selected flights at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, agency spokeswoman Jennifer Evanitsky said Tuesday. The test will be expanded in the fall to airports in Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New York, San Francisco and Washington.

The agency, which is under a congressional mandate to record the biometrics of departing foreign visitors, plans to test the devices through next June. Then it will decide whether it's feasible to further expand their use without disrupting travel too much, Evanitsky said.

Border officers currently collect [digital fingerprints](#) and photos from arriving foreign travelers to ensure they are who they say they are, the agency said in a news release. The new scanners have the potential to enhance existing tools and to confirm the departure of a foreign traveler using biometric verification, the release said.

Officer will stand at the passenger loading bridge of selected flights leaving the U.S. and will use the new hand-held devices, which are a bit bigger than a smartphone, to scan the fingerprints and passports of selected foreigner travelers.

The agency said it will match that data to the data collected when the person entered the country and then it will be stored in systems managed by the Department of Homeland Security. The agency said it "remains committed to protecting the privacy of all travelers."

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