

# Reagan National Airport to debut facial scanning technology

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Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport will debut facial recognition technology in November that will let all departing international travelers board flights without any paper or digital documents, according to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection, an agency within the Department of Homeland Security, is overseeing the process of implementing this new biometric technology at airports across the country in accordance with a congressional mandate. Biometrics refers to ways to use computer recognition of body measurements to verify a person's identity.

Five years ago, CBP launched the Global Entry Program, which allows pre-approved, low-risk U.S. travelers to go through expedited security screening once they return home. Global Entry allows U.S. citizens returning from foreign trips to deplane following the flight and bypass customs officers by going through kiosks for approval to re-enter the country.

The next step being introduced at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport will take passengers out of kiosk lines and get them walking through facial recognition checkpoints.

So far, 15 major airports, including Washington Dulles International Airport, have begun testing facial screening of passengers arriving in the U.S., while another 14 airports use the same facial comparison technology on passengers leaving the U.S.

Each participating airport must develop its own facial recognition technology, then CBP will administer its implementation.

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's Office of Technology created the system, known as veriScan, that will be used at Reagan. MWAA President and CEO Jack Potter said the veriScan system uses battery-powered, Wi-Fi and cellular-connected portable tablets as the device passengers walk up to, which he said is cheaper than systems used at other airports and requires less training.

