



Office of Communications

U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# News Release

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## **USCIS LAUNCHES PHOTO SCREENING TOOL FOR E-VERIFY PROGRAM** *Photo tool will help employers detect some forms of identity fraud*

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today launched a new photo-screening tool that will help employers comply with immigration law while also strengthening worksite enforcement. The photo tool will be the first step in giving employers the tools they need to help detect some forms of identity fraud in the employment eligibility process.

The photo tool is the first enhancement in [E-Verify](#), the agency's Web-based system that allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly hired employees. More than 23,000 employers are currently enrolled in the program – with more than 2,000 more joining each month – and will now be able to access the new photo screening tool to more accurately verify a new non-citizen employee's identity.

“Our current E-Verify system is not fraud-proof and was not designed to detect identity fraud,” said USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez. “The photo tool enhancement will give employers an additional resource to help verify identity and employment authorization status and is just one more valuable enhancement to an effective, fair and viable program.”

First piloted in March, the photo tool will be available when a new employee presents an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) or Permanent Resident Card (“green card”) to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9). It allows the employer to compare identical photos – the individual's photograph on the EAD or green card against the image stored in USCIS' databases, which contains nearly 15 million images of individual documents. The tool is designed to help an employer determine whether the document presented reasonably relates to the individual presenting it and contains a valid photo.

Employers currently participating in E-Verify will be trained on the system enhancement through a mandatory refresher tutorial that launches automatically on Sept. 17, 2007. New employer who register after that date will learn how to use the photo tool through an updated E-Verify manual, tutorial, and memorandum of understanding.

E-Verify, formerly known as the Basic Pilot employment eligibility verification program, is a free Web-based system that works by electronically comparing new employee information taken from the Form I-9 against more than 425 million records in the Social Security Administration's database and more than 60 million records in the Department of Homeland Security's immigration database.

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