

9 FAM APPENDIX D, 100 AUTOMATED VISA SYSTEMS

*(CT:VISA-1275; 08-31-2009)
(Office of Origin: CA/VO/L/R)*

9 FAM APPENDIX D, 101 PURPOSE AND VARIETY OF SYSTEMS

(CT:VISA-1275; 08-31-2009)

Modernized consular visa applications automate application processing, namechecks, and visa printing. They also record key namecheck, adjudication, and issuance and refusal data that is replicated to the consular consolidated database (CCD). Systems include the nonimmigrant visa (NIV) system *and* the immigrant visa (*IVO*) system. Each system has its own *user* manual containing operational instructions. On-line versions are available on the Consular Affairs intranet Web site at the *Systems home page under User Support, Consular Applications*.

9 FAM APPENDIX D, 102 CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

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- a. The modernized NIV and IV systems, installed at all visa-issuing posts, integrate the case processing, namechecking, and printing of nonimmigrant and immigrant visas (*NIV and IV*). The nonimmigrant system produces the machine readable visa (MRV) and the border-crossing card (BCC) or laser visa. The *NIV and IV* systems provide posts with a Windows-based graphical interface. The *NIV and IV* systems interface with telecommunications manager (TCM) to send namechecks to the *Consular Lookout and Support System* (CLASS). If the communications line or CLASS is not available, TCM holds the queries and refusal adds in a queue for transmission when service is restored. Namechecks are performed only on the CLASS system.
- b. Data replication, the continuous copying of data from posts' consular applications to the CCD in Washington, is functioning for all posts for all applications. Replicated data for posts generally dates back to the time

the modernized systems were installed at post.

9 FAM APPENDIX D, 103 LOOKOUT SYSTEMS

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The CLASS consists of a large automated database in Washington, DC that contains the names of aliens who have been found ineligible for visas; those whose visa applications require a Departmental opinion prior to issuance; and those who might be ineligible should they apply for a visa. Key features of CLASS include the ability to search for lost and stolen passports and culturally specific algorithms for Arabic, Persian, Russian/Slavic, and Hispanic names.

9 FAM APPENDIX D, 104 SYSTEM SECURITY

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- a. Automated systems are designed with built-in security features that, if used properly, prevent system abuse. Consular Affairs (CA) systems use the security features of the Windows NT and 2000 operating environments to control network access and then separately use the security features available in the Oracle database management system to control access to specific features within consular applications. User access is managed through profiles defined by the Department of State. Consular managers in the field assign individual users to specific profiles based upon employment status and management need through an application known as the *Consular Shared Tables* (CST). Although profile assignments are made in the field, the profiles themselves are established centrally and are not user configurable. It is significant that U.S. Foreign Service Officer (FSO) consular managers, rather than post systems personnel, control application-level access. Since CST also replicates its data back to the CCD, roles and the assignment of roles can be and are monitored remotely.
- b. Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) can be given different levels of system access. As necessary depending upon section staffing, FSNs can be allowed read-only access, data entry access, or access to handle more complex administrative responsibilities. Regardless of the access level granted, FSNs do not have access to approve or deny visas. Neither can they view the detailed results of namechecks, although they may do data entry for *independent* namecheck inquiries. (Routine namecheck inquiries are required by the system for all new cases created and at any time when significant information or the status of a case changes.)

9 FAM APPENDIX D, 105 SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

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Posts normally have a designated Foreign Service Officer (FSO) serving as a systems manager who has overall responsibility for post automated systems. The modernized consular applications are designed to run on a client-server LAN using a Windows operating system. Servers may be located in a computer center located outside of the consular section. The NIV and IV applications are installed on each workstation for designated users. Consular officers are not expected to have the level of technical expertise required of the systems manager; visa officers should, however, be sufficiently familiar with the visa *systems* (NIV and *IVO*) used at post to oversee effectively the work of the section and use the management features of the automated visa systems to control operational access to the visa process. Modernized systems are equipped with tools that allow CA systems staff in the Department to log on to a post's network remotely to troubleshoot, upgrade software, monitor performance, and provide a high level of technical support.