9 FAM Appendix D,
AUTOMATED VISA SYSTEMS

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

9 FAM 100 Introduction

9 FAM 101 Purpose and Variety of Systems

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

Automated visa systems provide lookout case management and/or assistance for visa processing. Systems include the Consular Lookout and Support System (CLASS) the Machine Readable Visa (MRV); and the Immigrant Visa Applicant Control System (IVACS). Each system has its own set of operational instructions, which is available to all system users. Posts not having the appropriate operational instructions or who need extra copies may request them from the Consular Affairs Systems Application Staff (CA/EX/CSD).

9 FAM 102 Case Management Systems

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

IVACS and *MRV* provide case management assistance for immigrant and nonimmigrant visa processing, respectively. These systems automate manual procedures but do not change visa-processing functions. Automated systems provide more rapid and reliable access to case information than is possible with manual systems and allow the automated preparation of standard communications relating to visa cases. Most of the work automated by these systems is done by Foreign Service National (FSNs) employees, who are the primary systems users. U.S. officers have a crucial role to play, however, in managing automated systems and in exploiting their considerable anti-fraud capabilities. The MRV system, which maximizes anti-fraud measures, requires more direct consular officer input.

9 FAM 103 Lookout Systems

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

The Consular Lookout and Support System (CLASS) consists of a large (several million names) automated data base in Washington, DC, which 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 for a visa should they apply for one. The system also includes the network of telecommunications lines linking posts to the Washington computer and the terminals used for CLASS access at posts abroad. Extracts of CLASS are sent to all visa-issuing posts in microfiche format, to be used as back-up to the automated system or for regular use at non- automated posts. An electronic version of the extract, called Distributed Name-check (DNC), is also under development and in operation at some posts.

9 FAM 103.1 Teletype Access

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

Most “on-line” posts gain access to CLASS using teletype terminals to produce messages which are transmitted to the central CLASS computer over telecommunication lines.

9 FAM 103.2 Computer Access

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

At some posts, CLASS access is achieved by use of computer equipment. This type of CLASS access is called “TTYREP,” which replaces teletype equipment with word and/or data-processing terminals. TTYREP also permits CLASS access using data processing terminals at posts with minicomputers.

9 FAM 103.3 Automatic Access

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

MRV and IVACS provide a third means of access to CLASS for name-checking purposes. These visa case management systems integrate the visa lookout and case management functions. The Department has also been able to install IVACS and *MRV* at posts without a telecommunications (TC) line. These TC-less IVACS and *MRV* posts, therefore, have no direct access to CLASS and must rely on either the microfiche or an electronic equivalent (DNC) residing on the local post computer or personal computer.

9 FAM 104 System Security

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

Automated systems are designed with built-in security features which, if used properly, prevent system abuse. All State Department programs run under Controlled User Environment (CUE) software that requires user passwords to access the system. These systems have clearly defined levels of system access that limit access to the most sensitive system functions to a few individuals. Although FSNs are the primary users, consular officers are ultimately responsible for the security of automated visa systems and the data they contain. Each post must develop appropriate procedures to review and monitor system use.

9 FAM 105 System Management

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

Posts with automated systems requiring minicomputers (IVACS and *MRV*) normally have a designated Foreign Service Officer serving as a systems manager who is responsible for the computer and the operations of programs and terminals. 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 programs (IVACS and/or MRV) used at post to oversee effectively the work of the section and use the management features of the automated visa systems.

9 FAM 106 Inquiries about Status of Petitions

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

Posts normally should not send telegrams to the Department or directly to INS inquiring about the status of petitions. As an alternative, the consular officer should advise an alien seeking such assistance to ask the petitioner to obtain the information on the pending visa petition directly from INS. Petitioners should direct such information inquiries to the Service Center with which the petition was filed. Posts may submit to the Department cases, which have public relations significance, however, stating the reasons for such action in the post's telegram.

9 FAM 107 Acceptance of Employment by Dependent of Treaty Alien

(TL:VISA-475; 10-21-2002)

While INS is not in a position to authorize the nonimmigrant spouse and children of a treaty trader to accept employment while in E status, the dependents will not be deemed to be deportable for having violated status if employed. So long as the principal E nonimmigrant is maintaining status, no action will be taken to require their departure. However, INS does consider aliens who accept such unauthorized employment to be ineligible for later adjustment of status to permanent resident. [See 8 CFR 245.1(b)(4).]