

Get Your TWIC Card!

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that the final compliance date for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program has been pushed from Sept. 25, 2008 to April 15, 2009. DHS said that the seven month extension is a reaction to feedback from port officials and industry, and this realigns the enrollment period with the original intent of the TWIC final rule.

However, DHS also announced that owners and operators of facilities located within Captain of the Port Zones Boston, Northern New England, and Southeastern New England **will need to comply with the TWIC demands by October 15, 2008**. These three ports were selected based on favorable conditions that facilitate near-term implementation. These ports are ideal for initial compliance based upon geographic proximity, the size of their TWIC enrollment population, and respective enrollment efforts to date. Additional ports will be announced in the coming weeks, and the Coast Guard will provide at least 90 days notice prior to enforcement.

TWIC was established in the Maritime Transportation Security Act and the SAFE Port Act to serve as an identification program for all Coast Guard credentialed mariners and personnel requiring unescorted access to secure areas within a port. The program is on track to complete enrollment for a substantial number of jurisdictions by the end of 2008, and several ports will be required to comply with TWIC regulations this year.

This is a brief reprieve for something all Coast Guard-credentialed transportation workers must do. Members should still make sure to obtain their TWICs well in advance. You can pre-enroll for TWIC on the TSA Web site (www.tsa.gov/twic). Pre-enrollment speeds up the process by allowing workers to provide biographic information and schedule a time to complete the application process in person. This reduces waiting and in-person enrollment times for each individual. If you want to go directly to the pre-enrollment page, visit <https://twicprogram.tsa.dhs.gov/TWICWebApp/> and click on "Apply for a TWIC."

The TWIC program is progressing steadily and has opened more than 100 fixed enrollment centers and dozens of mobile sites nationwide. More than 250,000 workers have enrolled to date and thousands more are processed each week. Enrollment began at the Port of Wilmington, Del. in October 2007.

Additional information can be found on the U.S. Coast Guard's Homeport site, <http://homeport.uscg.mil>, and on the Transportation Security Administration's web site at www.tsa.gov/twic.