



## New Identification Card Uses "SMART" Technology

**T**he Department of Defense today introduced its identification card of the future. Starting this month, the Department of Defense began issuing a new multi-purpose card for DoD personnel. Dubbed a "common access card," it will be more than just an identification card. The card will eventually allow physical access to secure areas, permit entry into the Department's computer networks, and serve as the authentication token for the Department's computerized public key infrastructure.

The common access card is an important example of the Department's efforts to use cutting-edge technologies to reform the Department's business processes, to eliminate paper-based activities, to ensure the security of its networks, and consequently to enhance military readiness.

The new ID is based on "smart card" technology that stores and processes information on an integrated microprocessor chip. Embedded within the card, this chip is a small computer without a monitor or power supply. It has the capability to read, write, and perform various operations on several thousand bytes of information. The common access card is about the size of an average credit card and will incorporate linear and two-dimensional bar codes and a magnetic stripe in order to enable the card to support other functions, either on a Department-wide or individual command basis.

Among the possible activities being considered on a Department-wide basis are processing food services charges in military mess halls and updating important manifest and deployment data. Local commands are also evaluating placing individual medical and dental information on the card, as well as student status, armory and property accountability, training, and rifle range performance.

"I applaud the fact this card gives our people a key technological tool to improve performance while protecting individual privacy," said Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) Bernard Rostker, whose office assisted in the development of the card.

To protect privacy, the card is designed with minimum information to support its identification, access and management features. It complies with the Geneva Convention for the Uniformed Services. While the card will not include a personal handwritten signature, it will store certificates to enable cardholders

to digitally sign documents such as e-mail, encrypt information, and establish secure Web sessions to access and update information via the Internet. These provisions are intended to enhance individual privacy in the Department as computerized systems replace paper-based systems.

**The common access card will become the standard identification card for approximately four million people affiliated with the Department. Included in this total are active duty uniformed services personnel, selected reserves, DoD civilian personnel, and eligible contractor personnel.**

The card will be issued initially at selected sites in the Quantico and Tidewater areas of Virginia and overseas in Germany and Korea. The target date for completion of the initial new card issuance is the end of September 2002. Current uniformed services ID card infrastructure will support the common access card.

Each card is expected to cost approximately six to eight dollars. Costs are expected to decrease as larger quantities are purchased and technology and competition improves.

Development of the common access card culminates almost a decade of DoD interest in smart card applications. In fact, the Department of Defense has been exploring the use of smart card technology since 1993. Initially, it was seen as only a means of conveniently transporting small amounts of information, but now advances in technology allow increased storage as well as conducting secure data transfer and online transactions.

"In November 1999, the DoD leadership charged us to innovate by exploiting smart card applications throughout the Department. The common access card answers the call by allowing us to realize the potential that technology offers," said Paul Brubaker, deputy chief information officer of the Department of Defense, whose office oversaw the technological development of the card.

Additional information on the common access card, including a picture of a "mock" card, is available at [www.dmdc.osd.mil/smartcard](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/smartcard).

**Editor's Note:** This information is in the public domain at [www.defenselink.mil/news](http://www.defenselink.mil/news).