



# MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 26, 2015

#15-030

### **New gate access procedures set to start at Fort Lee**

FORT LEE, Va. – Full operation of the Fort Lee Visitor Control Center began today in preparation for new Army-mandated gate access procedures that go into full effect June 15.

The measures fulfill more stringent requirements to vet non-military identification cardholders by conducting criminal background checks prior to entering the post. Access will be denied to visitors with background checks that contain credible derogatory information indicating they may present a threat to the good order, discipline and/or health and safety of the Army community.

"Frequent visitors or guests who do not have the appropriate military ID to access the installation unescorted should come to the VCC as soon as possible to request a background check and access pass before the full implementation of these new procedures," said Tony DeWitt, director of Emergency Services at Fort Lee.

"We especially want companies and contractors with commercial drivers regularly coming to Fort Lee to submit access request forms through their government sponsor in advance so we can get them vetted and issue passes," DeWitt said. He added that families and guests of service members attending graduations and other ceremonies on post are similarly encouraged to download and complete forms ahead of time to prevent any unnecessary delays entering post.

"The only thing pre-vetted visitors need to do is pick up their access pass at the VCC when they arrive – this saves everyone time and makes the process much smoother," DeWitt said.

The primary VCC is located in the visitors' center building adjacent to Lee Gate off Route 36. It will be open 5 a.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and – after June 15 – 6 a.m.-11 p.m. on weekends and federal holidays. Forms and additional information about the background checks and access procedures are available online at [www.lee.army.mil/pmo/access.aspx](http://www.lee.army.mil/pmo/access.aspx).

Those who still have questions or concerns after visiting the website can contact the VCC at (804) 734-5053 during operating hours.

The VCC parking lot entrance is on the right before the security checkpoint. Those who know they will require screening are asked to go directly to the VCC rather than having to be redirected by gate guards, which will help alleviate traffic delays at the gates. DeWitt said drivers entering Fort Lee should expect delays during morning and lunch hours for about a month following full implementation.

“During the initial implementation period, we encourage our regular military ID cardholders to use the Sisisky, Mahone or A Avenue access points when coming to work in the morning,” DeWitt said. “That should reduce traffic backups, as well. We just ask everyone to be patient and courteous during this time – everything will smooth out once people get used to the new requirements.”

Those who are considered properly “vetted” – basically anyone with a valid military-issued identification card – will not be impacted by this new procedure. All others 18 years of age and older will be subject to a background check and, if no derogatory criminal information is found, given an access pass valid for periods ranging from 24 hours to a year based on how often they access the post and other factors.

DeWitt said those who are denied access to the post will be provided instructions to request a waiver, which will require a justification for the request supported by court documents and written descriptions of any rehabilitative steps taken since the conviction.

“Examples of derogatory information that would result in denial of access include, but are not limited to, a felony conviction of sexual assault or rape, armed robbery, child molestation, production or possession of child pornography, trafficking in humans, and/or drug possession with intent to sell or distribute,” DeWitt said. “Registered sex offenders also would be denied access.”

DES officials continue to encourage individuals who know they have criminal information in their records that might result in denial of access to start gathering the documents they’ll need to file a waiver request. The Provost Marshal Office here does not have access to court paperwork, and it cannot assist individuals with obtaining documents.

“The waiver request process will take about 10 working days if everything is in order,” DeWitt said. “There are no shortcuts; we’re doing everything in accordance with the policy guidelines issued by the Army.”

Later this year, weekend and holiday operations will be conducted at a second VCC at Sisisky Gate, which is the post’s main access point. This is in preparation for the eventual transition of all VCC operations to that gate once a new facility opens there in 2016.

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