



Port Community Information Bulletin # 18-04  
Marine Safety Office (813) 228-2191  
Tampa, Florida

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Expiration Date: Until Cancelled

## Government Official Access & Credentialing Procedures

**This notice clarifies the procedures to be followed for Government Officials gaining access to MTSA regulated vessels and facilities.**

Vessel and facility access control is the cornerstone to an effective overall security program. As companies have begun to exercise their security plans ahead of the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, certain conflicts have arisen between Government Official's access procedures and elements of the respective security plans. To resolve these conflicts the following guidelines have been established:

1. Government Official's should expect to be challenged when attempting to access a vessel or facility. Government Official's will perform the following steps when gaining access to an MTSA regulated vessel or facility when performing duties in the **normal course of business**:
  - a. Identify yourself and organization verbally;
  - b. Present an official government issued identification card at each security checkpoint, being cognizant of protecting personal information (vessels and facilities are in compliance with the MTSA and its associated regulations when they deny access to individuals who refuse to properly establish their identity);
  - c. Sign the visitor logbook; and
  - d. Accept a personnel escort if requested by the vessel or facility security representative, except on those infrequent occasions in which law enforcement officials have specific safety or security concerns that warrant declining the offer of an escort.
2. Government Officials will not be subject to the following provisions of security plans:
  - a. Law enforcement personnel on official business are not required to consent to a baggage or government vehicle search; and
  - b. Law enforcement personnel are authorized to carry firearms while conducting routine operations on a vessel or facility.
3. Commercial vessels and facilities are required to permit law enforcement officials, in the performance of their official duties, who present proper identification, to enter or board without delay or obstruction.
4. Facilities and vessels are encouraged to amend their security plans if their approved plan conflicts with the procedures outlined here for dealing with law enforcement officers; and
5. The procedures detailed in paragraph 1 shall not apply to law enforcement officers accessing vessels or facilities during emergencies or exigent circumstances in the performance of their duties.

If you have questions or comments regarding this bulletin please contact my Port State Control Branch at (813) 228-2191 Ext: 8141.

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Captain of the Port