



United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Fraud Prevention Programs



INTELLIGENCE ALERT BULLETIN

2003-04

February 2003

New Visa Cancellation Stamps

TAGS: KFRD, CVIS



Consular Affairs has developed a highly penetrative security ink to be used exclusively for cancelling nonimmigrant visas. This unique formulation, designated security ink #297, is specially designed to penetrate TESLIN, the synthetic material used as the basis of visa foils issued since late 1993 until the recent introduction of the Lincoln Visa. The ink finally selected was chosen after extensive laboratory testing undertaken by both the U.S. Secret Service and INS/FDL.

Up to now, there existed no genuinely effective means for cancelling a visa permanently short of destructive methods that risked damaging the underlying passport page. To remedy this, CA commissioned the manufacture of two types of visa cancellation stamps in conjunction with the new security ink, and they are being distributed to visa issuing posts worldwide.



These stamps will be used to cancel previously issued visas, whether TESLIN or Lincoln MRVs, either submitted for revalidation (CANCELLED WITHOUT PREJUDICE) or detected as being forged, photo subbed, or being fraudulently misused (CANCELLED CANCELLED). The purpose of these cancellation stamps is to reduce the number of potentially recyclable visa foils being diverted to visa forgers and vendors of false documents. When applied to the face of a visa, this ink quickly penetrates through the material and cannot be removed or eradicated.

These products are being pouched to visa issuing posts in kits that will include several pre-filled cancellation stamps and a supply of replacement ink, accompanied by printed instructions for proper refilling and maintenance. As the instructions indicate, it is important that no other ordinary ink be used to refill these stamp devices, and that the specially labeled security ink is not used for purposes other than the permanent cancellation of U.S. visas. Further instructions pertaining to this project (VISA CANCELLATION STAMP PROJECT) will be communicated to posts via an upcoming ALDAC.



SECURITY NOTICE: The new security ink and stamps are enclosed in a granular packing material to absorb ink in case of accidental spillage in transit. This material poses no security or health risk.

Please make this alert a permanent part of your fraud prevention resources. Please share this information with your staffs, U.S. and foreign airline officials, foreign consuls, and local law enforcement and immigration officials, as appropriate.

Consuls: Please pass to RSO, INS/DD/OIC, FAA/CASLO, and other mission offices, as appropriate.