



# MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Communication, preparation key to Fort Lee access**

BY PATRICK BUFFETT, FORT LEE PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
[Fort Lee access FAQ](#)

**FORT LEE, Va.** – To mitigate confusion and community frustration here, the Directorate of Emergency Services is partnering with the Garrison Public Affairs Office in the launch of an intensified publicity campaign for the new Army-mandated gate access procedures that will go into effect at Fort Lee in April.

The revised policy requires senior commanders to “deny un-cleared contractors and visitors unescorted access to installations based on the results of (National Crime Information Center, or NCIC-III) background checks that contain credible derogatory information indicating the individual may present a threat to the good order, discipline and/or health and safety of the Army community.”

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 NCIC-III check and, if no derogatory criminal information is found, given an access pass that will be valid for periods ranging from 24 hours to a year based on how often they will require entry onto post.

“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,” said Tony DeWitt, DES director.

“Registered sex offenders also would be denied access.

“Any of these individuals can submit a request packet for a waiver,” DeWitt continued. “It will require court documents and written descriptions of any rehabilitative steps taken since the conviction as well as an explanation of why access to post should be granted.”

A goal of the early publicity push, DeWitt noted, is 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, he emphasized, and it cannot assist individuals with obtaining documents. "People will have to contact the court in which they were convicted," he said.

"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."

Another goal of the publicity effort is ensuring community members and visitors are aware of the new procedures at the gates when the revised access control measures are implemented. Anyone without the accepted forms of ID – an access pass issued by Fort Lee with driver's license or a military-issued identification card – will be denied entry to post. They will need to proceed off-base to the Visitor Control Center, or VCC, at the Lee Gate. If that access point is closed (overnight from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. or on weekends and holidays), the secondary VCC at Sisisky Gate will be used.

The primary VCC will be located in the visitors' center building adjacent to Lee Gate. The parking lot entrance is on the right before the security checkpoint. Those who know they're going to require screening are asked to go directly to the VCC rather than having to be redirected by the security personnel manning the access points. This will help alleviate traffic congestion at the gates, particularly during morning and evening rush hours.

"Furthermore, during the initial implementation period, we encourage our regular military ID card holders 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 while we work our way through the initial phase of this new procedure."

Simple and quick are the two words DES officials used to describe the background check process at the VCC terminals. Visitors who have no derogatory information found during the NCIC-III screening should be walking away with their access pass in about 10 minutes.

“We just finalized a frequently asked questions document that was posted to the Fort Lee home- page on Wednesday,” DeWitt noted. “That includes more detailed information about the types (duration) of access passes that will be issued and how they should be used. We encourage community members to read that information, particularly if the new procedures are going to impact them directly.”

Which brings him to another goal of the publicity campaign, he said. Sharing the details of the access control measures with coworkers, friends at Fort Lee and military family members who frequent the installation will help ensure the information is disseminated to all levels.

“Good communication is the best way to identify potential problems that will result in frustration, or possibly denial of access, later on,” DeWitt said. “We have several resources in place – like the Army Fort Lee Facebook page – that allow community members to ask questions and voice concerns. We’re trying to make this a transparent process that won’t result in needless inconveniences.”

The frequently asked questions document can be found at [http://www.lee.army.mil/pmo/documents/Fort Lee Installation Access FAQ.pdf](http://www.lee.army.mil/pmo/documents/Fort_Lee_Installation_Access_FAQ.pdf).

A previous Traveller article “New access requirements to enhance installation security” is available at [www.ftleetraveller.com](http://www.ftleetraveller.com) – type the title of the article in the search area.

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