



EBTC INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: Border security documents

SOURCE: CBC News

The United States says it has no intention of delaying its plan to introduce tougher security checks at border crossings, including with Canada.

Michael Chertoff, the U.S. Homeland Security secretary, told Stockwell Day, Canada's minister of public safety, that the new regulations will come into effect Jan. 1, 2008.

As of that date, Canadians will need a passport to enter the United States at land border crossings, and Washington will require Americans to obtain a new security identity card to re-enter the country.

Canadian officials want the plan changed or at least delayed.

But on Tuesday, Chertoff dismissed the suggestion.

"It seems to me way premature to raise the flag of defeat when I think we have ample precedent and ample ability to meet the deadline," he said.

Border travel troubles predicted

The U.S. plan could affect travel plans for millions of Canadians and Americans who cross the border every year. Many do so with simple identification, like drivers licences.

There are fears if the new rules go ahead, many thousands of would-be visitors would just stay home rather than go to the trouble of obtaining the new documents.

The Conference Board of Canada has examined the issue and found that just nine per cent of Americans without passports would be interested in obtaining the new security card. The economic think-tank predicts trouble ahead, especially for the tourism industry.

Day said after meeting with Chertoff that he doesn't think it would be "responsible" to "suggest to my colleagues or to Canadians that the date is going to be extended."