



Why This Matters

The Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program was initiated after September 11, 2001, as a border accord initiative among the United States, Canada, and Mexico to ensure the security and safety of inter-border commerce. The program goal is to promote free and secure trade by using common risk management principles, supply chain security, industry partnership, and advanced technology to improve the efficiency of screening and clearing commercial traffic at our shared borders. It is paramount that the program works as intended to reduce exposing the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to increased risk of compromised border security.

DHS Response

CBP concurred with our recommendations and stated that it plans to implement corrective actions to address the concerns identified. These actions include coordinating with both Mexican and Canadian officials to improve determining driver continued eligibility and developing an approach to monitor the outcome of the FAST program.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov

Free and Secure Trade Program - Continued Driver Eligibility

What We Determined

The FAST program continued eligibility processes do not ensure that only eligible drivers remain in the program. CBP is hampered in its ability to ensure that Mexican citizens and residents in the program are low risk. Mexico does not share the Southern border FAST program with the United States to vet and continuously monitoring drivers' eligibility. Also, the FAST program's Continuous Vetting process does not assess all violations and criminal information that may render drivers ineligible to participate in the FAST program. The information excluded from this process is reviewed every five years. As a result, high risk drivers may be actively enrolled in the FAST program, exposing CBP to increased risk of compromised border security. In addition, CBP has not implemented a process to assess the effect that the FAST program has on border security. CBP should determine whether FAST participation has increased or decreased border security risk at land ports of entry and if needed, establish control processes to mitigate any additional risk.

What We Recommend

Customs and Border Protection's Assistant Commissioner for Field Office Operations:

- 1) Coordinate with the Department of State and the Mexican government to determine the eligibility of Mexican participants in the FAST program.
- 2) Develop and implement a process to recurrently verify the eligibility status of enrolled drivers by screening for derogatory information available to CBP that could render a driver ineligible for FAST.
- 3) Develop and implement a process for land ports of entry to assess and continuously monitor the effect of the FAST program on border security risk and implement remedial actions as needed.