

For many years, the National Tour Association has promoted the interests of packaged travel companies in North America. Since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, several tour operators have noted that it has become increasingly difficult for motorcoaches to cross the US borders with Canada and Mexico. They point to three chief causes for this difficulty:

1. Procedures and support document needs tend to vary from border point to border point. This lack of standardization causes lengthy delays and throws itineraries into disarray. This is especially exasperating to passengers due to the fact that motorcoach passengers are a low security threat, generally senior citizens or high school groups.
2. The checking of identification and documentation for each passenger leads to lengthy and unnecessary delays. Given the profile of a typical motorcoach passenger, this is wasted time. A standardize manifest pre-clearance system would solve this problem by smoothing the clearance process and allow for detailed scrutiny of manifests before the coach arrives.
3. News of border-crossing delays and security-related hassles discourage cross-border tourism. Smoothing the overall process would promote Canadian and Mexican tourism in the United States and go a long way to erasing the “fortress America” image that many international travelers hold.

The National Tour Association encourages the Department of Homeland Security to examine policies and procedures related to cross-border motorcoach traffic in order to create a more standardized and transparent process that would allow for a secure, timely and seamless transportation experience. NTA and our members stand ready to assist DHS as they study this important travel issue.