

## DELAYS AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA)

On July 12, 2002, SSA initiated interim instructions for a phase-in policy which became effective for all offices on September 1, 2002. Under the new policy:

- SSA must use the INS' Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database by checking the alien's I-94 or A# (alien registration number) on the database, before completing its processing an application for a new social security number (SSN) or replacement card.
- Aliens who have been in the U.S. for less than 30 days may have their SSN applications processed even if the SAVE database does not verify their INS documentation. Aliens who have been in the U.S. for over 30 days must wait for SAVE verification before the SSA completes processing of the application for a SSN or replacement card.
- If there is any discrepancy in the information on SAVE versus the INS documents presented (e.g. name, date of birth, etc.), SSA must send a document verification request to INS. There is no deadline for the INS to respond, however, SSA officers are to follow up with INS in 20 day intervals.
- SSA has reported that in some cases, it must go through several follow-ups with INS before the SAVE database is updated, so that the information on this database is consistent with the INS documents presented by the alien and SSA can complete processing of the application.
- Processing can be especially lengthy in the case of some aliens: SSA will not begin processing a SSN application of aliens who were born in, are natives or citizens of, or recently resided in targeted countries (currently, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan), until SSA has INS verification (with exceptions for A or G nonimmigrants, U.S. permanent residents, and U.S. citizens).

Note that aliens who hold valid nonimmigrant status giving them authorization to work for an employer are work authorized, even if they have not completed the process of obtaining a SSN.