

TECHNICAL (BIOMETRIC)

1. Which fingers are required for capture on the PIV card? Should the choice of which fingers to capture for the PIV card be automatic, or should the operator have the final say?

The Index fingers are designated as primary for capture to the PIV card. Fingerprint substitution should only take place if the primary fingerprint cannot be imaged successfully (e.g. missing or badly scarred). (Ref: FIPS 201 Section 4.4.1)

2. In the event fingerprint capture is not possible, what should the alternative biometric be, and how should it be handled throughout the registration and issuance process?

In the event fingerprint capture is not possible, agencies must collect an alternative biometric. The most common is probably a facial image, however this is not specified by FIPS 201. For the purposes of the criminal history check, there is no alternate biometric. Where prints are not available, OPM will rely on the name check for criminal history. (Ref: FIPS 201 4.4.1)

3. What is the basis for the FIPS 201 fingerprint sensor requirement of 12.8mm x 16.5mm?

Computations made on data generated in NIST's MINEX trial showed that the best commercial template encoders access fingerprint ridge data in areas exceeding the final 12.8 x 16.5 specification. This finding implies some loss of minutia information if smaller areas are imaged.

4. At PIV card issuance, should the applicant's fingerprints be matched against the enrollment record, the PIV card biometrics, either, or both? Is this actually mandatory?

Biometric match of fingerprints at card issuance is mandatory. The match should be made against the templates placed on the PIV card from the record captured at enrollment. Whether this record is in the IDMS or on the PIV card is at the agency's discretion; however, matching to the PIV card has the added advantage of validating the biometric record on the PIV card. (Ref. FIPS 201, Section 5.3.1)

5. For fingerprint capture, is extraction from the record captured for the background investigation or independent capture the preferred method for collecting the PIV card fingerprint biometrics, and what are the restrictions on the use of either method?

Either method is acceptable. If capture is done independently, both capture events should be conducted in the same session to ensure continuity.