



# United States Army Garrison – Miami

## Common Access Card (CAC)

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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#### What is the Common Access Card?

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The Common Access Card (CAC) is a major smart card initiative currently underway across the Department of Defense (DoD). The CAC is a smart card that will serve as the:

1. Standard ID card for active-duty military personnel, National Guard and Selected Reserve personnel, DoD civilian employees, and eligible contractor personnel;
2. Principal card used to enable physical access to buildings and controlled spaces;
3. Principal card used to enable computer network and system access; and
4. Primary platform for the PKI authentication token.

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#### What is PKI?

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Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) provides data protection and can be used for sign-on access control, signing electronic documents for e-commerce, and encrypting e-mail. An added benefit of the CAC is that it will eliminate redundant data entry. Personnel will no longer have to fill out their name, rank and social security number on every form or every place they go – the CAC automatically provides this information.

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#### Who Will Receive the CAC?

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Active-duty military personnel, Selected Reserve, National Guard, DoD civilian employees, and eligible contractor personnel will receive a CAC. Retirees and military dependents will not receive the CAC at this time, but will continue receiving the current identification card.

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#### How can I use the CAC in my daily life?

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Initially, the CAC will be used to enable building access, computer network access, and personnel identification. Service members may use the CAC to enter their post/camp base/station, log onto their computers, or to verify their eligibility for benefits at a medical office or dining facility. These will be the primary uses of the CAC for its initial release. As the technology becomes more sophisticated, the Uniformed services will place additional functions on the CAC, leading to improvements in many business processes and services.

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#### When will the CACs be issued?

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The Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System/Real-time Automated Personnel Identification System (DEERS/RAPIDS) workstations will issue the CACs, starting with the Beta Tests at selected sites in October 2000. The DoD mandate to begin implementation of the CAC initiative is December 31, 2000. Full implementation of the CAC will run from February 2001 through the end of FY 2002.

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#### What is a smart card?

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A smart card is a credit card-size device that contains one or more integrated circuit chips and may also employ one or more of the following technologies: magnetic stripe; barcodes; non-contact and radio frequency transmitters; biometric information; encryption and authentication; or photo identification.

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#### What is the benefit of smart card technology?

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Smart card technology will streamline business processes, share, and protect information. For instance, because smart cards can securely store and access information about personnel, organizations can minimize paper-based, labor-intensive processes—thus saving money and time. Additionally, because smart card technology supports multiple applications on one platform, the number of cards issued to personnel will be reduced.