



30 September 2024

Ref: OIA 24-557

Mr Mark Brown
via FYI website: fyi-request-28399-4eb7101e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Mark

Request for information under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email to the New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) received on 14 September 2024, in which you request the following information under the Official Information Act 1982:

“Regarding the Passport eGates used at airports, would you please list what biometric details they check and measure for?”

Secondly the eGates have a false floor suggesting that they also measure your body weight and compare that against previous weights recorded. Would you confirm if this is the case? If this is occurring, then what are the ranges the body weight can fluctuate between before its considered a reading outside the acceptable range?”

In response to your request, the eGate system photographs the traveller’s face and compares that image’s facial biometrics with the facial biometrics of the image held on the passport entered by the traveller. The facial recognition software used by the eGates works by identifying, measuring and mapping the facial features or landmarks of the face, such as the nose, eyes, and ears. When a traveller’s facial features match up with the facial features of the passport image, the system permits the traveller to pass. If the system cannot determine a match, the system will not allow the traveller to pass, and the traveller is then referred to a Customs officer for manual processing and identification confirmation before being permitted to travel.

I can confirm that the eGate system does not weigh travellers. There are several reasons for this, most notably that passports do not record a traveller’s weight to enable comparison and a traveller’s weight will fluctuate when for example, wearing a backpack.

If you have any queries in regard to this response, please contact the Correspondence, Reviews and Ministerial Servicing Team: OIA@customs.govt.nz

Please note that Customs proactively releases responses to Official Information Act requests on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after we have sent it to you. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Nāku noa, nā

Jonathan Morten
Manager, Service Optimisation