



Transportation
Security
Administration

Fact Sheet

Changes to the Security Process

Since 9/11 significant advancements have been made in aviation security, including the installation of hardened cockpit doors, a substantial increase in the number of Federal Air Marshals, the establishment of the Federal Flight Deck Officer program, the 100 percent screening of all passengers and baggage and other measures. These initiatives have raised the bar in aviation security and shifted the threat.

As the agency looks to continue to enhance security, it is paramount that terrorists not be able to predict with certainty what screening procedures they will encounter at airports. By incorporating randomness into our procedures and eliminating low-threat items, TSA will focus its efforts on halting more serious threats to aviation, such as explosives.

Changes to the Security Screening Process

New procedures will be easy for passengers to navigate but difficult for terrorists to manipulate. These measures include more random searches of passengers and their carry-on bags as well as refined pat-down procedures.

- **Refined Pat-Downs**

New procedures will include screening of the legs from mid-thigh down to the ankle and the entire arm from shoulder to wrist. Exposed skin or close-fitting clothes that clearly illustrate that there is no threat will not require screening. Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) of the same gender as the passenger will continue to use the front of the hand to screen the passenger's entire back and abdomen.

- **Random Additional Screening**

Passengers may be selected randomly for additional screening. These searches will be conducted without regard to race, age, gender, religion or nationality. They will be very straightforward for passengers but will add complexity and an element of unpredictability for those who wish to circumvent our system. By design, travelers will not experience the same search every time they fly. These searches may include:

- Explosive screening of shoes
- Hand-wanding of passengers
- Pat down
- Carry-on bag searches

Changes to the Prohibited Items List

TSA is updating the prohibited items list to more effectively confront current threats to aviation. Changing the prohibited items list to allow certain high volume items that do not pose a threat enables TSOs to focus on identifying explosives.

- **Small Scissors are Now Permitted**

Current data shows that scissors and tools make up about 25 percent of the total number of prohibited items nationwide. The number of scissors discovered at checkpoints and the time and effort dedicated to positively identifying them is disproportionate to the threat they pose. Metal scissors with pointed tips and a cutting edge four inches or less, as measured from the fulcrum, are now allowed. Metal scissors with blunt tips, plastic scissors and ostomy scissors will continue to be permitted.

- **Tools**

From April to October, 2005, 468,033 tools were discovered at security checkpoints. Screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers and other tools, (except crowbars, drills, hammers, and saws) seven inches or less in length are now permitted.

###