



Transportation
Security
Administration

Unpredictable, Random Security Talking Points and FAQs

March 2009

BACKGROUND:

Faced with a patient, adaptable enemy, TSA has migrated from a static, rigid security approach to a more nimble, flexible and unpredictable one.

As the agency continues to evolve, introducing new layers of security, there are now more opportunities than ever to counter an enemy that adapts attack plans and methods around known security protocols. The challenge is not only countering today's known threat but future, unknown threats as well.

TALKING POINTS:

- TSA has changed the way we do business. Specific security measures will vary from airport to airport and day to day in order to counter an enemy that specifically designs attacks around known security protocols.
- This new security approach makes attack planning more difficult as procedures change from day to day.
- TSA has shifted resources from a static, checkpoint based security model to a more nimble, unpredictable approach that starts well before passengers arrive at an airport. We are extending this effort and including our airport partners.
- Every airport would continue to follow a set of baseline security procedures. Local TSA will work with their airport partners to determine what additional security measures should be employed. These additional, random security measures will increase security by enhancing unpredictability.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Why are you doing this now?

A. We are constantly looking for ways to increase security. This evolution has been in progress for the past several years and is now reaching the entire airport.

Q. How does this increase security?

A. Increasing unpredictability makes attack planning more difficult.

For example, if airports are required to conduct three perimeter patrols every day and they schedule these patrols for 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m., this pattern can be easily overcome by an observant person. Under this new program, the frequency and pattern of patrols would vary from day to day, making planning an attack much more difficult.

Q. Is this a step back from standard security procedures? Are you decreasing security?

A. Playbook will improve security. Every airport will continue to follow a set of baseline security procedures. In addition, local TSA will work with their airport partners that adopt Playbook to determine what additional security measures should be employed. These additional, random security measures will greatly increase security by enhancing unpredictability.

Q. Do airports have to switch to this new protocol?

A. Implementation of this random, unpredictable approach for our airport counterparts is voluntary. Interest from our airport partners has been very high and we are confident that this approach will be widely adopted.

Q. Are airports that don't do this less safe than airports that do?

A. All airports have a high level of security and must follow baseline security procedures.

Q. When will airports move to this new approach to security?

A. Federal Security Directors will work with their counterparts at airports to ensure a smooth transition on a schedule that works best for all parties involved.