

Intro:

The timeline of airline security measures going back several decades shows that security has adapted to threats as they arose. But while the terrorist threat has changed over time, checkpoint security has not always kept pace and passengers have become passive subjects in the process rather than active, engaged partners. Because TSA was created in the aftermath of 9/11 to meet Congressional deadlines, checkpoints had to be force-fitted into available airport space. TSA is introducing changes to the checkpoint using people, process and technology to improve security while enhancing both the passenger's traveling experience and the officers' work experience. These changes will enable TSA to be more proactive in detecting and deterring threats.

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July 25, 1947

Three Romanian terrorists kill an aircrew member on board a Romanian Airlines flight, resulting in the world's first fatal hijacking.

November 1, 1955

First major act of criminal violence against a U.S. airliner In hopes of collecting his mother's life insurance, Jack Graham places a bomb in her luggage and kills all 44 people on board the Denver-bound plane.

January 6, 1960

A mid-air explosion by a suicide bomber kills all 34 people aboard a National Airlines plane, sparking demands for the use of baggage inspection devices.

May 1961

The first American airliner is diverted to Cuba. The U.S. government begins using armed guards on commercial planes when requested by the airlines or the FBI.

September 5, 1961

President John F. Kennedy signs legislation making air piracy punishable by death or imprisonment.

January 1969

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) creates the Task Force on the Deterrence of Air Piracy following the hijacking of eight airliners to Cuba earlier in January 1969. The task force develops a "profile" to be used along with metal detectors (magnetometers) in screening passengers.

August 29, 1969

Two Palestinian terrorists carry out the first hijacking of a U.S. aircraft flying outside the Western Hemisphere when they divert an Israel-bound TWA aircraft to Syria.

September 11, 1970

President Richard Nixon announces a comprehensive anti-hijacking program that includes a Federal marshal program.

October 1970

An agreement is signed between the departments of the Treasury and Transportation, with the U.S. Customs Service given the responsibility to establish an enforcement program aimed at eliminating the threat of more hijackings.

The Customs Air Security Officers Program, better known as the "Sky Marshal Program," is created. Armed Customs Air Security Officers are placed on aircrafts dressed as typical passengers in an effort to thwart any hijacking attempts.

March 9, 1972

Moments after a flight bound for Los Angeles takes off from JFK Airport in New York, the airline is notified that there is a bomb on board and the aircraft returns to JFK. A bomb-sniffing dog finds the explosive 12 minutes before it is set to detonate. The FAA Explosives Detection Canine Team Program is created so any aircraft receiving a bomb threat can quickly divert to an airport with a canine team.

December 1972

The March bomb scare and two more violent hijackings in October and November trigger a landmark change in aviation security.

The FAA issues an emergency rule making inspection of carry-on baggage and scanning of all passengers by airlines mandatory at the start of 1973.

August 5, 1974

The anti-hijacking Air Transportation Security Act of 1974 is passed. It sanctions the FAA's universal screening rule that spurs the introduction in U.S. airports of metal detection screening portals for passengers and X-ray inspection systems for carry-on baggage.

August 6, 1974

Two people are killed and 17 injured when a bomb explodes near the Pan Am ticket counter in Los Angeles International Airport.

June 14, 1985

TWA Flight 847 is hijacked en route from Athens to Rome and forced to land in Beirut, Lebanon, where hijackers hold the plane for 17 days. When their demands to release more than 700 Shiite Muslim prisoners are not met, hostage Robert Dean Stethem, a U.S. Navy diver, is shot and his body is dumped onto the airport tarmac.

June 22, 1985

In response to the TWA Flight 847 hostage ordeal, President Ronald Reagan directs the Secretary of Transportation, in cooperation with the Secretary of State and Attorney General, to immediately explore an expansion of the FAA's armed Federal Air Marshal Program (previously the Sky Marshal Program) aboard international flights of U.S. air carriers.

August 8, 1985

Congress enacts Public Law 99-83, the International Security and Development Cooperation Act, which establishes the explicit statutory basis for the Federal Air Marshal Program and makes FAMs a permanent part of the FAA workforce.

April 17, 1986

Jordanian Nizar Hindawi attempts to send his pregnant Irish girlfriend, Ann Murphy, from London's Heathrow Airport to Israel with a bomb hidden in her suitcase. The plan is foiled when El Al (Israel's national airline) security searches her bags and finds the explosive device.

December 21, 1988

A bomb destroys Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 on board as well as 11 people on the ground. The bomb was found to have been concealed in a radio cassette player.

After the Lockerbie bombing, security measures go into effect for U.S. carriers at European and Middle Eastern airports that require all checked baggage to be X-ray or searched and matched to the passenger.

1989

In wake of the Pan Am crash over Lockerbie in 1988, the Aviation Security Advisory Committee (ASAC) is created to examine areas of civil aviation security with the aim of developing recommendations for the improvement of civil aviation security, methods and procedures. It is composed of federal and private sector organizations.

September 11, 2001

Nineteen terrorists affiliated with al-Qaeda hijack four commercial airliners. Two of the planes are flown into the World Trade Center towers in New York City and one is crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth plane crashes into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers attempt to retake control of the plane. Thousands are killed in the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil. This is the first time airliners are used as weapons rather than bargaining tools. The attacks change the way hijacking is perceived as a security threat.

November 19, 2001

Following the 9/11 tragedy the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) is signed into law. This gives the federal government direct responsibility for airport screening. The Transportation Security Administration is created to oversee security in all modes of travel.

November 19, 2001

The position of federal security director (FSD) is created to act as TSA's personal representative against the war on terrorism at airports nationwide. ATSA mandates the FAA to require passenger airplanes flying in the U.S. to have reinforced cockpit doors.

December 22, 2001

Richard Reid uses matches in an attempt to ignite explosive devices hidden in his shoes on a flight from Paris to Miami. He is overpowered by passengers and crew. As a result, a new shoe screening policy is

implemented and later, TSA will require all shoes to be removed for X-ray screening in 2006.

December 23, 2001

The Federal Aviation Administration issues a security directive ordering airlines to add random shoe inspections to the random baggage checks already carried out.

April 24, 2002

TSA announces that it will deploy up to 1,100 explosive detection systems and up to 4,700 explosive trace detection machines at the nation's 429 airports to screen all bags for explosives by December 31, 2002.

November 25, 2002

The Department of Homeland Security is established by the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

The Homeland Security Act creates the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program to train and arm volunteer aviators to protect the aircraft cockpit and passengers against acts of criminal violence and air piracy.

August 24, 2004

Two female Chechen suicide bombers are responsible for using hexogen, better known as RDX, to cause simultaneous explosions in separate Russian passenger planes. Ninety people are killed in the attacks.

December 17, 2004

President Bush signs into law the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 which, among other measures, requires TSA to add butane lighters to its list of prohibited items.

March 31, 2005

TSA recognizes Congressional intent and adds all common lighters to the prohibited items list.

August 10, 2006

British officials foil a plot to blow up aircraft flying from the U.K. to the U.S. with liquid explosives hidden in carry-on bags. The terror alert is raised to "high," or "orange," in the U.S. and to its highest level of "severe," or "red," for all commercial flights from the United Kingdom. All liquid, gels, and aerosols are banned from carry-ons. TSA institutes mandatory shoe screening to inspect for dangerous items via X-ray after the threat level is raised.

September 25, 2006

TSA announces it is adjusting its total ban on liquids, gels and aerosols. Rules are changed to allow passengers to travel through security checkpoints with travel-sized toiletries, of three ounces or less, that fit comfortably in one quart-size, clear plastic zip-top bag. This is called the "3-1-1 Rule." Passengers can also board with beverages purchased in the secure area.

October 2007

In response to intelligence regarding terrorists using remote controls to detonate explosives, TSA trains officers to conduct additional inspection of remote controls in carry-on baggage without banning these items.

December 25, 2009

Umar Faruk Abdulmutallab attempts to detonate an explosive device concealed in his underwear on board Northwest flight 253. TSA works with DHS, foreign partners, and air carriers to swiftly implement enhanced aviation security measures.

April 2010

TSA puts new enhanced aviation security measures in place for all air carriers with international flights to the U.S., superseding the emergency measures put in place immediately following the attempted terrorist attack on Dec. 25, 2009.

August 2010

TSA achieves key the 9/11 Act requirement of screening 100 percent of air cargo on domestic passenger aircraft.

October 2010

TSA implements immediate security measures for air cargo after suspicious devices comprised of modified printer cartridges are found on board in-bound cargo aircraft.

November 2010

TSA rolls out new pat-down procedures to airports nationwide. Pat-downs are one important tool to help TSA detect hidden and dangerous items such as explosives.

November 2010

TSA achieves 100 percent watch list matching for all passenger flights within or bound for the U.S. using the Secure Flight system. Secure Flight, the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) behind-the-scenes watch list matching program, fulfills a key recommendation of the 9/11 Commission by assuming responsibility of watch list matching from individual airlines. By establishing a consistent watch list matching system, Secure Flight enhances aviation security and more effectively facilitates air travel for passengers.

December 2010

TSA deploys approximately 500 Advanced Imaging technology units to airports nationwide, fulfilling its goal to implement this highly effective security tool. Advanced imaging technology represents the best available technology to safely screen passengers for metallic and non-metallic threats including weapons, explosives and other objects concealed under layers of clothing without physical contact.