

# Department of Homeland Security **Office of Inspector General**

TSA Management and Oversight at Honolulu  
International Airport






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Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / [www.oig.dhs.gov](http://www.oig.dhs.gov)

SEP 27 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: John W. Halinski  
Deputy Administrator  
Transportation Security Administration

FROM: Anne L. Richards   
Assistant Inspector General for Audits

SUBJECT: *TSA Management and Oversight at Honolulu International Airport*

Attached for your action is our final report, *TSA Management and Oversight at Honolulu International Airport*. We incorporated the formal comments from the Transportation Security Administration in the final report.

The report contains four recommendations aimed at improving airport screening operations. Your office concurred with all recommendations. Based on information in your response to the draft report, we consider recommendations 2 and 3 resolved and open. Once your office has fully implemented the recommendations, please submit a formal closeout letter to us within 30 days so that we may close the recommendations. The memorandum should be accompanied by evidence of completion of agreed-upon corrective actions and of the disposition of any monetary amounts.

Recommendations 1 and 4 remain unresolved and open. As prescribed by the Department of Homeland Security Directive 077-1, Follow-Up and Resolutions for the Office of Inspector General Report Recommendations, within 90 days of the date of this memorandum, please provide our office with a written response that includes your (1) agreement or disagreement, (2) corrective action plan, and (3) target completion date for each recommendation. Also, please include responsible parties and any other supporting documentation necessary to inform us about the current status of the recommendation. Until your response is received and evaluated, the recommendations will be considered open and unresolved.

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we are providing copies of our report to appropriate congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. We will post a redacted version of the report on our website.



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Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Mark Bell, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (202) 254-4100.

Attachment



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Background .....	2
Results of Audit .....	5
Effects of Changes to Screening Procedures Not Fully Evaluated .....	5
More Direct Supervision of Screening Operations, Better Supervisory Guidance, and Training Needed .....	8
Inadequate Staffing and Need for Equipment at Affected Location .....	11
Recommendations .....	15
Management Comments and OIG Analysis .....	16

## Appendixes

Appendix A: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.....	20
Appendix B: Management Comments to the Draft Report .....	23
Appendix C: Representatives Mica and Chaffetz Request Letter .....	29
Appendix D: Review of Training .....	31
Appendix E: Review of Performance Indicators and Disciplinary Actions.....	33
Appendix F: Staff Involved in Security Failure .....	40
Appendix G: HNL Airport Configuration.....	41
Appendix H: Types of Checked Baggage Screening Searches.....	42
Appendix I: Major Contributors to This Report.....	43
Appendix J: Report Distribution .....	44



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Department of Homeland Security

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## Abbreviations

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EDS	Explosive Detection System
ETD	Explosive Trace Detection
FSD	Federal Security Director
FY	fiscal year
HNL	Honolulu International Airport
OIG	Office of Inspector General
SOP	standard operating procedure
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
TSO	Transportation Security Officer
TSM	Transportation Security Manager



## **Executive Summary**

Representatives John Mica and Jason Chaffetz requested a review to determine why a portion of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) screener workforce at Honolulu International Airport did not perform critical transportation security screening of baggage. The request came after TSA investigated allegations of improper screening of checked baggage at the airport and took disciplinary and administrative actions. The objective of our audit was to determine whether TSA ensured that Transportation Security Officers complied with baggage screening procedures at Honolulu International Airport.

Although ignoring security procedures is never justified, Transportation Security Officers at one location in Honolulu International Airport did not screen all checked baggage as required during the last few months of 2010. The responsibility for screening the baggage belongs to the individual Transportation Security Officers, but this situation might not have occurred if TSA —

- Developed changes in screening procedures comprehensively and then thoroughly evaluated the effects of such changes;
- Supervisors provided better oversight of Transportation Security Officers and baggage screening operations; and
- Provided screening operations at the affected location with adequate staff and screening equipment in a timely manner.

Without ensuring that baggage is screened as appropriate, TSA risks the safety of the traveling public by allowing unscreened baggage on passenger aircraft.

We made four recommendations to TSA that, when implemented, should assist the agency with developing and managing changes to security procedures. The recommendations should also help TSA provide more effective oversight of airport screening operations. TSA concurred with the four recommendations.



## Background

TSA protects the Nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce. TSA reports that its vision is to set the standard for excellence in transportation security through its people, processes, and technology.

As part of TSA's mission, all individuals, accessible property, and checked baggage must be screened using the screening methods contained in TSA's standard operating procedures (SOPs). TSA's *Checked Baggage Screening Standard Operating Procedures* describe uniform procedures and standards for screening baggage to deter, detect, and prevent the carriage of any prohibited items, such as explosives, incendiaries, or weapons, onboard aircraft. TSA periodically modifies its SOPs to adjust to the current threat environment, the addition of new equipment, or passenger concerns.

TSA primarily uses the Explosive Detection System (EDS) or Explosive Trace Detection (ETD) to screen checked baggage.

- EDS screening of checked baggage requires Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) to place checked baggage in a machine to screen it by x ray for prohibited items. EDS screening of checked baggage is mandatory at locations where the equipment is available.
- ETD screening of checked baggage relies on manual procedures combined with technology to identify small amounts of explosives. ETD screening requires TSOs to [REDACTED] TSOs swab baggage and place the swab in a unit that uses ETD technology to analyze the content for potential explosive residue.

Prior to January 2010, TSA's SOP for using ETD required that [REDACTED] of checked bags receive [REDACTED] (testing the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (40/40/20 protocol). TSA explained that although the 40/40/20 protocol was initially effective and efficient for random and unpredictable screening, the changing threat environment warranted new procedures. Appendix H contains a detailed description of TSA's checked baggage screening searches.



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Department of Homeland Security

TSA's Office of Security Operations explored options to replace the 40/40/20 protocol with a procedure that improved the probability of detection while maintaining an acceptable level of efficiency using TSA staffing allocation standards. TSA decided to [REDACTED] and use a new ETD method that required a [REDACTED] [REDACTED]<sup>1</sup> Selectee bags would continue to be screened using [REDACTED] procedures.

Beginning in January 2010, TSA required TSOs to [REDACTED] of checked bags [REDACTED] when using the ETD screening methodology at all airports, including Honolulu International Airport (HNL). The new SOP allowed use, at times, of alternate screening procedures (mitigation procedures). Mitigation procedures enable staff to use alternate procedures for timely screening during specific, short-term, special circumstances, such as unexpected increases in the volume of checked baggage. Authority was delegated to the Federal Security Director (FSD) at an airport to implement such procedures for 15-minute increments to decrease the security risks associated with excess baggage.

**Mitigation Procedures** allow for screening of bags by:  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] baggage, that is, swabbing four checked bags at a time, taking [REDACTED] of each bag.  
There may only be a total of [REDACTED] before the sample is analyzed.  
Using certified canine teams.  
Source: TSA

In December 2010, a confidential source notified TSA officials and provided video evidence showing some TSOs failing to follow required screening procedures at the Overseas Terminal (Lobby 4) screening location at HNL. Although some employees adhered to the agency's screening procedures, others circumvented these procedures and cleared bags for transport without the required screening.

Among other things, the evidence showed TSOs opening bags, placing notices of inspection inside, and transporting them back to the airline without screening them. The videos also showed TSOs marking baggage as "cleared" before screening,

A **notice of inspection** is a document TSOs place inside checked baggage indicating the baggage has been opened for inspection by TSA.  
Source: TSA

<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] is a special requirement for individuals selected by a computer-assisted passenger screening system or another process as determined and approved by TSA.





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Department of Homeland Security

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██████████ a cart loaded with baggage, and screening baggage by swabbing only the  
██████████

In response to the allegations of screening violations, TSA’s Office of Inspection performed an investigation between December 31, 2010, and March 23, 2011. The investigation team interviewed 191 employees and reviewed documentation and video evidence. Although one TSO admitted to circumventing screening procedures as early as January 2010, the investigation focused only on the period between September and December 2010. TSA took personnel actions against employees who did not properly screen checked baggage during the last few months of 2010 in the Overseas Terminal (Lobby 4).

In June 2011, Representative John Mica and Representative Jason Chaffetz requested a review to determine why a portion of TSA’s screener workforce at HNL failed to perform critical transportation security screening. The Representatives requested that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) provide “a complete analysis of the failure of TSA’s oversight and supervision of screening operations, protocols, and procedures,” including corrective and disciplinary actions. They also requested that we review performance evaluations, guidance, training requirements, and use of the National Deployment Force. The Representatives’ letter is in appendix C; additional information responding to their questions is in appendices D, E, and F.

*TSA’s **National Deployment Force** deploys Transportation Security Officers to support airport screening operations during emergencies seasonal demands or other circumstances requiring more staffing resources than are regularly available.*

Source: TSA



## Results of Audit

Although ignoring security procedures is never justified, TSOs at one location in HNL did not screen all checked baggage as required during the last few months of 2010. The responsibility for screening the baggage belongs to the individual TSOs, but this situation might not have occurred if TSA —

- Developed changes in screening procedures comprehensively and thoroughly evaluated the effects of such changes;
- Supervisors provided better oversight of TSOs and baggage screening operations; and
- Provided screening operations at the affected location with adequate staff and screening equipment in a timely manner.

Without ensuring that baggage is screened as appropriate, TSA risks the safety of the traveling public by allowing unscreened baggage on passenger aircraft.

### **Effects of Changes to Screening Procedures Not Fully Evaluated**

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TSA's fragmented process of developing changes to screening procedures and not fully evaluating the effects of new procedures may have contributed to the screening violations at HNL.

### **Developing Changes to Screening Procedures and Evaluating Effects**

TSA had a fragmented and inconsistent process for developing and evaluating changes to its SOP for baggage screening. TSA relied on different numbers and locations of airports when studying proposed changes to the SOP. TSA had difficulty providing a comprehensive document or centralized point of contact to explain the studies and analysis to support decisions driving this and other changes to SOPs. Nor did TSA have a comprehensive document that showed whether the procedural changes would have an adverse effect on unique airports, such as HNL, which has a high volume of checked baggage and densely packed boxes that require screening.



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Department of Homeland Security

Between 2007 and 2010, TSA headquarters conducted four pilot studies on the effects of various ETD protocols on checked baggage screening. However, these studies did not contain sufficient data and analysis to guide procedural changes nationwide. As shown in table 1, TSA was not consistent with the airports tested. According to TSA officials, the inconsistencies were due to changes in the equipment on hand and other factors.

Table 1: Airports Evaluated in Pilot Studies*					
No.	Category	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	X	√			
2	X	√			
3	I		√	√	
4	I	√	√	√	
5	I	√	√	√	√
6	II	√			
7	II		√	√	
8	II				√
9	II	√	√	√	
10	II		√		
11	III		√		
12	III	√			
13	III		√		
14	III	√			
15	III		√		
16	III		√		
17	IV	√			
18	IV				√
19	IV	√			
20	IV		√		
21	IV				√
22	IV		√		
23	IV		√		

*Source:* OIG based on TSA information.

\*TSA classifies the Nation's airports into one of five categories (X, I, II, III, and IV) based on various factors such as the number of annual takeoffs and landings. In general, Category X airports have the largest number of passengers boarding aircraft and Category IV airports have the smallest number.



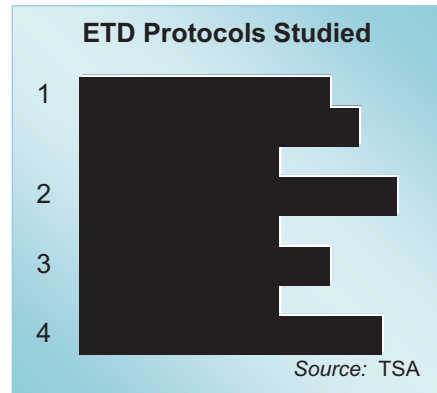
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Department of Homeland Security

Between 2007 and 2010, TSA conducted four pilot studies of ETD protocols:

- In a 2007 study, TSA reviewed 10 Category X through IV airports using four different screening ETD protocols. The results showed that the average search time to screen ██████████ of checked baggage ██████████ was 320 seconds per bag; using the 40/40/20 protocol took an average of 161 seconds per bag.

- In a 2008 study of 13 Category I through IV airports, data was collected on ETD screening with ██████████

The results showed that Category I airports had problems screening the checked baggage in a timely manner. The report recommended providing EDS machines to two airports with high numbers of passengers to relieve them of ETD screening.



- In a 2009 study, TSA tested an additional five Category I and II airports. The report concluded that implementing ETD using the ██████████ protocol increased screening time over using the 40/40/20 protocol. However, when implementing the ██████████ protocol in January 2010, TSA could not demonstrate how it used this information.
- In a 2010 study conducted in April and May after implementing the ██████████ protocol, TSA tested it at four Category I, II, and IV airports. Although results were limited, they showed that those airports were meeting the average screening time and recommended ending additional data collection. TSA did not test a Category X airport during this study.

At the time of the change to the *Checked Baggage Screening SOPs* in January 2010, HNL and ██████████ were the only Category X airports with locations using ██████████ on checked



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### Department of Homeland Security

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baggage. TSA did not test these airports in any of the four pilot studies. Therefore, TSA did not know the effects of changes to the SOPs on its largest airports.

Although none of the pilot reports thoroughly explained TSA's methodology for selecting airports for the studies, TSA indicated that it focused on airports that relied heavily on ETD-only screening. Additionally, although TSA officials explained that they tried to be consistent in their choices of airports, only 1 of the 23 airports was tested in all four pilot studies, as shown in table 1. Our statistician reviewed the study information provided by TSA and concluded that TSA documentation did not address a specific methodology that TSA used to select airports for pilot testing.

### **More Direct Supervision of Screening Operations, Better Supervisory Guidance, and Training Needed**

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The TSOs' decision not to follow screening procedures could have been due in part to limited direct supervision. Also, clearer guidance on direct observation of screening operations and better training of supervisors might have addressed this situation.

#### **Direct Supervision**

Screening procedures were circumvented, in part, because of Supervisory TSOs' limited direct supervision of employees at HNL. TSA management at HNL did not ensure that screening managers and supervisors were regularly present, observing operations, and performing all responsibilities required by TSA management directives and SOPs.

Although the level of supervision of checked baggage screening operations is not recorded or measured, our video review, TSA's investigation report, and employee interviews showed TSA management provided varying levels of supervision. Some TSOs believed management and direct oversight was sufficient, but the majority stated that management, including Lead TSOs and Supervisory TSOs, provided occasional, little, or no direct supervision. For example:



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Department of Homeland Security

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- One Transportation Security Manager (TSM) said that he observed the Lead TSO, Supervisory TSO, and another manager spending too much time in the office and not managing staff at the baggage screening locations.
- One Supervisory TSO said that TSMs were not involved at all at baggage screening locations.
- One Supervisory TSO confirmed that there was no local policy for direct supervision. The Supervisory TSO would have liked more direct contact with the TSMs and did not believe managers spent enough time at screening locations.

### Supervisory Guidance

TSA has directives and procedures on management and oversight responsibilities, but they do not include clear guidance on direct supervision of screening operations, and thus allow different interpretations and implementation. TSA's directives and procedures include its *Screening Management SOP* and the *Performance Accountability and Standards System Management Directive No. 1100.43-1 and User Guidance*.

TSA's *Screening Management SOP* includes staffing guidelines, duties, and responsibilities to ensure that checked baggage screening meets statutory requirements. According to this SOP, the Supervisory TSO is responsible for implementing security screening standards at all screening locations. The SOP further explains that a Supervisory TSO must be present at each screening location open for operation or designate a Lead TSO to act on his or her behalf.

The SOP identifies more than 40 Supervisory TSO tasks to ensure that each screening location is operating properly. These tasks include the following:

- Monitoring TSO and Lead TSO performance;
- Maintaining the proper staffing level at each screening location;
- Ensuring that TSOs are knowledgeable about all SOPs;



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Department of Homeland Security

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- Correcting improper screening or behavior; and
- Ensuring that Notice of Inspection cards are properly used and controlled.

Although the SOP includes Supervisory TSO responsibilities and requirements for completing duties, it does not include specific metrics, leaving the responsibilities and requirements open to interpretation. For example, the SOP requires Supervisory TSOs or designated Lead TSOs to monitor TSO performance, monitor all screening activities, and ensure compliance with all applicable SOPs. The SOP also requires them to correct improper or faulty application of screening procedures to ensure effective, vigilant, and courteous screening. However, rather than include more specific details on oversight requirements, the SOP focuses on screening equipment operation, safety concerns, and opening and closing of screening locations.

The *Performance Accountability and Standards System TSA Management Directive No. 1100.43-1 and User Guidance* includes criteria for evaluating TSOs' and Lead TSOs' technical proficiency, competencies, readiness for duty, training and development, and collateral duties. However, it does not contain means of measuring or evaluating the quality or quantity of direct supervision. For Supervisory TSOs and Screening Managers, this directive has similar criteria and provides criteria for supervisory accountability factors. Specifically, it includes a team-based measure that holds Supervisory TSOs and TSMs accountable for their direct reports in "Readiness for Duty" and "Training and Development."

### **Supervisory Training**

TSA provides Supervisory TSOs with training courses focused on general supervisory skills, but does not provide sufficient training on the quality and quantity of observation and supervision; or how often managers, Supervisory TSOs, and Lead TSOs should be physically present to observe screening operations. We attribute this training deficiency to the need for supervisory requirements in TSA's oversight-related guidance.

The Supervisor Technical Training course provides Supervisory TSOs and Lead TSOs with general supervisory skills to manage checkpoints and checked baggage screening locations. The training course discusses key topics such as Supervisory TSO job functions, communication, situational awareness, and managing screening operations. For example, the definition of situational awareness



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Department of Homeland Security

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includes understanding current conditions, recognizing potential hazards, planning, decision-making, understanding consequences of loss, and being proactive. The course provides information on managing multiple security incidents at checkpoints and checked baggage screening locations, but does not thoroughly address balancing Supervisory TSO administrative functions with direct observation.

Before TSA required Supervisory TSOs to take the Supervisor Technical Training course, it required them to take COACH! Training. This training helped Supervisory TSOs build on existing leadership skills with tools for checkpoint and checked baggage locations, but it did not directly address oversight and observation. TSA also offers TSMs a course—Leading People and Managing Operations—to provide general supervisory skills to manage responsibilities and challenges at checkpoints and checked baggage screening locations.

Although these three courses discuss key topics such as working with stakeholders, communication, and screening operations, TSA training could give more guidance to Supervisory TSOs and managers on how best to provide leadership presence at screening locations to ensure that TSOs are complying with screening procedures.

#### **Inadequate Staffing and Need for Equipment at Affected Location**

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TSA management at headquarters and HNL did not provide the staffing and more efficient equipment needed for screening operations at the affected location. Data was available for analysis, but TSA management at headquarters used a limited selection of information to predict and prepare for staffing demands. Furthermore, TSA management at HNL did not allocate staff appropriately to handle the volume of checked baggage that needed screening. Although requested, TSA headquarters did not provide the affected screening location with more efficient equipment to screen checked baggage, causing local TSA management to implement temporary solutions and mitigation procedures.





## Use of Data for Allocating Staff

TSA headquarters was aware that airports with high annual numbers of passengers boarding aircraft had difficulty screening checked baggage in a timely manner using ETD screening protocols. Yet TSA did not optimize its use of the available information and data to predict and prepare for staffing demands. TSA's pilot testing of new ETD protocols did not include significant testing of Category X airports, which have the largest number of passengers boarding aircraft.

TSA's Office of Security Operations conducted a 2008 pilot study of 13 airports, which included testing of three Category I airports, using an ETD protocol of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Following the study, TSA issued a memo proposing that Category I airports revert to the 40/40/20 protocol "in an effort to maintain operational flow and meet departure schedules."

At Category I airports, between 1.25 million and 5 million passengers board aircraft annually, whereas at Category X airports such as HNL, which were not tested in the study, more than 5 million passengers board annually. Because TSA did not test its [REDACTED] ETD protocol at Category X airports, it did not know whether these larger airports had difficulties screening checked baggage using the proposed new ETD screening protocol.

According to TSA management at HNL, some passengers who travel to Asian nations check very large boxes, called Balikbayan boxes (see exhibit 1). Measuring 18"x 18"x 24", these densely packed boxes are much larger than the 8"x 12"x 20" bag TSA used to estimate the length of time needed to screen using ETD. There was no study to evaluate the effect of these boxes under the changed SOPs.

**Exhibit 1: Balikbayan Boxes**



Source: OIG



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### Department of Homeland Security

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Local TSA management explained that they frequently shifted staff from other checked baggage screening locations to assist the affected screening location during peak times. On daily reports, screening managers documented staffing levels by specific screening location, but we could not determine how TSA used these reports to address the staffing problem, such as finding trends in the number or frequency of TSOs moved. Without tracking these staffing decisions, TSA management at HNL could not predict when such staffing would be needed in the short term or provide TSA headquarters with useful information for future staffing decisions.

#### **Mitigation Procedures**

TSA allowed airports to use mitigation procedures when using ETD screening under the new [REDACTED] protocol. According to TSA, the FSD at an airport may implement mitigation for 15-minute increments to decrease the security risks associated with excess baggage. The decision to implement mitigation procedures places direct responsibility on the FSD for deviating from standard checked baggage screening protocols. This option recognizes that timely screening cannot be conducted at all times, and it may create a misunderstanding among TSOs on the acceptability of applying alternate screening practices.

The affected screening location at HNL documented using mitigation procedures 30 times from January 13 through February 11, 2010. We did not find documentation that mitigation procedures were used after February 11, 2010; however, we noted that HNL screened an increasing volume of checked baggage with the same staffing allocation at the affected screening location. HNL management implemented additional actions, such as adding ETD machines or transporting baggage to other screening locations with EDS equipment, but these options were burdensome to TSOs.

To expedite the screening process for unexpected high-volume baggage needing to be screened, TSA allows airports to use various levels of screening and to intermittently use mitigation procedures under specific circumstances. Although bypassing security measures is never justified, these practices may have led



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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some TSOs to believe that [REDACTED] was not always possible, and that it was acceptable to not always perform such searches.

### Equipment

TSA headquarters did not provide HNL with the requested EDS screening equipment in a timely manner. HNL requested an EDS machine for the screening area in August 2008 because of safety concerns at the affected location. The request noted that safety is the over arching concern related to this request. More specifically, the check-in area of Lobby 4 is very congested because many of the flights are scheduled around the same time, causing the baggage to accumulate in a confined area. This causes a safety issue for the passengers as well as the Officers.

TSA headquarters confirmed receipt of HNL's request and added it to an unfunded requirements list. However, a prior OIG audit showed that new and used equipment was stored in a warehouse awaiting delivery to airports for more than 1 year at the time HNL was requesting the EDS equipment.<sup>2</sup>

In 2009, TSA headquarters informed HNL that the equipment would arrive in June 2010, 18 months after it was requested. TSA officials later explained that there were delays with the system integration contractor, pushing estimated delivery and installation to December 2010. The equipment arrived in December 2010, as the TSA Office of Inspection investigation began.

Without the more efficient EDS equipment, TSA management at HNL implemented labor-intensive interim options to ensure that all baggage was screened. For example, HNL established a pod of four additional ETD screening stations in the affected screening location. Local TSA management also instructed TSOs to transport baggage to another area approximately 500 feet away for EDS screening, which TSOs explained was physically demanding. TSOs had to load carts, navigate through crowds of passengers, unload and screen the

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<sup>2</sup> DHS OIG Audit Report, *Management of the Transportation Security Administration's Logistics Center*, OIG-10-14, November 2009.



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### Department of Homeland Security

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baggage, and then return the loaded carts to the original area. See appendix G for a diagram of this location.

#### **Conclusion**

TSA does not know the extent to which baggage was not screened during 2010 at HNL, placing the safety of the traveling public at risk by allowing unscreened baggage on passenger aircraft. There is no acceptable justification for TSOs to bypass their security mission; however, TSA allowed various levels of screening and intervals of mitigation that TSOs could easily misinterpret as meaning that [REDACTED] screening was not always possible or needed.

To ensure compliance with its SOPs, TSA should fully evaluate the effects of changes to them. TSMs and Supervisory TSOs need to provide sufficient direct oversight to ensure that all baggage is screened according to approved procedures. Finally, TSA needs to ensure that airports have the appropriate staffing and equipment to conduct screening in accordance with SOPs.

#### **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Transportation Security Administration Deputy Administrator:

##### **Recommendation #1:**

Create and document protocols to ensure that sufficient information is gathered and used for thorough analysis when deciding to modify standard operating procedures. These protocols should be well documented and ensure comprehensive, transparent, and logical approaches with detailed support, while allowing for flexibility to address urgent threats.

##### **Recommendation #2:**

Revise the position descriptions to clarify the roles and responsibilities for checked baggage supervisors and managers and define the expectations for



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### Department of Homeland Security

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direct supervision. This should ensure that assigned staff are performing screening duties in accordance with all standard operating procedures.

#### **Recommendation #3:**

Ensure that supervisors and managers are trained on their responsibility and accountability to ensure that all screening operations are performed as required.

#### **Recommendation #4:**

Develop and implement performance metrics to evaluate the supervision of checked baggage areas as part of supervisory performance plans and evaluations. These metrics should include frequent direct observation of baggage screening activities.

#### **Management Comments and OIG Analysis**

TSA provided comments to the draft of this report. A copy of the response in its entirety is included in appendix B. TSA also provided technical comments and suggested revisions to sections of the report. When appropriate, we made changes to reflect the suggested revisions.

According to its response to the draft report, TSA agreed with our recommendations to improve the agency's management and oversight of its security screening operations. TSA had concerns with the report's conclusion and evidence that the screening violations at HNL Lobby 4 might not have occurred if TSA developed changes to its screening procedures more comprehensively and fully evaluated the effects of such changes. TSA further asserted that perceived shortcomings in the process of evaluating changes to checked baggage screening procedures did not cause TSOs to decide to circumvent those procedures.

Our report recognizes that ignoring security procedures is never justified, and individual TSOs are responsible for screening baggage. However, we maintain that a more comprehensive approach to revising screening procedures may have helped TSA reduce the need for and use of mitigation procedures and would have ensured that all affected airports were considered.



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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We reviewed the documentation that TSA provided demonstrating the agency's data collection effort. Although this effort lasted for several years, TSA only tested the proposed ETD screening procedures in two Category X airports in one 2007 study, and HNL was not one of those two airports. Additionally, TSA did not re-evaluate any additional Category X airports in subsequent pilot studies of this change to the SOPs. Without such data, the agency cannot be certain whether the manner in which the SOPs were developed was related to the HNL officers' failure to follow the SOPs. Further, we maintain that allowing the use of mitigation procedures demonstrates that TSA recognized changes to the SOPs might be a problem for some airports.

TSA also asserted that we did not provide evidence to support our conclusion that mitigation procedures affected baggage screening, and that we ignored credible evidence in TSA's investigation. We reviewed both TSA's Report of Investigation and video evidence, and we agree that TSOs did not conduct the required screening. TSA's Report of Investigation, as well as our interviews, showed that TSOs revealed the violations began after January 2010, when the SOPs changed, not prior to the revisions. TSOs at HNL knew that mitigation procedures were used frequently once the [REDACTED] protocol was initially implemented, and they had to screen an increasing amount of checked baggage at the affected location. For these reasons, officers could have inferred that TSA airport management considered mitigation acceptable.

In its response, TSA further noted that HNL was the only location at which procedures were not followed. However, the agency did not provide evidence to support this assertion, nor did it demonstrate it reviewed all airports. In fact, had the confidential source not provided evidence to TSA, the agency might have remained unaware of the violations at HNL.

Finally, TSA is responsible for knowing the extent to which baggage is not screened and ensuring the safety of the traveling public.

**TSA Response to Recommendation #1:** TSA concurred with the recommendation. The agency agreed it should improve its process to develop, evaluate, and



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Department of Homeland Security

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document changes to its screening procedures. TSA anticipates implementing the new process by June 30, 2013.

**OIG Analysis:** This recommendation will remain open and unresolved until TSA provides a more detailed corrective action plan and a copy of the approved process.

**TSA Response to Recommendation #2:** TSA concurred with the recommendation and has taken steps to implement corrective action. TSA conducted a job analysis study and reviewed job duties, responsibilities, and competencies for Supervisory TSOs, Lead TSOs, and TSOs. TSA plans to use the results of the study to update position descriptions. TSA expects the revised position descriptions to be completed by December 31, 2012.

**OIG Analysis:** This recommendation is resolved, but will remain open until TSA provides the results of the job analysis study and the revised position descriptions.

**TSA Response to Recommendation #3:** TSA concurred with the recommendation and has begun to implement the recommendation. In July 2012, TSA launched a 2-week training course titled, "Essentials of Supervising Screening Operations." The course provides Supervisory TSOs with both technical and leadership training to address integrity, responsibility, and TSA's mission and vision. TSA expects that the agency's 4,400 Supervisory TSOs will complete the training by February 2014. Additionally, TSA plans to expand its training portfolio for managers, Supervisory TSOs, Lead TSOs, and other levels of field leadership.

**OIG Analysis:** This recommendation is resolved, but will remain open until TSA provides the curriculum for the "Essentials of Supervising Screening Operations" and evidence that its Supervisory TSOs have completed the training.

**TSA Response to Recommendation #4:** TSA concurred with the recommendation and has begun to implement the recommendation. TSA chartered an Integrated Project Team to identify specific metrics that will allow



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Department of Homeland Security

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TSA managers nationwide to more effectively monitor baggage screening operations.

**OIG Analysis:** TSA's planned actions address the recommendation. It will remain open and unresolved until TSA provides the Integrated Project Team charter and related reporting requirements and metrics.





## **Appendix A**

### **Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established by the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* (Public Law 107-296) by amendment to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*. This is one of a series of audit, inspection, and special reports prepared as part of our oversight responsibilities to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness within the Department.

The objective of our audit was to determine whether TSA ensured TSOs were complying with baggage screening procedures at HNL. We conducted this audit in response to a request by two members of Congress: Representative John Mica, Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and Representative Jason Chaffetz, Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense, and Foreign Operations, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The Representatives questioned why a portion of the TSA screener workforce at HNL failed in their performance of critical transportation security screening responsibilities.

To answer our objective and respond to the Congressmen, we interviewed officials and personnel from the following offices at TSA headquarters:

- Office of Security Operations;
- Office of Security Capabilities;
- Office of Inspection;
- Office of Human Capital;
- Office of Professional Responsibility; and
- Office of Training and Workforce Engagement.

We interviewed HNL airport operator staff, TSA officials, TSMs, and all levels of TSOs. We attempted to meet with all 48 individuals involved in the security system failure, including those suspended and terminated. Only 23 of the 48 individuals were available or willing to meet. The 48 individuals included 3 members of the FSD's staff, 2 TSMs, 4 Supervisory TSOs, 6 Lead TSOs, and 33 TSOs. The 23 individuals we met with included 1 member of the FSD's staff, 1 TSM, 2 Supervisory TSOs, 1 Lead TSO, and 18 TSOs.



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Department of Homeland Security

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We reviewed TSA's Report of Investigation and related personnel actions. We reviewed video evidence included in the investigation files and made direct observations of the screening location. We analyzed SOPs for checked baggage and screening management issued between April 2009 and March 2011.

We reviewed TSA documentation for staffing allocations and checked baggage throughput, requests for additional staffing and equipment, and costs associated with the use of the National Deployment Force.

Using IDEA software, we randomly selected a statistically valid sample of 194 out of 680 TSOs at HNL and reviewed their training files for October 2009 through March 2011.<sup>3</sup> We reviewed TSA's National Training Plan for TSOs, Lead TSOs, and Supervisory TSOs from the timeframe under review and selected three training courses per quarter to review. We also reviewed three one-time training courses that were relevant to the checked baggage security incident at HNL. We reviewed a total of 21 training courses. (See appendix D.)

We used the same statistically valid sample size to review TSO performance evaluation files from fiscal year (FY) 2009 through FY 2011. We reviewed disciplinary files for January 2009 through September 2011. We looked at these files to determine whether TSOs met performance criteria and whether they had disciplinary action taken associated with checked baggage screening. (See appendix E.)

In addition to the statistically valid sample, we reviewed the performance evaluations, disciplinary files, and training files for the 43 TSOs involved in the security system failure as identified by TSA's Office of Professional Responsibility.

We conducted this performance audit between August 2011 and February 2012 pursuant to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives. We believe that

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<sup>3</sup> Given a population of 680 TSOs, a 90 percent confidence interval, 5 percent sampling error, and 50 percent population proportion, the statistically valid sample size is 194 TSOs.



**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
Department of Homeland Security

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the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives.



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
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## Appendix B Management Comments to the Draft Report

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
601 South 12th Street  
Arlington, VA 20598



Transportation  
Security  
Administration

**AUG 31 2012**

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: Anne L. Richards  
Assistant Inspector General for Audits  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

FROM: John S. Pistole *JA For*  
Administrator

SUBJECT: *TSA Management and Oversight at Honolulu International  
Airport – Sensitive Security Information*  
OIG Project No. 11-140-AUD-TSA

Purpose

This memorandum constitutes the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) response to the DHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) draft report entitled, *TSA Management and Oversight at Honolulu International Airport – Sensitive Security Information*, OIG Project No. 11-140-AUD-TSA.

Background

As DHS OIG describes in the report, TSA primarily uses either Explosives Detection Systems (EDS) or Explosives Trace Detection (ETD) to screen checked baggage. EDS screening requires Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) to place checked baggage in a machine that uses x-ray to screen for explosives and other prohibited items. ETD screening requires TSOs to manually swab parts of the bags, and analyze the swabs for trace amounts of explosives residue.

Prior to January 2010, TSA's Checked Baggage Screening Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for ETD required that [REDACTED] of checked bags receive [REDACTED].

(40/40/20 protocol).



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Department of Homeland Security

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2

In January 2010, TSA changed the SOP and began requiring TSOs to conduct searches of bags (protocol). Honolulu International Airport (HNL) did not have EDS technology available to screen bags in Lobby 4. Consequently, TSOs at Lobby 4 were required to conduct searches unless they transported the bags to another lobby area within the airport terminal equipped with EDS technology.

In December 2010, a confidential source notified TSA officials that some HNL TSOs were clearing checked baggage for transport on a commercial passenger aircraft without conducting the required screening. TSA's investigation into the allegation revealed that over the course of several months many employees working at HNL Lobby 4 failed to follow the SOP for ETD screening of checked baggage. More than 40 TSOs, Lead TSOs (LTSO), and Supervisory TSOs (STSO) submitted sworn statements to TSA investigators that, taken together, described widespread and frequent failures by TSA employees working the morning shift in Lobby 4 to follow the screening protocol. HNL officers admitted to TSA investigators that the SOP violations included marking checked bags as "clear" and sending them onto airplanes without any screening. The HNL officers also admitted to conducting only ETD screening instead of the EDS screening mandated by the SOP.

TSA ultimately took disciplinary action against more than 40 HNL officers for failing to conduct required screening, and against two Transportation Security Managers (TSM) and three members of the Federal Security Director's (FSD) staff for careless or negligent performance of their duties. Disciplinary action ranged from 14-day suspension to removal from the Agency.

In June 2011, Congressman John Mica and Congressman Jason Chaffetz requested that DHS OIG conduct a review to determine why a portion of TSA's HNL screening workforce failed to perform critical transportation security screening. The Congressmen asked for "a complete analysis of the failure of TSA's oversight and supervision of baggage and passenger screening operations, protocols, and procedures at HNL."

DHS OIG conducted its review and analysis between August 2011 and February 2012, and has provided TSA with its draft report, *TSA Management and Oversight at Honolulu International Airport* (OIG Project No. 11-140-AUD-TSA). Overall, DHS OIG concluded that the responsibility for performing required security duties rests with individual employees, but that Agency factors also contributed to the security failure at HNL. The contributory factors identified by DHS OIG involved the oversight of TSOs, the training of STSOs, the development and management of changes to screening procedures, staffing of the security screening workforce, and the deployment of security technology hardware.

#### Discussion

TSA concurs with DHS OIG's recommendations to improve TSA's management and oversight of its security screening operations. As discussed further below, TSA has already begun implementing some of DHS OIG's recommendations. While TSA agrees with DHS OIG's



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Department of Homeland Security

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3

recommendations for improving training, management, oversight, and the process for testing and evaluating SOP changes, we have several concerns with DHS OIG's conclusions in the draft report.

TSA disagrees with DHS OIG's claim that the screening violations at HNL Lobby 4 morning shift might not have occurred if TSA developed changes in screening procedures more comprehensively and fully evaluated the effects of such changes. The manner in which the SOPs were developed had nothing to do with the HNL officer's failure to properly follow the SOP. TSA's investigation revealed that Checked Baggage Screening SOP violations became almost normal practice in HNL Lobby 4, and at times some HNL officers were not screening any bags at all. The willful nature of the officers' violations and the lack of sufficiently diligent management oversight, does not support the conclusion that the situation at HNL Lobby 4 could have been prevented by a more streamlined, better documented, process for evaluating SOP changes.

TSA provided documentation to DHS OIG that demonstrated TSA's complex and comprehensive data collection and analysis effort conducted over a period of several years at a number of different airports prior to implementing the [REDACTED] protocol. TSA agrees that improvements may be made in this area and has agreed to implement DHS OIG's recommendation. However, TSA does not agree that any perceived shortcomings in the process for evaluating changes to TSA's screening procedures caused the officers to make the decision not to comply with TSA's SOP. As DHS OIG notes in the draft report, TSA's investigation revealed that from September to December 2010, violations of the Checked Baggage Screening SOP had become almost normal practice at HNL Lobby 4. If TSA's process for implementing SOP changes was a factor in the ongoing screening failures, it would be expected that such ongoing failures would have been seen at other airports and that did not occur. If there were identifiable problems with implementing the screening protocols at HNL Lobby 4 as the result of its configuration those problems should have been raised up through the chain of supervision for remediation.

TSA also disagrees with DHS OIG's conclusion that the availability of checked baggage mitigation procedures could have easily led some TSOs to believe that screening [REDACTED] of checked baggage was not always possible or necessary. Mitigation procedures are permitted to account for unpredictable and unique circumstances where adhering to the standard protocols could result in additional security and safety issues. TSA has longstanding limits and tight controls for checked baggage mitigation and TSOs are aware that such actions may only be used in limited situations under specific circumstances. The DHS OIG draft report provides no evidence to support the claim that the existence of mitigation procedures for the [REDACTED] protocol "may have led some TSOs to believe that [REDACTED] was not always possible, and that it was acceptable to not always perform such searches."

TSA first established a process for allowing alternative or mitigation procedures for checked baggage screening in 2005 to address special circumstances, such as unexpected checked baggage volume. TSA's SOP clearly provides that mitigation procedures can only be used under "specific, short-term, special circumstances" not as a matter of routine screening operations.





## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Department of Homeland Security

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4

Mitigation procedures may only be authorized by an FSD or their designee, and cannot be approved by anyone below the position of Assistant FSD for Screening (AFSD-S). Also, mitigation procedures are only used in 15-minute intervals, and each use must be documented and reported to TSA Headquarters.

DHS OIG not only failed to offer evidentiary support for its conclusion about the impact of checked baggage mitigation procedures, they ignored the most credible evidence in TSA's investigation. TSA's investigation contained sworn statements of more than 40 TSOs, LTSOs, and Supervisory TSOs who admitted to knowingly violating TSA's screening procedures and clearly demonstrates that there was no ambiguity about the screening requirements at HNL Lobby 4.

#### Conclusion:

TSA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to DHS OIG on its draft findings and recommendations.

DHS OIG provided four recommendations for TSA and our comments follow each recommendation:

**Recommendation #1:** Create and document protocols to ensure that sufficient information is gathered and used for thorough analysis when deciding to modify standard operating procedures. These protocols should be well documented and ensure comprehensive, transparent, and logical approaches with detailed support, while allowing flexibility to address urgent threats.

**TSA concurs.** TSA agrees that it should improve its process for developing, evaluating, and documenting changes to its screening procedures. TSA also appreciates that DHS OIG recognizes that this process should remain flexible to allow the agency to address urgent threats and vulnerabilities. TSA anticipates implementing this new process by June 30, 2013.

**Recommendation #2:** Revise the position descriptions to clarify the roles and responsibilities for checked baggage supervisors and managers and define the expectations for direct supervision. This should ensure that assigned staff are performing screening duties in accordance with all standard operating procedures.

**TSA concurs.** TSA has already taken steps to implement this recommendation. As part of a comprehensive job analysis study, TSA recently conducted a thorough review of job duties, responsibilities, and competencies for STSOs, LTSOs, and TSOs. The results of this study are scheduled to be released by September 30, 2012. TSA anticipates updating the position descriptions of these positions, while clearly delineating the role and oversight responsibility of STSOs, including checked baggage STSOs. The revised position descriptions are expected to be completed by December 31, 2012.



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Department of Homeland Security

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5

In addition, TSA plans to review the position descriptions for TSM, Deputy AFSD, AFSDs, AFSD-S, AFSD-MS, DFSD and FSD in 2013 to ensure that supervisory responsibilities are clearly articulated. This update should be completed by August 31, 2013.

**Recommendation #3:** Ensure that supervisors and managers are trained on their responsibility and accountability to ensure that all screening operations are performed as required.

**TSA concurs.** TSA has already taken steps to implement this recommendation. In October 2011, TSA implemented a new competency requirement for all screening employee performance plans, titled "Application of Standard Operating Procedures." This competency is defined as an employee's ability to retain and implement knowledge of all applicable SOPs related to their position and requires that STSOs hold themselves and their subordinates accountable for acquiring, demonstrating, maintaining, implementing, and applying proper screening-related knowledge and skills; including the appropriate use of technology and other tools to perform routine and non-routine assignments in accordance with SOPs, directives, and other policies.

In July 2012, TSA launched a new training course titled 'Essentials of Supervising Screening Operations'. This 2-week course is specifically designed to help STSOs establish a true leadership presence at the checkpoint and checked baggage screening locations by providing them the tools they need to understand their leadership strengths, as well as how to use their strengths to effectively evaluate TSO on-the-job performance and take corrective actions as needed, to include coaching and mentoring. This course also provides STSOs with technical training to review and support the security screening measures they are responsible for carrying out, as well as administrative training so they have an opportunity to review the roles and responsibilities for themselves and their officers and identify areas where improvements can be made. The goal of this training is to establish a cadre of STSOs that take responsibility for the critical role they have in the successful accomplishment of TSA's mission. The training addresses integrity, responsibility, core values as well as TSA's mission and vision, so they are all operating from the same basic platform. This training is required for all current and newly selected STSOs. TSA expects that by February 2014 all 4,400 STSOs will have attended this training.

TSA will be building its training portfolio to support the expansion of courses that include similarly tailored training for TSMs and other levels of TSA's field leadership team, while also continuing to build a comprehensive training portfolio for the STSO and LTSO cadres. The specific project plans have not yet been developed for these additional courses; however, project plans will be developed some time in FY 2013.

**Recommendation #4:** Develop and implement performance metrics to evaluate the supervision of checked baggage areas as part of supervisory performance plans and evaluations. These metrics should include frequent direct observation of baggage screening activities.

**TSA concurs.** TSA has already taken steps to implement this recommendation. TSA chartered an Integrated Project Team to identify specific metrics that will allow TSA managers across the nation to more effectively monitor checked baggage screening operations. STSOs will be





## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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6

required to personally observe, collect, and report specified data to senior management. Senior management will be better informed about the need to follow up and evaluate the actions of a supervisor or a work unit, in response to any noted anomalies. TSA anticipates that this data and the associated reporting requirements and metrics for checked baggage screening will be established at federalized airports across the Nation by July 31, 2013.



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**Appendix C**  
**Representatives Mica and Chaffetz Request Letter**

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2011

Charles K. Edwards  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Drive, SW  
Bldg 410 / Mailstop 2600  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Inspector General Edwards:

We, along with our colleagues in Congress, continue to be concerned with the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) management and oversight of its Federal screener operations. The recent proposed firings of a significant number of TSA employees, including members of the TSA's own leadership team, at Honolulu International Airport (HNL) highlight the conflict that exists when TSA acts as both the operator and regulator of the aviation screening programs. It is imperative the Federal agency responsible for maintaining aviation security operates in an effective and efficient manner.

We request your office conduct a complete investigation and thorough review of why a significant portion of the TSA screener workforce at HNL dramatically failed in their performance of critical transportation security screening responsibilities. Specifically, we are interested in the following information:

- A complete analysis of the failure of TSA's oversight and supervision of baggage and passenger screening operations, protocols and procedures at HNL.
- A detailed summary of the security system failure.
- A review of HNL Transportation Security Officers (TSO) performance indicators, past evaluations, and all performance related disciplinary actions.
- An examination of whether the initial and recurrent training requirements for TSOs at HNL were current and consistent with national training requirements.



**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
Department of Homeland Security

Mr. Charles K. Edwards  
June 21, 2011  
Page Two

- The number of individuals involved their title and position, and current wage level.
- Summary of corrective and disciplinary action.
- A review of the TSA's processes to remove non- or underperforming TSO's in general, and at HNL in particular.
- A review of the TSA's plans to staff HNL screening operations until permanent TSO replacements can be hired and trained, and if the TSA plans to deploy the National Deployment Force, an audit of the total cost of such a deployment.

We request you conduct a thorough investigation with a report of your findings and recommendations. Additionally, we request a complete briefing by you and your staff regarding your investigation. Please contact Sean McMaster, with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure at 202-226-8048 and Mitchell Kominsky with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform at 202-225-5074 with any questions.

Sincerely,



John L. Mica  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation  
& Infrastructure



Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security,  
Homeland Defense and Foreign  
Operations  
Committee on Oversight &  
Government Reform



## **Appendix D**

### **Review of Training**

The initial and recurrent training requirements for TSOs at HNL were current and consistent with TSA national training requirements. However, some TSOs did not meet all annual training requirements in FY 2010 and the first two quarters of FY 2011. The HNL Training Manager explained that some TSOs were not given enough time to complete required training, while others were not effectively using their time in the training labs.

The Basic TSO Training Program requires all TSO candidates to complete a minimum of 40 hours of classroom training and 60 hours of on-the-job training. HNL follows TSA's New Hire Training Program, which requires new TSOs to complete seven Web-based training modules followed by 47 hours of classroom training and 65 hours of on-the-job training for checkpoint certification. New TSOs have to complete the Checked Baggage training section, which requires 16 hours of classroom training and 30 hours of on-the-job training, to receive certification for checked baggage. Of the 194 TSOs in our sample, 10 were new and subject to initial training during our scope-of-training review. All 10 TSOs completed the basic training requirements.

All TSOs are required to take prescribed annual training courses to maintain proficiency with skills learned during basic training and to remain current with procedural changes, as well as new threat items. Recurrent training must be conducted in accordance with the National Training Plan. We selected the most relevant 21 courses to review during FY 2010 and the first two quarters of FY 2011. We randomly selected a statistically valid sample of 194 TSOs at HNL and those 43 TSOs who were involved in the security system failure<sup>4</sup> who are required to complete recurrent training requirements. The review of the statistical sample revealed the following completion rates:

- 65 TSOs (33.5 percent) completed all 21 courses.
- 91 TSOs (46.9 percent) completed 18 to 20 courses.
- 19 TSOs (9.8 percent) completed 15 to 17 courses.
- 13 TSOs (6.7 percent) completed 10 to 14 courses.
- Five TSOs (2.6 percent) completed one to nine courses.
- One TSO (0.5 percent) did not complete a training course.

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<sup>4</sup> Fifteen of the 43 TSOs were also included as part of the statistically valid sample of 194 TSOs.



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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Our review of the 43 TSOs involved in the security system failure revealed the following results:

- 22 TSOs (51.16 percent) completed all 21 courses.
- 15 TSOs (34.88 percent) completed 18 to 20 courses.
- Six TSOs (13.95 percent) completed 15 to 17 courses.



## **Appendix E**

### **Review of Performance Indicators and Disciplinary Actions**

TSA has issued guidance for measuring performance and removing non- or underperforming TSOs. Each fiscal year, TSA's Office of Human Capital develops performance criteria requiring TSOs to complete assessments to maintain certifications and screening functions, as well as measures for on-the-job performance. Additionally, TSA has issued guidance for progressive disciplinary actions that can be taken against an employee in response to unacceptable performance or conduct. We reviewed the performance indicators used to evaluate TSOs for the previous 3 fiscal years and the disciplinary actions issued at HNL.

#### **Performance Indicators and Evaluations**

PASS is a pay-for-performance management system serving many purposes for TSA employees, one of which is to measure and evaluate TSOs and TSMs. TSA measures TSOs and TSMs annually on items such as technical proficiencies, mandatory training, readiness for duty, and competencies (such as critical thinking, customer service, and decisionmaking). TSMs and Supervisory TSOs are responsible for rating, reviewing, and approving a TSO's evaluation.

Technical proficiency: Assesses TSOs' ability to perform their screening function. It assesses their ability to master screening equipment and procedures. The TSO's screening function and certification determine the assessments required for the fiscal year. For each required technical proficiency assessment, TSOs must satisfy the requirements and pass with three possible attempts. After each failed attempt, the TSO is removed from the screening function and receives training and coaching before another assessment is administered. The TSO is either retained and trained, or removed from employment.

We reviewed the technical proficiencies for the 43 TSOs involved in the security system failure, as well as a statistically significant sample for FYs 2009–2011. Our review indicated that 100 percent of both the 43 TSOs and the sample passed the technical competency on ETD of checked baggage in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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Mandatory training: Measures completion of required training items. This component was removed from performance evaluations in FY 2011 because TSA determined that it was not a performance component but merely a compliance with the National Training Plan. TSA put the responsibility on FSDs to monitor this requirement in a different format. In FY 2009, 99.74 percent of the TSOs in our statistical sample and 99.86 percent of the TSOs involved in the security system failure completed the mandatory training. In FY 2010, 98.43 percent of the TSOs in our statistical sample and 99.45 percent of the TSOs involved in the security system failure completed the mandatory training.

Readiness for duty component: Measures a TSO's and TSM's dependability and professional presence. Specifically, this component measures items such as whether supervisors, managers, or rating officials have received corrective or progressive disciplinary action throughout the fiscal year for unscheduled leave, or uniform and appearance.

Competencies: Measures an employee's behavior and performance standards that are the most critical to job performance. For TSMs and Supervisory TSOs, it includes supervisory accountability and management proficiencies. Table 2 displays the competencies on which the TSOs and TSMs are rated.



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**Table 2: Competencies for Screening Workforce**

Competency	TSO	Lead TSO	Supervisory TSO	TSM
Critical Thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customer Service/Interpersonal Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decisionmaking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oral Communication	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coaching and Mentoring		✓	✓	✓
Conflict Management			✓	✓
Promoting a Performance-Based Culture at TSA			✓	✓
Readiness for Duty			✓	✓
Team Building			✓	
Training and Development			✓	✓
Critical Incident and Management Reporting				✓
Program and Policy Compliance and Accountability				✓
SOP Compliance				✓
Staffing and Operational Needs				✓

Source: DHS-OIG.





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Competencies are evaluations that place employees into one of four different groups, with group 0 as the lowest and group 3 as the highest rating. Our review of the competencies indicated that a majority of the employees sampled were placed in the highest group. Interviews with TSMs and Supervisory TSOs at HNL showed that TSA does not have a consistent process for assigning these scores, and the score is subject to the perspective of the rating official. (See table 3.)

Table 3: FY 2009 Through FY 2011 Competency Ratings for the Statistical Sample of 194 TSOs						
Rating	FY 2009		FY 2010		FY 2011	
	0-2	3	0-2	3	0-2	3
Critical Thinking	N/A	N/A	18%	82%	14%	86%
Customer Service/Interpersonal Skills	21%	79%	16%	84%	15%	85%
Decisionmaking	23%	77%	17%	83%	13%	87%
Oral Communication	23%	77%	13%	87%	13%	87%
Coaching and Mentoring	N/A	N/A	15%	85%	6%	94%
Conflict Management	18%	82%	9%	91%	20%	80%
Promoting a Performance-Based Culture at TSA	27%	73%	9%	91%	N/A	N/A
Readiness for Duty	0%	100%	9%	91%	N/A	N/A
Team Building	0%	100%	0%	100%	7%	93%
Training and Development	0%	100%	9%	91%	N/A	N/A

*Source:* OIG analysis of performance evaluations.  
*Note:* Several competency factors changed between FY 2009 and FY 2011. Factors not assessed during a fiscal year are designated N/A, or not applicable.



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Department of Homeland Security

We selected a statistically valid sample of 194 TSOs and reviewed their group number on their performance evaluations for FYs 2009–2011. (See table 3.) In addition, we selected the 43 TSOs involved in the security system failure and reviewed their group numbers on their performance evaluations for the same fiscal years.<sup>5</sup> (See table 4.)

Rating	FY 2009		FY 2010		FY 2011	
	0–2	3	0–2	3	0–2	3
Critical Thinking	N/A	N/A	2%	98%	0%	100%
Customer Service/Interpersonal Skills	14%	86%	0%	100%	11%	89%
Decisionmaking	12%	88%	2%	98%	0%	100%
Oral Communication	17%	83%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Coaching and Mentoring	N/A	N/A	0%	100%	0%	100%
Conflict Management	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Promoting a Performance-Based Culture at TSA	0%	100%	0%	100%	N/A	N/A
Readiness for Duty	0%	100%	0%	100%	N/A	N/A
Team Building	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Training and Development	0%	100%	0%	100%	N/A	N/A

Source:

Note: Several competency factors changes between FY 2009 and FY 2011. Factors not assessed during a fiscal year or with no sampled employees rated are designated N/A, or not applicable.

<sup>5</sup> Seventeen, 18, and 5 TSOs for FYs 2009 through 2011, respectively, were also included as part of the statistically valid sample of 194 TSOs.



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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### Disciplinary Actions

Several different actions—corrective, disciplinary, and adverse—can be taken to address unacceptable performance and conduct by a TSO.

- Corrective actions: Administrative and nondisciplinary actions that inform an employee about unacceptable performance or conduct that should be corrected or improved. Examples of corrective actions include Letters of Counseling, Letters of Guidance and Direction, or Letters of Leave Restriction.
- Disciplinary actions: Actions taken against an employee for failing to perform duties acceptably, interfering with others' performance, or exhibiting conduct that adversely affects the agency's ability to accomplish its mission. Examples of disciplinary actions include Letters of Reprimand and suspensions of 14 days or less.
- Adverse actions: The most severe actions, including suspensions of more than 14 days, involuntary demotion, or removal.

All actions are initiated, completed, and filed by TSA airport management staff, including the Supervisory TSO, TSM, Assistant FSD, and FSD. The Supervisory TSO issues corrective actions and Letters of Reprimand, and can propose suspensions, while all other issuances must be at the TSM level or higher. The classification of a disciplinary and adverse action is determined by multiple factors. Factors include the nature and seriousness of the offense; whether the offense was intentional, technical, or inadvertent; employee's job level; record of past disciplinary and adverse actions; length of service; performance on the job; and consistency of the penalty with other similarly imposed offenses.

HNL issued 116 disciplinary and adverse actions between January 2009 and September 2011. We reviewed disciplinary and adverse actions taken against TSOs selected in our random statistical sample of TSOs at HNL.

Our review showed that TSA issued 16 actions from January 2009 through September 2011. (See table 5.)



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**Table 5: Summary of Types of Disciplinary and Adverse Actions Taken**

Action Taken	2009	2010	2011	Total
Last Chance Agreement	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Letter of Reprimand	3	1	4	<b>8</b>
Three-Day Suspension	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
Seven-Day Suspension	1	1	2	<b>4</b>
Fourteen-Day Suspension	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: d

In addition to our statistically valid sample, we reviewed actions for those TSOs involved in the security system failure.<sup>6</sup> Our review showed that TSO issued 10 actions from January 2009 through September 2011. (See table 6.)

**Table 6: Summary of Types of Disciplinary and Adverse Actions Taken**

Action Taken	2009	2010	2011	Total
Last Chance Agreement	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Letter of Reprimand	5	3	0	<b>8</b>
Three-Day Suspension	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Seven-Day Suspension	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Fourteen-Day Suspension	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: d

Disciplinary and adverse actions were issued to TSOs for failing to [REDACTED] of an oversized item using ETD protocol, improperly escorting emergency personnel through a checkpoint, and multiple violations of leave restrictions. We also reviewed the corrective actions taken for a statistical sample of the TSOs employed at HNL for calendar years 2009 to September 2011 and those TSOs involved in the security system failure and not in the statistical sample. Instances for which a corrective action was issued included failing to mark checked bags as clear, allowing an airline porter to take unscreened bags, and leaving luggage in an EDS machine overnight.

<sup>6</sup> Fourteen of the 43 TSOs were also included as a part of the statistically valid sample of 194 TSOs.



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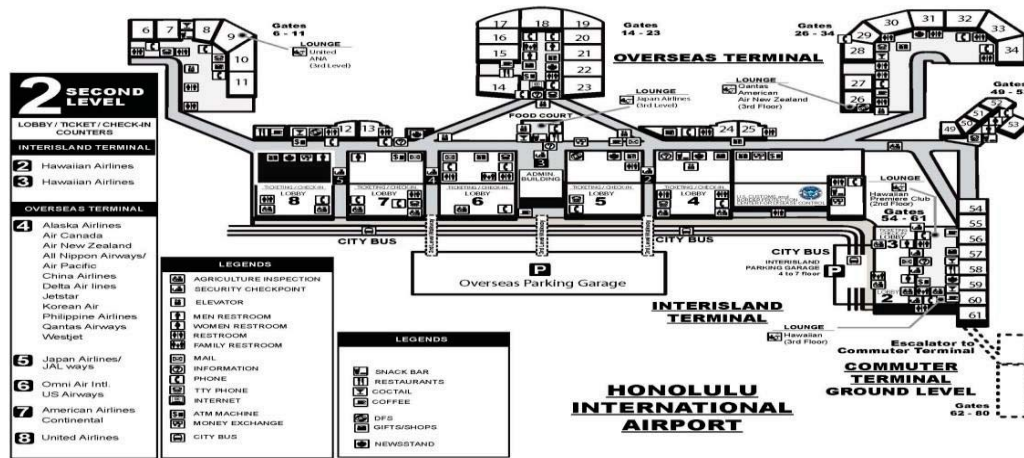
**Appendix F**  
**Staff Involved in Security Failure**

No.	Position	Pay Band	Salary Minimum	Salary Maximum	Personnel Action
1	FSD	SES			Removal/Pending Appeal
2	Assistant FSD Screening	K	\$89,338	\$138,479	Retirement
3	Deputy Assistant FSD Screening	J	\$74,732	\$115,833	Removal/Pending Appeal
4	TSM	I	\$61,256	\$94,999	Removal/Pending Appeal
5	TSM	H	\$50,273	\$71,091	Removal/Pending Appeal
6	Supervisory TSO	G	\$41,216	\$63,860	Resignation
7	Supervisory TSO	G	\$41,216	\$63,860	Removal
8	Supervisory TSO	G	\$41,216	\$63,860	30-day suspension
9	Supervisory TSO	G	\$41,216	\$63,860	21-day suspension
10-14	Lead TSO	F	\$35,214	\$52,877	Removal
15	Lead TSO	F	\$35,214	\$52,877	21-day suspension
16	TSO	E	\$30,685	\$46,084	Retirement
17-33	TSO	E	\$30,685	\$46,084	Removal
34	TSO	E	\$30,685	\$46,084	Cleared
35-42	TSO	E	\$30,685	\$46,084	30-day suspension
43-44	TSO	E	\$30,685	\$46,084	21-day suspension
45	TSO	E	\$30,685	\$46,084	14-day suspension
46-48	TSO	D	\$26,722	\$40,084	Removal



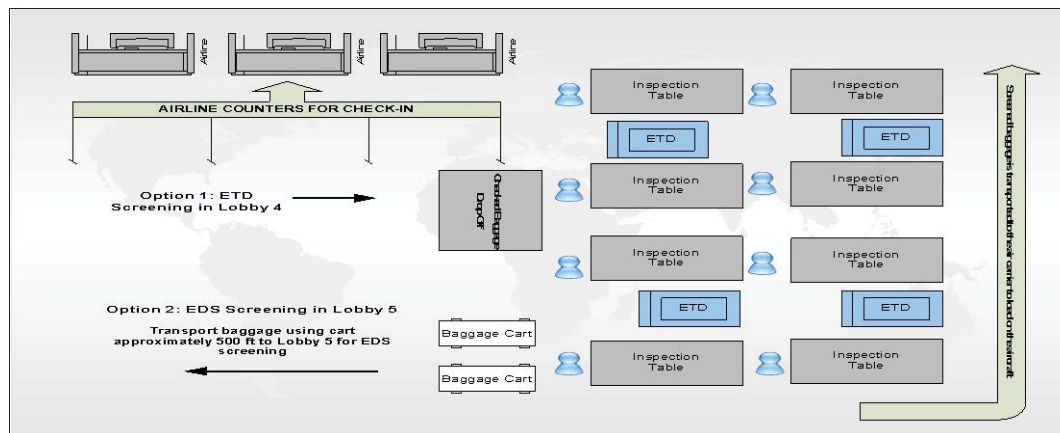
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## Appendix G HNL Airport Configuration



Source: HNL W b

The security system failure at HNL occurred in the screening area identified as Lobby 4, or the Overseas Terminal. The diagram below shows a closer look at the security set up of this area at the time of the security failure.



Source:



## Appendix H Types of Checked Baggage Screening Searches

### Checked Baggage Screening SOP, Revision 4, April 2009

TSOs must sample and analyze the [REDACTED]

TSOs must [REDACTED] inspect [REDACTED] TSOs must sample and analyze [REDACTED] making no more than [REDACTED] before analyzing the sampling media.

In addition to the steps performed in the [REDACTED] TSOs must sample and analyze all items in the baggage that are the size of a [REDACTED] or larger and conduct a physical search of any bag, box, or other container discovered inside the checked baggage that is the size of a [REDACTED] or larger.

### Checked Baggage Screening SOP, Revision 5, January 2010

TSOs must perform a [REDACTED] inspection of all items the size of a [REDACTED] or larger. TSOs must also sample the [REDACTED] as well as taking [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] or larger and the [REDACTED]

### Checked Baggage Screening SOP, Revision 5, Change 2, March 2010

TSOs must perform a brief [REDACTED] inspection of the bag and its contents. TSOs must also sample the [REDACTED] of the bag [REDACTED] as well as taking [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] or larger and the [REDACTED]





## **Appendix I**

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## **Appendix J**

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