



Fact Sheet: General Aviation



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About General Aviation

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is working to strengthen General Aviation (GA) security to further minimize the vulnerability of GA aircraft flights being used to deliver illicit materials, transport dangerous individuals or employ aircraft as a weapon. The department has developed a long-term strategy intended to enhance international and domestic general aviation security by: identifying and vetting passengers and crew on international GA aircraft prior to entering and departing U.S. airspace; screening aircraft to ensure that illicit materials do not enter the U.S.; and conducting these screening and vetting activities as far from critical sites within the U.S. as practicable, preferably at the last point of departure for the aircraft outside the U.S.

Identifying and Vetting Passengers and Crew

Secure Fixed Based Operators (FBO): TSA is developing, in close coordination with the industry, a program in which overseas FBOs voluntarily provide additional security for flights inbound to the U.S. The program would allow for FBOs to check manifests against eAPIS filings to better identify the flight crew and passengers on board general aviation aircraft. TSA is partnering with Signature Flight Support to establish a pilot program at several locations that serve as a last point of departure into the United States. We are encouraged by the public/private sector partnership to improve security and believe that the broader application of such programs will provide robust security while maintaining operational flexibility for general aviation operators.

Preclearance: DHS has signed an agreement on new aviation preclearance security operations with Irish Minister of Transport Noel Dempsey. The agreement broadens U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operations in Shannon and Dublin, Ireland, to include full preclearance of commercial and private air passenger flights destined for the U.S. Private aircraft flying through Ireland may use CBP preclearance facilities to fly to any airport within the U.S., without having to stop at a pre-designated airport of entry for customs clearance before continuing to their final destination.

Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS): DHS recently announced additional measures to strengthen private aircraft security by requiring more detailed information about arriving and departing private aircraft and persons onboard, within a timeframe necessary for the department to assess the risks that certain flights may pose to national security.

The Advance Information on Private Aircraft Arriving and Departing the United States final rule expands on existing regulations and is part of a comprehensive effort to strengthen general aviation security. The rule requires pilots of private aircraft to send CBP their electronic manifest data relative to all people traveling onboard. The following information must be sent one hour prior to departure for flights arriving into or departing from the United States by filing manifest data through eAPIS or an approved alternate system:

- Advance notice of arrival information;
- Advance notice of departure information;
- Aircraft information to foster aircraft identification; and
- Complete passenger and crew manifest data.

Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP): The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is engaging in efforts to establish a security program for GA operators to make them consistent with existing security programs for commercial aircraft of similar size.

In October 2008, TSA announced a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that would strengthen the security of general aviation by further minimizing the vulnerability of aircraft being used as weapons or to transport dangerous people or materials. The proposed regulation would reduce the susceptibility of large aircraft misuse by individuals wishing to harm the U.S. and its citizens.

The LASP regulation proposes to require all U.S. operators of aircraft exceeding 12,500 pounds maximum take-off weight to implement security programs that would be subject to compliance audits by TSA.

The proposed regulation would also require operators to verify that passengers are not on the No-Fly portion of the federal government's consolidated terrorist watch list.

The LASP will require currently unregulated general aviation operations over a specific weight threshold to adopt security measures, which would align these operations with operations currently regulated for security purposes.

TSA continues to enhance international and domestic general aviation security by developing a comprehensive strategy to:

- Establish baseline standards of security for general aviation operations;
- Ensure that flight crews have undergone a fingerprint-based criminal history records checks check and terrorist name checks;
- Designate security coordinators;
- Conduct watch list matching of passengers through a TSA-approved watch list matching service provider; and
- Check/validate property on board for unauthorized persons and accessible weapons

Screening Aircraft to Protect Against Illicit Materials

Radiation/Nuclear Detection Screening: For the past three years, DHS' Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) has led an effort to identify key vulnerabilities to weapons of mass destruction threats, specifically with regard to radioactive and nuclear items. DNDO, together with CBP and TSA, is working to facilitate international general aviation operations while enhancing security for those operations and for the nation as a whole.

Last April, Secretary Chertoff directed CBP and DNDO to implement full radiological and nuclear scanning of all arriving international general aviation aircraft. DHS achieved this goal at the end of last year. Today, all international general aviation aircraft are scanned upon arrival to the U.S. using handheld Radiation Isotope Identification Devices (RIID) by CBP officers.

Earlier this year, DNDO and CBP also conducted a testing program at Andrews Air Force base to identify improved operating procedures using these handheld detectors and to determine requirements for improved next-generation technologies.

These measures are part of a much larger initiative to create a Global Nuclear Detection Architecture to protect our country from radiological and nuclear threats whether they come by land, air, or sea.

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