

New mid 1980s, 1375
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to



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New Airport Security Equipment and Techniques Flight by humans is an unnatural occurrence that our species has mastered, or at least somewhat mastered. Within the aviation industry there are inherent risks that come with operating and or flying aboard an aircraft. The predominant risk that we are talking about unfortunately is death. Because of these risks the Federal Government and their agencies must take steps to minimize this from happening.

The government agency delegated to do this is the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The FAA is responsible for a wide range of things such as monitoring all airlines for safe maintenance practices and monitoring all airports to ensure compliance with safety and regulatory standards. Previous attacks against airliners occurred overseas, but the World Trade Center bombing showed that terrorist activity had moved across the Atlantic Ocean.

From 1975, to the mid 1980s, 1375 deaths occurred due to suspected terrorist actions. There are two recent incidents, which seem to have refocused everyones attention, to include the governments of many nations, back on the issue of security. The first major incident occurred on December 21, 1988. That's when numerous potential holes in the airport safety net were identified after a plastic explosive hidden by terrorists inside a radio cassette player destroyed Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. This caused the deaths of all 270 passengers and crewmembers on board. This incident caused great attention to be focused on airport security, with the United States alone doubling airline security cost from \$500 million to almost \$1 billion per year.

Until recently, the FAA has usually taken steps to improve air safety as a reaction to a hijacking or a bombing. Today, the government says it's planning ahead, for example, developing ways for airlines to deal with hijackers armed with chemical or biological weapons. In the meantime, the FAA hopes that passengers will be tolerant of airport security measures. Because while it may be the hundredth time you've heard the question, "Has anyone unknown to you asked you to carry an item on this flight?" the FAA reminds you that they're just trying to provide security in a dangerous world. While still under the cloud of the TWA flight 800 crash, President Clinton directed Vice President Al Gore to convene a commission that would review aviation safety and security and the pace of modernization of the nation's air traffic control system.

While the committee was reviewing safety and security, there were other measures the FAA implemented immediately to reduce the risk of any more attacks, which this was believed to be at the time when the review began. As a result of the inquiry by the president's commission, the FAA is requiring that changes be made in the aviation industry, mostly affecting the airlines. Some of the changes affect the airlines, and others will affect the passengers traveling on those airlines.

Some changes the airlines have to put into effect are easily accomplished, like positive passenger identification, but others will require more extensive planning prior to implementation. The airlines will now be required to complete more thorough pre-flight inspections, meaning every cabin, every cargo hold, every time. All aircraft will be fully inspected prior to take-off. As part of the review process, the president's committee was to determine

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whether the aviation industry was maintaining an even pace with technology. Equipment technology is continually improving, increasing an airports capability to detect weapons and explosives. However, one airport that was recently under investigation by federal agents was found to have the proper equipment but their security personnel where inadequately trained, which rendered the equipment useless. It is important to note that not all improvements can be invented and/or developed within a lab.

Some would say that it is just as important to have properly skilled security personnel who have the proper training to use the high-tech equipment, as it is to have the equipment. It is thought that some terrorist could be detected if the very latest in weapons and explosives detection equipment had been installed at the airports that had terrorist attacks originate at their location. In the past, it was less difficult to detect the common weapons of the terrorist. Most were guns or knives, which