

**BACKGROUND:** The most visible component of the Transportation Security Administration’s (TSA) multi-layered aviation security strategy is the passenger and baggage screening process. At U.S. airports, passengers must walk through magnetometers designed to detect metallic objects – and increasingly other items – on the body. A passenger’s carry-on luggage is simultaneously passed through imaging systems that seek to identify prohibited items, including liquids, explosives or metallic objects like large knives or other weapons. Additional screening technology is used at the checkpoint to, as needed, identify the presence of explosives, further assess the presence of metal on a passenger and determine if explosives are present in a liquid-bearing container. Long lines, occasionally poor customer service and inconsistent policies have frustrated many air travelers over the past several years. A registered traveler program and the recent introduction of “diamond” self-select lanes based on a traveler’s familiarity with the security process, on the other hand, have earned positive reviews from travelers and industry alike.

### **ISSUES FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION**

1. **Set Overall Screening Technology Standards:** To date, TSA has failed to articulate – and follow through on – a risk-management philosophy that sets specific guidelines within which new technologies should be deployed. Absent any established technological guidelines, TSA is unable to plan for the acquisition of new technology that will provide measureable security improvements and enhance the passenger’s experience at the checkpoint.

***Action Item:***

- Develop a risk management strategy that encourages the deployment of checkpoint technologies to scan people and carry-on luggage more effectively and efficiently. The strategy should include technology standards that balance security and efficiency to best detect metals, liquids, explosives and other threats and manage potential risk.

2. **Develop and Deploy Next-Generation Screening Technology:** Over the years, screening technology has improved in throughput and alarm rates, yet the government has failed to make significant updates. Additionally, new multi-threat portals that can detect explosives as well as metal have been developed, but not deployed. Such technology enhances not only security but also efficiency for TSA and passengers alike.

***Action Items:***

- Develop requirements for a next-generation walk-through passenger portal that enhances security and mitigates passenger inconvenience by allowing for fewer false hits.
- Continue testing new advanced technologies that more securely and efficiently process travelers through the TSA screening process and deploy those systems in a timely fashion so as to minimize passenger confusion and enhance the overall screening process.
- Study the most cost-effective solution for deploying new inspection technology, and properly budget for incremental upgrades so as not to increase taxes on already burdened travelers.