
Crew Member Security Aspects of an Operator's Security Programme

NOTE

This paper supersedes 15POS10, of the same name.

BACKGROUND

Commercial flights are sometimes operated into areas and destinations where the security situation is very difficult to predict. Moreover, the situation in any country has the potential to change rapidly due to a sudden terrorist attack, civil unrest, or a natural disaster which can put both security and safety under threat.

When this happens, crew members who are in transit or on a layover can find themselves on the front line. One such example was the abduction of two Turkish Airlines pilots near Beirut's international airport in August 2013. The crew and some passengers were on their way to the crew hotel, when several armed men stopped their bus and abducted the pilots. They were held for more than two months.

Two essential components of an operator's security programme are the response to any threat notification, and the protection of crew members and their baggage. ICAO Doc 8973, Appendix 24, has some limited provisions on this, which read as follows:

Threat notification

31. Aircraft operator security programmes should include procedures for responding to information that indicates that a specific aircraft may be the target of an act of unlawful interference. Programmes should indicate who is responsible for implementing the additional security measures considered necessary to counter a threat, and should assign responsibility for informing the appropriate authority of the situation in the event that threat notification originates with another source.

Protection of Executives and other personnel

93. Although not necessarily directly related to the prevention of unlawful acts against civil aviation, aircraft operator security programmes should address security measures for executives or crew members, and their families, who may be targeted by criminal elements during business trips or layovers. Such measures are normally based on risk assessment and threat analysis.

POSITION

Whilst IFALPA supports the above paragraphs, the Federation believes that these guidelines, which directly affect the security of crew members, should become Standards, and that operator security programmes should, as a minimum, include the following components:

General

- There should be a continuous threat and risk assessment of the routes, destinations and en-route alternate aerodromes;
- Each flight should be subject to the decision of the pilot-in-command, taking account of all the latest available intelligence provided.

At the airport

- Any security screening of crews and their baggage should ideally be performed at a discrete facility separate from passenger screening to minimize unwanted attention.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that the security of crew baggage is verified and maintained prior to placing them on board the aircraft.

Transits and layovers

- There should be security measures for crew members and their baggage, including but not limited to transport to and from the hotel.
- Crew baggage should be locked to prevent any kind of interference, and subject to security protection measures and under the supervision of at least one crew member. Extra measures may need to be put in place when crew baggage is transported unaccompanied.
- There should be provisions for extracting crews in specific circumstances such as civil unrest or a natural disaster.

Response to threats

- Procedures should be in place for responding to information that indicates that a specific aircraft may be the target of an act of unlawful interference;
- A nominated person/post should be responsible for implementing the additional security measures considered necessary to counter a threat and for informing the appropriate Authority of the situation in the event that threat notification originates with another source.