



TRANSPORT SECURITY ADVISORY

Unscreened air service risk assessment: determining the level of threat

Purpose

This Transport Security Advisory provides guidance to assist operators of unscreened regular public transport (RPT) air services to determine the level of local security threats to their operations as part of their security risk assessment processes. This guidance is designed to be used to assist operators in completing the **level of local security threat** section in the Office of Transport Security (OTS) *Security Risk Assessment template part B*. It does not constitute an assessment of threat to aviation operations, and the levels provided do not correspond to the national threat levels determined by the National Threat Assessment Centre.

Security Risk Assessment stage one: determining the threat to your operations

The *OTS Security Risk Assessment template* is designed to assist operators in completing their risk assessment process. As part of preventive security risk assessment processes, operators of unscreened RPT air services must determine the level of security threats to their operations, based on their local environmental and operational profile.

The *OTS Aviation Security Risk Context Statement* of February 2009 provides the relevant guidance on the national threat context to guide your determination of the local security threat to your operations. Copies of the risk context statement can be acquired by emailing security.analysis@infrastructure.gov.au, or through the OTS office in your state or territory. A list of security risk context information available from OTS is provided in this Transport Security Advisory.

The first step in the process is to identify the level of local security threats to your operations against each of the risk events listed in the template. The local threat and risk context of each Australian air service operation depends on a number of local operational and environmental factors including the size of the aircraft, the type of service, the number of passengers, the amount of traffic in the environment, the locations the aircraft is servicing and perceived vulnerabilities.

Unscreened air services are only likely to be attractive terrorist targets where an attack on operations would fulfil one or more of the terrorists' strategic objectives. Information on terrorist strategic objectives is in the *Aviation Security Risk Context Statement* at page 24.

As discussed in detail in the risk context statement, as both a target and a potential weapon, high-capacity RPT aircraft are potentially attractive to terrorist groups. These aircraft are mass casualty targets, and could have the

weight, speed and fuel capacity to enable successful suicide hijacking attacks against other targets, unless mitigated by measures such as hardened cockpit doors.

On the spectrum of targets, larger unscreened air services that provide opportunities for terrorists to target large numbers of people would be more likely to attract terrorist interest. High capacity (38 seats or more) RPT services are likely to have a higher risk profile than other services. Unscreened high-capacity aircraft may be additionally attractive to terrorists if it is perceived that they are more vulnerable to attack as a result of not being screened.

Aircraft operations that do not involve large passenger numbers, including low-capacity RPT and general aviation, are less likely to be attractive to terrorist groups and may therefore have less security risk associated with their operations.

In considering the level of security threat to an operation from a risk event, operators should consider the profile of their operations and if a particular risk event against their operations would meet terrorist objectives.

Considering the level of local security threat from terrorism: case studies

1. An operator of a particular **high capacity unscreened RPT service** may consider, based on the security risk context and their own operational profile, that a terrorist attack against their operations—for example a mid-flight IED—could occur. The operator of this air service may therefore assess the level of local security threat against this risk event to be **MEDIUM**.
2. An operator of a particular **low capacity unscreened RPT service** may consider, based on the security risk context and their own operational profile, that while possible, a terrorist attack against their operations is not expected. The operator may therefore assess the level of local security threat against terrorist-related risk events to be **LOW**.

The *Aviation Security Risk Context Statement* provides details on the most likely forms of terrorist attack. Operators should refer to Section 5 of the statement to assist in considering the level of threat against their operations for specific risk events.

Although the most serious threat comes from transnational terrorist groups, we must also protect the travelling public against other acts of unlawful interference, including drunkenness, anti-social behaviour, hoax activity, protest activity and acts by mentally disturbed individuals. In the regional and general aviation environment, these can be serious risks given the relative scale of operations and must be considered in determining the threat to particular air services. The *Security Risk Assessment template* allows levels of threat to be determined against disaffected individuals, violent and disruptive protest, and criminal activity. These levels of threat may be different to the levels attributed to terrorist activity and should be based on an assessment of the local environment and individual services.

OTS SECURITY RISK CONTEXT PUBLICATIONS

The *Aviation Security Risk Context Statement* of February 2009 is the primary document for the Australian Government to communicate the strategic threat and risk context to the regulated aviation industry.

The risk context statement is supplemented by a quarterly *Aviation Security Quarterly Report*, which provides an update of the security situation and key preventive security messages based on the intelligence and criminality reporting for that period. These reports are distributed to industry and are discussed at Aviation Security Advisory Forums and Regional Industry Consultative Meetings.

OTS also produces **Transport Security Advisories** in relation to specific issues or events that have security implications for industry participants. Transport Security Advisories are a valuable resource for aviation security professionals, both in assisting with security planning and as a resource for supporting training and staff security awareness programs.

Recent Transport Security Advisories include:

Attack on Glasgow Airport, United Kingdom	2 July 2007
Transport Security Guidance Material (for areas of mass gathering)	4 July 2007
Potential Misuse of Official Uniforms, Identification and Vehicles	September 2007
Ongoing Threat to Public Transport Systems	5 February 2008
Reporting Suspicious Activity	2 February 2008
National Counter-Terrorism Alert System	3 September 2008
Suspicious Behaviour on Aircraft	1 October 2008
Facilitation of Terrorist and Criminal Activity by Trusted Insiders	8 October 2008
Terrorist Threat to the Transport Industry: 5 year outlook	October 2008
Mumbai Terrorist attacks	5 December 2008
Airport precincts: intermodal transport hubs	August 2009
Terrorism related arrests	4 August 2009

For further information regarding OTS risk context material, or to obtain copies of any of these documents, please contact the Security Analysis Liaison Officer (SALO) in your state OTS office or email security.analysis@infrastructure.gov.au

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