



TRANSPORT SECURITY ADVISORY

Unscreened airport risk assessment: determining the level of threat

Purpose

This Transport Security Advisory provides guidance to assist operators of unscreened airport 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 of unscreened airports 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: determining the local security 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 airports 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 airport depends on a number of operational and environmental factors including the size of the airport, the types of aircraft it services, the number of passengers gathered at any one time, the amount of traffic in the environment, the airport's location and perceived vulnerabilities.

Unscreened airports 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.

Airports that service high-capacity regular public transport (RPT) operations¹ provide attractive terrorist targets as they concentrate large numbers of passengers in confined spaces at regular, predictable times, outside security controlled areas. Terrorists are likely to be most attracted to large airports in major cities, but will also be influenced by opportunity and by the security measures in place at an airport when selecting a target.

On the spectrum of targets, larger unscreened airports that provide opportunities for terrorists to target gatherings of people, or which are located in a symbolic location or close to populated areas, would be more likely to attract terrorist interest. Unscreened airports that service high capacity non-jet RPT flights are likely to have a higher risk profile than those that do not, but they are still likely to be at lower risk than larger screened airports with greater passenger throughput and resulting congregations.

Airport operations that do not involve large passenger numbers, including those servicing 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 at their airport would meet terrorist objectives.

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

1. An unscreened airport with **significant terminal operations**, including congested check-in areas, retail and dining areas, and **large congregations of people resulting from frequent or concurrent arrivals or departures of high capacity RPT aircraft** may consider, based on the security risk context, that a terrorist attack against their operations—for example using an improvised explosive device—could occur. The operator of this airport may therefore assess the level of local security threat against this risk event to be **MEDIUM**.
2. An unscreened airport with **infrequent high-capacity aircraft** may consider, based on the security risk context, that while possible, a terrorist attack against their operations is not expected. As a result the operator of this airport may assess the level of local security threat against terrorist risk events to be **LOW**.
3. An unscreened airport that does not service high capacity RPT—**servicing low capacity RPT only** and without large numbers of concurrent flights—may consider that a terrorist attack against their operations is very unlikely. The operator may therefore assess the level of local security threat to be **NEGLIGIBLE**.
4. **General aviation** is generally less attractive to terrorist than RPT services. An airport servicing only general aviation is likely to identify that a terrorist attack is very unlikely. They would therefore assess the level of local security threat against their operation from terrorism to be **NEGLIGIBLE**.

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

¹ Section 3 at page 18 of the Aviation RCS provides an explanation of the various operational segments of the aviation sector that are referenced in this document.

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 local threat to a particular airport. The *Security Risk Assessment template* allows levels of local 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.

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	02 July 2007
Transport Security Guidance Material (for areas of mass gathering)	24 July 2007
Potential Misuse of Official Uniforms, Identification and Vehicles	September 2007
Ongoing Threat to Public Transport Systems	05 February 2008
Reporting Suspicious Activity	12 February 2008
National Counter-Terrorism Alert System	23 September 2008
Suspicious Behaviour on Aircraft	01 October 2008
Facilitation of Terrorist and Criminal Activity by Trusted Insiders	08 October 2008
Terrorist Threat to the Transport Industry: 5 year outlook	October 2008
Mumbai terrorist attacks	15 December 2008
Airport precincts: intermodal transport hubs	August 2009
Terrorism related arrests	04 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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