



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, June 8, 2015

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TSA Can Improve Aviation Worker Vetting

The Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General today released a report on TSA's controls over the vetting of aviation workers who apply for credentials allowing unescorted access to secured airport areas. DHS OIG reviewed TSA's process for vetting workers for terrorist links, criminal history, and lawful status. The Inspector General's review also sought to determine the accuracy and reliability of data TSA uses for vetting.

In the review, the DHS OIG concluded:

- TSA has multiple, layered controls for vetting workers for terrorism, and its process is generally effective. However, TSA could not identify all individuals on the Consolidated Terrorist Watchlist because current interagency watchlisting policy does not authorize TSA to receive all terrorism-related categories of information. DHS OIG identified 73 individuals with possible terrorism-related information that was not reported to TSA. TSA acknowledged that these individuals were cleared for access to secure airport areas despite representing a potential security threat.
- TSA lacks effective controls for vetting applicant's criminal history and work authorization. TSA relies on individual airports for criminal history and work authorization checks. Presently, TSA does not have an adequate monitoring process in place to ensure that airport operators properly adjudicated credential applicants' criminal histories.
- Moreover, law and FBI policy generally prohibit TSA and the airports to conduct recurrent criminal history vetting and rely on individuals to self-report disqualifying crimes. TSA is planning a pilot program for late 2015 whereby the FBI will begin providing automated updated from the FBI for new criminal history matches associated with individuals who have undergone prior criminal history records checks.
- With respect to work authorization vetting, TSA data indicates that airports may not be consistently verifying that credential applicants possess the immigration status necessary to work in the U.S.



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- Finally, DHS OIG identified thousands of aviation worker records that appeared to have incomplete or inaccurate biographic information, including incomplete names, passport numbers, alien registration numbers, Social Security Numbers, and aliases. TSA has taken steps to address some of these weaknesses, and enhancements should become effective within 2 years.

TSA agreed with the recommendations in the DHS OIG's report. Inspector General John Roth--who will be testifying before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs about these and other TSA issues on Tuesday, June 9--noted that "it is vital to airport security that only fully vetted aviation workers receive credentials to access secure areas of our nation's airports. We are pleased that TSA has agreed to our recommended improvements."