



Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General

Transportation Security Administration's Management of Its Screening Workforce Training Program Can Be Improved



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Preface

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established by the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* (Public Law 107-296) by amendment to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*. This is one of a series of audit, inspection, and special reports prepared as part of our oversight responsibilities to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness within the department.

This report addresses the strengths and weaknesses of some aspects of the Transportation Security Administration's management of its screening workforce training program. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observations, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations herein have been developed to the best knowledge available to our office, and have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. We trust this report will result in more effective, efficient, and economical operations. We express our appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne L. Richards".

Anne L. Richards
Assistant Inspector General for Audits

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Abbreviations

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FY	Fiscal Year
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OTT	Operational and Technical Training
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
TSO	Transportation Security Officer

OIG

*Department of Homeland Security
Office of Inspector General*

Executive Summary

The Transportation Security Administration is responsible for protecting the Nation's transportation systems to ensure the movement of people and commerce. Transportation Security Officers screen passengers, carry-on baggage, and checked baggage to prevent prohibited objects from being transported on aircraft. The objective of our review was to determine the efficacy of the Transportation Security Administration's management of its Transportation Security Officer training program.

The agency can improve its management of the training program for the screening workforce by developing and documenting standard processes to:

- Use officer test results to evaluate training program results;
- Assign on-the-job training responsibilities; and
- Evaluate workforce and training needs to ensure that officers have the tools and time necessary to complete training requirements.

The Transportation Security Administration did not establish a lead office to organize and coordinate Transportation Security Officer training until 2006. The agency issued a management directive designating the Operational and Technical Training Division responsible for the overall management of the analysis, design, development, and implementation of Transportation Security Officer training programs. However, the division did not assume an active leadership role until 2009 due to its need to maintain current training levels and respond to emerging threats. Without a documented process for updating training based on screener performance data and changes in technology or equipment, the Transportation Security Administration may be missing opportunities to enhance its officers' skills and abilities.

We are making four recommendations that, if implemented, would improve the agency's management of its screening workforce training program.

Background

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for protecting the Nation's transportation systems to ensure the movement of people and commerce. TSA is most visible at more than 450 domestic airports where approximately 43,000 Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) perform security screening procedures.

The *Aviation and Transportation Security Act*, Public Law 107-71, mandated that TSA establish a screener training program. This training program should provide the screening workforce with the skills necessary to use various technologies and perform physical searches of baggage and pat-down searches of airline passengers while facilitating the orderly flow of passengers through screening checkpoints. According to the law, as codified at 49 U.S.C. 44935 the training program must:

- Include 40 hours of initial screener classroom instruction¹ and 60 hours of on-the-job training;
- Include remedial training on those screening functions in which a screener fails the operational test related to those functions; and
- Ensure that screeners are proficient in using the most current technology and recognizing new threats and weapons.

TSA implemented Management Directive Number 1900.8, *Transportation Security Officer Training and Initial Certification Programs*, to guide the overall management of the design, analysis, and implementation of all TSO training programs. This directive requires the agency to provide TSOs and TSO candidates with appropriate training to ensure that they perform their security and customer service functions in accordance with established standard operating procedures. The directive also requires the Federal Security Directors to ensure that each TSO's work schedule includes sufficient time to meet annual training requirements.

¹ For the purpose of this report, we refer to "initial screener classroom instruction" to reflect the "Basic Screener Training" program, which was revised as the "New Hire Training" program and is the basic requirement for all new TSOs.

To meet these requirements, multiple offices within TSA share responsibilities for or provide input to TSO training. These offices include the Office of Security Operations, the Office of Inspections, the Office of Security Technology, and the Office of Human Capital. Appendix C provides additional information regarding these offices and their roles in TSO training activities.

Results of Audit

TSO Training Program Management

TSA can improve its management of the TSO training program by developing and documenting standard processes. The agency does not have documented standard processes to update training based on current information, such as the results of officer testing. While TSA officials explained they have a process in place to guide training enhancements, they acknowledged the process is informal and not documented. The agency recently began efforts to record the processes used to improve the training program and it is in the process of developing a standard process for identifying and assigning on-the-job training mentors. The agency also has not documented procedures to determine or allocate the equipment, support, and time needed for the workforce to complete training requirements, and provides little centralized oversight of the training program.

TSA did not establish a lead office to organize and coordinate TSO training until 2006. At that time, TSA issued Management Directive 1900.8, *Transportation Security Officer Training and Initial Certification Programs*, designating the Operational and Technical Training (OTT) Division within the Office of Security Operations as responsible for the overall management of the analysis, design, development, and implementation of all TSO training programs. However, the OTT Division did not assume an active leadership role until 2009. According to OTT officials, this limited action was due to OTT's need to maintain current training levels and respond to emerging threats.

Without guidance and a documented process for updating training based on screener performance data and changes in technology or equipment, TSA may be missing opportunities to enhance its TSOs' skills and abilities.

Documenting Updates to Training

Management Directive 1900.8 requires the OTT to evaluate TSO training programs on a continuing basis to ensure that the courses remain current and up-to-date. According to a division official, OTT uses intelligence information, Aviation Security Assessment Program test results, covert testing results, and standard operating procedure changes to modify training, but it did not have a written procedure describing how to determine whether a training course needs to be modified. Division officials could not provide documentation or evidence of how the above information was used. For example, OTT could not demonstrate how the training methodology or content was modified based on the results of the following activities:

- TSA's 2008 Aviation Security Assessment Program report tests prepared by the Office of Security Operations, which included 11 recommendations meant to improve the TSO training program.
- TSA's Office of Inspection and the DHS OIG, covert testing identified vulnerabilities in passenger and baggage screening procedures and technologies.
- The Practical Skills Evaluations.²

A TSA official reported that a 2009 multiyear contract for specialized security training will provide a more structured TSO training program support effort. This will include analysis of performance data, coordination of training with technology deployment functions, and support of the evaluation and application of existing technologies training. Division officials explained that they have not established measurements of program effectiveness because the division and the training program are still developing and continue to "play catch up."

During visits to selected airports, some airport management teams described local efforts to revise TSO training based on performance measures, including covert testing. Federal Security Directors and Training Managers stated that local testing results

² Practical Skills Evaluations are announced assessments of TSOs. These assessments are based on the applicable security screening standard operating procedures to ensure that security officers are performing screening functions as required.

influenced local training initiatives, such as more training on improvised explosive devices and an increased focus on standard operating procedures.

On-the-Job Monitoring Assignments

Another element that needs improvement is the on-the-job training program. A TSA official recognized the importance of a standardized, structured on-the-job training program, and the agency has established multiple workgroups over the past four years to improve this program. However, TSA was unable to provide documentation of the accomplishments of these workgroups. In addition, TSA has not implemented a formal program for selecting and dispatching fully qualified on-the-job training monitors. According to the Training Managers at the airports visited, the on-the-job training program is implemented differently among airports. For example,

- At five of the eight airports we visited, the TSOs were assigned only one on-the-job training monitor.
- At the three other airports TSOs were assigned multiple monitors.

TSA officials acknowledged that the agency did not strategically plan and document TSO training development from the onset due to the urgent need to initiate operations in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the need to maintain operations and constantly respond to emerging threats.

Training Equipment and Support

Based on our interviews with TSOs and management personnel at the airports visited, TSA may not always provide TSOs with the equipment and support they need to effectively complete required training. The *Aviation and Transportation Security Act* requires TSA to work with air carriers and airports to ensure that computer-based screener training facilities are conveniently located and easily accessible.³³ TSA has not developed a standard process to identify and coordinate the necessary computer support, such as machines, bandwidth, and location of machines, to ensure that the tools available are adjusted to meet current or future needs.

³³ 49 U.S.C. 44935(i).

At the airports we visited, airport management and TSOs explained that some training computers were slow or malfunctioning at times. The TSOs noted that the computer startup time was not factored into the training time scheduled. Some TSOs mentioned that the Online Learning Center system occasionally crashed or did not record the accurate data on training completion. A TSA official said that a combination of factors contributed to these problems, including inadequate network bandwidth, computer and web browser security settings, interaction with other programs, and slow network performance during periods of high user activity.

OTT has not identified the appropriate number of training computers needed at each airport. The original computer allocation was conducted in 2003, and OTT has not updated the allocation since taking control of the training program. Based on TSA's computer allocation inventory records, the agency did not consistently allocate computers nationwide. For example, one airport shows a computer for every 32 TSOs, while another airport had one computer for each TSO. According to TSA officials, TSA may have initially deployed equipment without conducting studies to determine the appropriate number of computers needed for the TSOs to accomplish training. However, no documentation could be produced to verify how they were actually deployed. TSA officials stated that no additional studies to guide deployment have been conducted since its inception. These officials explained that recent computer allocations were made based on requests from airports.

TSA and OTT have not ensured that airports place training computers in practical locations for optimal learning. Training computers are sometimes placed far from the checkpoint or checked baggage areas, requiring TSOs to spend part of their allotted training time traveling to and from the computer locations. TSA management at the airports we visited identified the need for more training space as a challenge for TSOs to receive training. For example, two of the airports we visited have offsite training facilities. Three other airports had training facilities that were not conveniently located to some of the checkpoints.

Some of the training environments, such as break rooms or areas close to checkpoints, are not conducive to learning. At several of the airports visited, TSOs were taking training courses surrounded by the conversations of coworkers or the traveling public. We

conducted TSO interviews in some of these locations and validated that the computers were situated in distracting environments.

TSOs must complete both new hire and recurrent training on screening technologies; however, airport training equipment is sometimes different from the devices used at screening checkpoints. According to an OTT official, when TSA deployed a new generation of x-ray machines to 81 airports, the updated recurrent training for TSOs with these machines had not been implemented because of software problems. TSOs were still training with x-ray images from older generation equipment, which limits their ability to identify prohibited items using the current checkpoint equipment.

TSA must ensure that Federal Security Directors and Training Managers at each airport provide the screening workforce with the equipment and support they need to enhance their skills and knowledge. The airport leadership should provide computer-based training facilities that are conveniently located, easily accessible, and foster learning.

Training Time

TSA does not ensure that TSOs are provided the time they need to effectively complete training requirements. Management Directive 1900.8 requires Federal Security Directors to ensure that each TSO's work schedule includes sufficient time to meet annual training requirements established in the National Training Plan.⁴ However, TSA has not created a process to ensure that Federal Security Directors provide enough time for TSOs to complete training requirements.

TSA Headquarters develops the training that TSOs must take and determines the amount of time associated with completion of the training sessions, but this time estimate includes only the time for the lessons, not travel or setup. If TSOs encounter difficulties with the online training session, they may not have enough time to complete the training.

⁴ The National Training Plan includes all TSA-mandated training courses that an employee should take quarterly to meet their annual requirements, including recurrent training for skills maintenance, administrative training, and developmental training.

TSOs described rushing through course material without devoting the attention needed to retain the lessons. TSA officials agreed that if TSOs hurry through training courses because they are not being allocated sufficient time by management or they do not have access to training computers, they may not receive adequate or quality training.

Federal Security Directors did not ensure that screening supervisors allocated sufficient time for TSOs to complete the National Training Plan courses. Training Managers and TSOs interviewed said that some supervisors did not always staff checkpoints and checked baggage areas to allow time for TSOs to leave for training. According to TSA officials and local airport management, there is an extent to which operational needs supersede training.

At one airport, TSA officials allowed TSOs to bypass the use of the Online Learning Center and provided little time for training because of staffing challenges. One lead TSO indicated that he had not accessed the Online Learning Center since 2005. The TSO also explained that staff had limited time to read printed training materials in lieu of going online. Therefore, the staff is encouraged to simply sign off on the materials and receive credit for taking the courses without providing evidence of reading or understanding the information. The Federal Security Director at this airport acknowledged these practices and said that he had been encouraging the Training Manager to have the TSOs use the Online Learning Center. We did not encounter this situation at other airports.

Successful Use of Screening Equipment Depends on Training

The screening workforce is TSA's most important asset for ensuring the safety and security of the traveling public; however, the agency has not articulated a standard methodology to keep its training material current and relevant.

Without a documented process for updating training based on screener performance data and changes in technology or equipment, TSA may be missing opportunities to enhance its TSOs' skills and abilities. TSA should assess its training equipment needs to provide TSOs with access to sufficient computer equipment and bandwidth to successfully complete assigned training courses. The agency must also ensure that TSOs

are provided with the time and space needed to effectively complete training requirements.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Acting General Manager, Office of Operational Performance, ensures the Operational and Technical Training Division:

Recommendation #1: Finalizes the documentation and implementation of a comprehensive methodology to guide its efforts to keep the TSO training program and materials up-to-date and relevant.

Recommendation #2: Establishes and documents a formal On-the-Job Training Program with specific criteria for Transportation Security Officers selected to serve as monitors.

Recommendation #3: Reviews and modifies its requirements for training needs to guide agency allocation of computer resources to the airports. The Operational and Technical Training Division should:

3a. Provide documented criteria and guidance for the placement of the training equipment. This should include the use of equipment in the training classrooms that is similar to equipment in checkpoint and checked baggage areas.

3b. Ensure that computer hardware and software, as well as the client servers, can support the complex needs of a robust, web-based training portfolio.

Recommendation #4: Conducts a study to identify the total average time needed for TSOs to complete required training, including time needed to travel to training locations; and, establishes requirements that airport management provide the minimum time needed for the screening workforce to complete training requirements.

Management Comments and OIG Analysis

TSA concurred with all four of the recommendations in the report and the agency has already begun to formulate plans and initiate actions to address the recommendations. We consider the recommendations resolved, but open. TSA provided information on some ongoing projects and new initiatives to build a well documented training plan that will fill the gaps identified in this audit report. A summary of the agency's responses to the recommendations follows.

TSA Comments to Recommendation #1:

Concur: TSA provided information on several activities already underway that address this recommendation. The OTT Division will document and describe curriculum configuration management principles in the draft version of the Curriculum Development Reference Guide. The final version should be available by the second quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2011. The OTT Division recently created a Curriculum Development Roadmap Tool that visually depicts the forecast for all curriculum-related activities on the horizon. This should improve OTT's ability to more clearly define which events or inputs, such as Aviation Security Assessment Program test results or covert tests address a specific curriculum.

Beginning in FY 2011, quarterly work plan reviews will be conducted by the OTT Management Team to help prioritize the training work needed. This will help improve visibility into when curriculum updates are happening, while ensuring more effective management and integration of these efforts. By the end of the first quarter of FY 2011, a new Program Management Support Services contract will provide two to three resources to document methodologies, processes, and procedures.

OIG Analysis:

We recognize TSA's efforts to address its need to finalize the documentation and implementation of its methodology to ensure that its TSO training program remains current and relevant. This recommendation is resolved but will remain open until we have obtained and reviewed the final versions of the Curriculum Development Reference Guide, the Curriculum Development Roadmap Tool, the OTT work plan resulting from the quarterly work plan reviews, and notification of the hiring of resources responsible for the TSO training program. TSA should specify and demonstrate how each of these components will ensure a current and relevant TSO training program.

TSA Comments to Recommendation #2:

Concur: TSA is in the final stages of formalizing an on-the-job training program for TSOs and has provided copies of the draft working documents. The formalized on-the-job training program will provide a structured training curriculum for the TSOs who will serve as instructors. This will include mandatory courses on mentoring and providing feedback in an effective manner. A TSO will sign a one-year commitment agreement to serve as an on-the-job training instructor. The on-the-job training instructor program will help establish consistency in the methods and techniques used to develop and mentor the workforce during this critical portion of the overall training initiative. TSA has scheduled a pilot to be conducted in the second quarter of FY 2011. TSA plans to implement this program system wide in the third quarter of FY 2011 if minimal or no changes are required as a result of the pilot.

OIG Analysis:

TSA's response described efforts to formalize the agency's on-the-job training program, which are sufficient to resolve this recommendation. The recommendation will remain open until we have obtained and reviewed the final formalized on-the-job training program, the results of the pilot on-the-job training instructor program, and the schedule for deployment of the on-the-job training instructor program. TSA should also provide documentation to show how this plan will be implemented system-wide including, trainer and student ratios, training duration, and participant satisfaction.

TSA Comments to Recommendation #3a:

Concur: OTT agreed that a reassessment of computer allocations is warranted and will undertake an effort to develop a formula for allocating training computers. Once a formula is approved, it will be distributed to the field. TSA's Office of Field Real Estate Services is currently revising the Space Allocation Worksheet and Space Guidelines to allocate more space to accommodate the training requirements. TSA plans on releasing the new Space Allocation Worksheet in the second quarter of FY 2011 and the new guidelines in the third quarter of FY 2011.

OIG Analysis:

This recommendation is resolved and will remain open. We recognize that the revision of the Space Allocation Worksheet and the Space

Guidelines will improve the logistical and space needs for critical training equipment. However, TSA did not fully address the need to ensure that the equipment in the classroom is similar to the equipment at the checkpoint and the checked baggage area.

We need to review the details of the training computer allocation formula and anticipated implementation plan. TSA should provide the revised space allocation plan, implementation details, and documentation of how the agency intends to ensure that similar equipment will be employed in the classrooms and the checkpoints and baggage areas.

TSA Comments to Recommendation #3b:

Concur: TSA is establishing a focused working group as a permanent team structure to identify training requirements and the information technology capabilities that will be needed to support those requirements. This will be a long term goal of TSA, and does not have a simple solution that can be quickly implemented. It is anticipated that TSA will pilot many different types of interactive web-based training solutions over the next several years, and progress and success will be achieved with each new project initiated.

OIG Analysis:

This recommendation is resolved, but will remain open until we have obtained and reviewed specific detailed plans including milestones and timetables that identify training requirements and resulting computer hardware, software and system solutions. Once the agency has established a focused working group as a permanent team structure, we would like to review its membership and planned activities. TSA should provide documentation showing that future anticipated web-based training efforts include a technical assessment of the computer hardware, software and client server systems needed for successful TSO training program implementation.

TSA Comments to Recommendation #4:

Concur: OTT has begun conducting a study to analyze how to build a formula to ensure TSOs are provided sufficient time to complete required training, including capturing the uniqueness of each airport with regard to the location of training classrooms/facilities, as well as the types of equipment in use at each airport. Currently, TSAs Staffing Allocation Model calculates hours for training, which is used to ensure airports have sufficient staffing to allow them to send TSOs to training during non-peak

times with no impact to screening operations. The Staffing Allocation Model does not include additional hours that may be needed for travel to and from a training facility. The model does not address the specific screening equipment in place at any given airport. Some airports have Advanced Imaging Technology equipment and need training hours for that machine, while other airports do not have such equipment and therefore do not need training hours in that category. Some airports have training facilities within the terminal areas, and therefore, additional time for travel is not needed. Some airports have offsite training facilities, and therefore allocating additional time for travel is needed. Once the formula is developed, TSA will be able to modify allocations of training hours based on the needs of an airport.

OIG Analysis:

TSA's response identifies its plans to conduct a study and create a formula that will take into consideration the needs for additional time for travel, training room locations, air port configuration and various types of equipment in use at the airports. This recommendation is considered resolved, but will remain open until we have obtained and reviewed the allocation formula, the revised training allocation plan, and documented evidence that airport management have implemented the new plan.

Appendix A

Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of our review was to determine the efficacy of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) management of its Transportation Security Officer (TSO) training program. To answer our objective, we reviewed prior audit reports related to TSO training. We analyzed federal regulations, TSA's management directives, standard operating procedures, contracts, and other documentation related to passenger and checked baggage training. We interviewed TSA officials from offices involved in the development and delivery of the TSO training program, including the Office of Human Capital, Office of Operational Performance, Aviation Security Assessment Program, and Operational and Technical Training Division.

We selected eight airports to visit based on the highest number of TSO Full Time Equivalents, the highest number of air travelers that are screened at the check points, the lowest reported Threat Image Projection results, the highest number of enplanements per the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, and those airports not recently visited or tested by DHS OIG. These airports included:

- Dallas/Fort Worth International
- Houston George Bush Intercontinental
- John F. Kennedy International
- Newark Liberty International
- Orlando International
- San Diego International
- Phoenix Sky Harbor International
- Tampa International

We judgmentally selected a sample of at least 48 TSOs at each airport. We interviewed a total of 385 TSOs, Lead TSOs, and Supervisory TSOs using a standardized data collection instrument. This instrument obtained qualitative and quantitative information regarding the required training, including the initial screener classroom training, on-the-job training, the National Training Plan, and remedial training. It also elicited the opinions of TSOs regarding some components of their training.

During site visits, we interviewed the Federal Security Directors, Deputy Federal Security Directors, and airport Training Managers to identify how local and national training programs were integrated, assess training effectiveness, and identify the extent to which training and performance assessments are used to improve TSA's TSO training program. At one location, we observed a New Hire Training Program class session.

Appendix A

Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

We reviewed electronic data on course completion for all airports to determine whether TSOs received the required training, and for comparison to TSA management records and reports. The data included initial, on-the-job, recurring, and remedial training components. We relied on TSA to generate the data and did not test or validate the information.

Our method for selecting our sample prevents us from projecting the findings on a national level, but one should not discount our findings since airports visited were locations with a high number of TSOs and air travelers.

We conducted our audit between July 2009 and April 2010 under the authority of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix B Management Comments to the Draft Report

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: Richard L. Skinner
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

FROM: John S. Pistole
Administrator *John S. Pistole*

SUBJECT: Response to Draft Report OIG-09-162-AUD-TSA, *Transportation Security Administration's Management of Its Screening Workforce Training Program Can Be Improved*, August 2010

Purpose:

This memorandum constitutes the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) response to DHS's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Draft Report OIG-09-162-AUD-TSA, *Transportation Security Administration's Management of Its Screening Workforce Training Program Can Be Improved*, dated August 2010.

TSA appreciates OIG's efforts on this audit and will use the findings and recommendations to improve the management of the Transportation Security Office (TSO) training program.

Background:

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), Public Law 107-71, mandated that TSA develop a plan for the training of security screening personnel. The training plan must ensure that the screening workforce is able to effectively operate those technologies deployed to their assigned airports, and that they can perform baggage and individual searches while facilitating the orderly flow of passengers through screening checkpoints. Additionally, the training plan must:

- Include 40 hours of initial screener classroom instruction and 60 hours of on-the-job training (OJT);
- Include remedial training on those screening functions in which a screener fails the operational test related to those functions; and

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- Ensure that screeners are proficient in using the most current technology and recognizing new threats and weapons.

The OIG initiated this audit to determine whether TSA's training and development program enables TSOs to fully implement required program procedures and effectively use the various screening technologies and techniques in support of aviation security.

Discussion:

Since initially established in 2002, the TSA has always made TSO training a priority. The overall responsibility for screener related training has resided with an Assistant Administrator or other TSES leader. TSA has undergone many organizational changes and in 2006 a decision was made to divide training responsibilities between the Office of Human Capital (general training) and the Office of Security Operations (technical training). TSA issued Management Directive 1900.8, *Transportation Security Officer Training and Initial Certification Programs*, designating the Operational and Technical Training Division (OTT) within the Office of Security Operations as the lead office responsible for the overall management of the analysis, design, development, and implementation of all TSO technical training programs.

OTT has been ensuring training products are kept current with Standard Operating Procedures changes and is responsive to immediate and emerging threats, such as the response to the liquids, gels, and aerosols threat in 2006, which prompted a focused improvised explosives device (IED) detection training effort. Additionally, OTT developed and introduced training to support newly established specialized security activities and/or positions, such as TSA assuming the responsibilities for Travel Document Checker, establishing training for newly established Behavior Detection Officers, and Security Training Instructors. In 2009, TSA awarded a new contract to support the design, development, and delivery of technical training; and OTT is in the process of developing a roadmap that will help identify opportunities to build a training portfolio to always contribute to the enhancement of TSO skills and abilities.

In the audit report OIG states that TSA has not documented procedures to determine or allocate the equipment, support, and time needed for the workforce to complete training requirements and that TSA provides little centralized oversight of the training program. TSA believes it is important to highlight, that while OIG does not believe that the documentation level is sufficient, TSA does in fact continually evaluate the logistical support elements of training to ensure that the resources needed, whether equipment or time allocated for training, are at an appropriate level. In its overall efforts to finalize documentation that will capture repeatable procedures and processes related to the design, development, and delivery of technical training, TSA will formalize the methodology used to determine or allocate the equipment and logistical support needed by the workforce to complete training. The time needed for training is currently calculated into the annual staffing allocation model, and using the information gleaned by the OIG during this audit, TSA is analyzing the potential need to address specific airport anomalies related to off-site training location travel requirements.

With regard to the issue raised by the OIG wherein it is stated that TSA provides "little centralized oversight of the training program," TSA would like to clarify that it has only decentralized the delivery of technical training, which relies upon its airport based instructors for

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delivery and local management to ensure appropriate time and equipments/supplies are provided to the TSOs so that they can complete the required training. The OTT at TSA HQ centrally manages the design, development, and distribution of the training curriculum. This model requires the support of OTT, field management, and the TSOs to make it successful.

Another issue that TSA would like to address is the one related to the implication that image interpretation training sessions using x-ray images from first generation technologies versus new generation machines was ineffective and/or inappropriate. TSA believes that the critical element to highlight is that while technologies with enhanced capabilities are being introduced into the airports, the basics of x-ray image interpretation will not change. Because there are a variety of technologies currently deployed, TSA must also maintain a variety of x-ray images for training purposes. OTT does ensure new images are routinely developed so that the training libraries are updated regularly, and as the new images are incorporated into the libraries, older images are archived. Viewing images that are developed for either the legacy x-ray systems or the newer advanced x-ray systems does not, in any way, diminish the value of these sessions. Since the completion of this audit report TSA has deployed an upgrade to the simulator software package and TSOs are now training and testing with imaging that captures both legacy x-ray and next generation advanced x-ray technologies.

TSA continues to refine and redesign the new hire training course curriculum and methods used to deliver the training content. The basic course exceeds both the 40 hour classroom and 60 hour OJT minimum requirements set forth in ATSA, and includes a mix of classroom sessions, practical exercises, image interpretation sessions and hands-on labs. The training is continually evolving to address the introduction of new technologies and emerging threats. Moving from the original focus of training to support establishing a 45,000 member cadre, TSA is now able to design its training to strengthen and improve technical skills, while also building competencies that lead to the professional development of our TSOs individually, and as a team.

- **Strategic Plan for Technical Training.** In 2010, TSA's Operational and Technical Training Division (OTT), within the Office of Security Operations (OSO) finalized a Strategic Plan for the management of the technical training program. The plan captures strategic goals and initiatives to accomplish those goals over a five year span. Through this plan, TSA is able to identify training needs and build training portfolios for its workforce that will reinforce the core screening activities and skills needed to always improve performance. Additionally, implementing the OTT Strategic Plan will allow a more systematic and structured method of introducing a variety of new training courses that will increase the TSOs overall effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Technical Training Roadmap.** OTT is also nearing completion of a Technical Training Roadmap to support implementation of the strategic plan and to establish a clear path forward for professional and technical skills development. This roadmap will allow TSA to identify the types of training planned as well as identify what additional/different training might be needed and/or desired to ensure the workforce is proficient in the tasks they must perform. This roadmap will also help ensure that the appropriate investment of resources is made available to complete the projects identified.

Appendix B

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- **Standardization and Performance Improvement.** OSO has launched an Integrated Project Team (IPT) comprised of various organizational elements within TSA, as well as DHS Science & Technology Human Factors experts, to conduct a root cause analysis of covert testing results. This will help TSA better understand what types of adjustments to hiring, procedures, local oversight, environmental conditions, and/or training should be considered to bring about improved individual and overall system effectiveness. Based on the data gathered by the IPT and analyzed by OSOs senior leadership team, TSA is designing a multi-month pilot, to be run in a small group of airports of various sizes and complexities of operations, that will require field management to implement a number of activities specifically designed to address the performance of the specific members of the workforce at that airport. These airports will be able to monitor individual and airport performance metrics during this pilot and determine if the activities undertaken show improvement. Using the information gained through these pilots, TSA will be able to determine if this would be something that all airports should implement.
- **TSA Academy.** TSA is exploring the feasibility of establishing a TSA Academy. An IPT will be launched at the start of fiscal year (FY) 2011, to develop a comprehensive alternatives analysis for senior leadership consideration. The IPT will gather data that will identify potential costs (both initial and recurring), facility space requirements, as well as the specific types of training that would/could be considered for Academy delivery. TSA's current model has airport assigned instructors delivering training locally at a variety of different locations, both on and off airport. Once the alternatives analysis is completed, TSA will determine what solution will best contribute to the professional development of its workforce.

Conclusion

In conclusion, progress has been, and continues to be, made in the area of TSO training and professional development. TSA continues to build its training portfolio, with the desired outcome of improving performance and developing its workforce to help ensure TSA is recognized as a premier counterterrorism agency. The Strategic Plan and Roadmap for training design and development, as well as the Standardization and Performance Improvement efforts, are only three of the projects currently underway at TSA. It is anticipated that as TSA moves these projects forward, we will have the opportunity to identify skills, capabilities, and competencies that will contribute to TSO development, and also continue to build a comprehensive training portfolio. TSA looks forward to continued communication with OIG leading to improved processes.

TSA concurs with and has already taken steps to address several of the recommendations set forth in the OIG draft report. TSA's specific responses to the recommendations contained in the draft report are attached.

Appendix B Management Comments to the Draft Report

U. S. Department of Homeland Security
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

Response to OIG Draft Report,
TSA's Management of Its Screening Workforce Training Program Can Be Improved

Recommendation #1: Finalizes the documentation and implementation of a comprehensive methodology to guide its efforts to keep the TSO training program and materials up-to-date and relevant.

TSA Concurs: Several activities are already underway that address this recommendation:

- TSA's Operational and Technical Training Division (OTT) continues to document and carefully describe curriculum configuration management principles in the draft version of the Curriculum Development Reference Guide. This guide will provide an unprecedented level of documented detail for the methodology used to ensure training program materials remain up-to-date and relevant. The final version should be available by the second quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2011, as a deliverable under Task Order 4 of the Specialized Security Training contract (SST900).
- OTT recently developed a Curriculum Development Roadmap tool that visually depicts the forecast for all curriculum-related activities on the horizon. Among other benefits, dialogue based on this tool will improve OTT's ability to more clearly define which events or inputs (Aviation Screening Assessment Program tests, covert testing, Practical Skills Evaluation data, etc.), specifically address which specific curriculum. With regular use, this tool will become an important part of OTT's overall methodology for keeping training program materials up-to-date and relevant.
- Beginning in FY 2011, quarterly work plan reviews will be conducted by the OTT Management Team. These reviews will not only help the OTT Management Team better prioritize what work needs to be conducted over the next fiscal year, but also the costs associated with that work. It will also help improve visibility into when curriculum updates are happening, while ensuring more effective management and integration of these efforts.
- By the end of the first quarter of FY 2011, a new Program Management Support Services contract will bring on board two to three resources that will be key resources used to document methodologies, processes, and procedures.

Recommendation #2: Establishes and documents a formal On-the-Job Training Program with specific criteria for Transportation Security Officers selected to serve as monitors.

TSA Concurs: While TSA has always had a formal on-the-job-training (OJT) program, as mandated by Aviation and Transportation Security Act, with specific content and sign off requirements for each element covered during OJT, lessons learned over the past eight years have prompted TSA to establish a more structured approach to training and establish dedicated

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OJT mentors. TSA has provided copies of the draft working documents to the DHS OIG audit team during this audit.

The revised OJT Program will now include a structured training curriculum for the TSOs who will sign up to serve as an OJT Instructor (OJTI), to include mandatory courses on mentoring and providing feedback in an effective manner. Additionally, a TSO will sign a one-year commitment agreement to serve as an OJTI, and agree that because this is a collateral duty, execution of this commitment will limit their availability to sign up for any other collateral duty assignments during that year. The OJTI program will help establish consistency in the methods and techniques used to develop and mentor the workforce during this critical portion of the overall training initiative. The formalized training for the OJTIs will provide them with the tools they need to be effective trainers and mentors.

TSA has scheduled a pilot to be conducted in the second quarter of FY 2011, and if minimal and/or no changes are required as a result of the pilot conducted, TSA plans to implement this program system wide in the third quarter of FY 2011.

Recommendation #3: Reviews and modifies its requirements for training needs to guide agency allocation of computer resources to the airports. The Operational and Technical Training Division should:

3a. Provide documented criteria and guidance for the placement of the training equipment. This should include the use of equipment in the training classrooms that is similar to equipment in checkpoint and checked baggage areas.

TSA Concurs: OTT will undertake an effort to develop a formula for allocating training computers. As the training materials/products continue to become more reliant upon information technology (IT) as a key component for delivery, a reassessment of computer allocations is warranted. Once a formula is agreed upon within TSA, it will be distributed to the field. With regard to training classrooms, TSA's Office of Field Real Estate Services (OFRES) is currently revising the Space Allocation Worksheet (SAW) and Space Guidelines to allocate more space to accommodate the training requirements that has been lacking in the past. OTT is in communication with OFRES to assist with determining training space needs. OFRES plans on releasing the new SAW in the second quarter of FY 2011 and the new guidelines in the third quarter of FY 2011.

3b. Ensure that computer hardware and software, as well as the client servers, can support the complex needs of a robust, web-based training portfolio.

TSA Concurs: Based on preliminary data gathering and informational discussions between the TSA's Office of Information Technology (OIT) and OSO/OTT, it was determined that establishing a focused working group is warranted as a permanent team structure to identify training requirements and the IT capabilities that will be needed to support those requirements. This will be a long-term goal of TSA and does not have a simple solution that can be quickly implemented. It is anticipated that TSA will pilot many different types of interactive Web-based training solutions over the next several years, and progress and success will be achieved with each new project initiated.

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Recommendation #4: Conducts a study to identify the total average time needed for TSOs to complete required training, including time needed to travel to training locations; and, establishes requirements that airport management provide the minimum time needed for the screening workforce to complete training requirements.

TSA Concur: OTT has begun conducting a study to analyze how best to build a formula to ensure TSOs are allocated, and management provides, sufficient time to complete required training, including capturing the uniqueness of each airport with regard to the location of training classrooms/facilities and the types of equipment in use at each airport. Currently, TSA's Staffing Allocation Model (SAM) does calculate hours for training, which is used to ensure airports have sufficient staffing to allow them to send TSOs to training during non-peak times with no impact to screening operations. What the SAM model does not currently include are additional hours, if needed, to address travel to and from a training facility, nor does it address the specific screening equipment in place at any given airport. Some airports have Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) machines and need training hours for that equipment. Some airports do not have AIT and therefore do not need training hours in that category. Some airports have training facilities within the terminal areas; and therefore, additional time for travel is not needed. Some airports have offsite training facilities; and therefore, allocating additional time for travel is needed. Once the formula is developed, TSA will be able to modify allocations of training hours based on the needs of an airport.

Appendix C

TSA Offices and Positions Primarily Focused on TSO Training

Office of Security Operations

Responsible for TSOs performing airport checkpoint and baggage screening operations. Includes:

Office of Operational Performance - Coordinates TSO training to enhance aviation security screening performance.

Operational and Technical Training Division - Designs, develops, implements, manages, supports, and evaluates training solutions required by statute or regulation to improve workforce performance throughout TSA. The division establishes training procedures and methodologies to ensure that training programs are effective.

Aviation Security Assessment Program - Provides summary reports of testing to the Operational and Technical Training Division for recommended training improvements. Airports generate assessments using inert bombs, bomb parts, and other threat items from checkpoint bomb kits to identify weaknesses in the screening process in order to strengthen screening performance through training, procedures, or technology.

Office of Human Capital

Provides human capital strategies and services to build, develop, and sustain a high-performing, diverse TSA workforce. Includes:

Human Capital Information Systems Division – Maintains TSA’s Online Learning Center

Performance Accountability and Standards System - Provides annual TSO performance evaluations. This feedback may show what screening functions are problematic and may need to be a focus of TSO training.

Office of Inspection

Ensures the security and integrity of the agency’s operations through its covert testing program. The Office of Inspection provides its covert testing results to the Operational and Technical Training Division.

Federal Security Directors

Provide daily operational direction for federal security at airports. Federal Security Directors are to ensure that all TSOs have successfully completed initial and on-the-job training, and are provided remedial training following an operational test failure. Federal Security Directors must ensure that each TSO’s work schedule includes sufficient time for meeting annual training requirements, including recurrent training standards.

Training Managers/Training Specialists

Arrange, organize, and ensure that TSOs receive required training and that the completed training is posted in the Online Learning Center. The training manager or specialist serves as the liaison between the Federal Security Director and Operational and Technical Training Division.

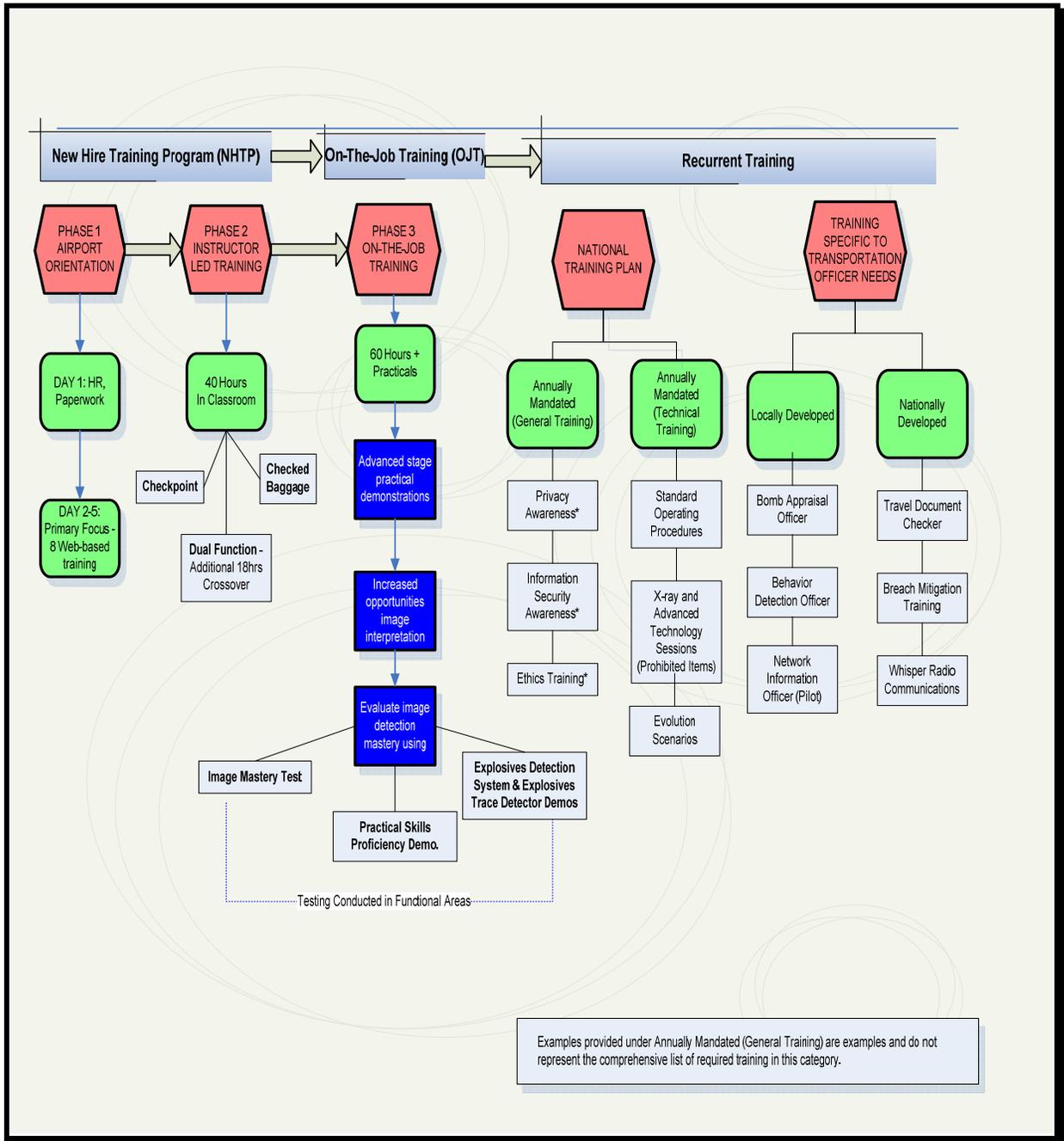
Security Training Instructors

TSOs assigned to Federal Security Directors’ staff who are responsible for delivery of nationally and locally developed, remediation, recurrent, and return-to-duty training. Instructors also assess and provide feedback for improvements to training materials or delivery techniques. These TSOs serve in the capacity of an instructor 80% of the time and as a TSO for 20% of the time.

Transportation Security Officers

Implement screening procedures central to TSA’s objectives. TSOs protect the traveling public by preventing deadly or dangerous objects from boarding aircraft.

Appendix D TSO Training Flowchart



Appendix E
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Appendix F
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