

Air Cargo Security

INTRODUCTION

There are many types of security controls in place at airports around the world to improve the safety and security of flights. Most of these controls include some form of physical screening and in some cases, such as passenger screening, this is the only security control in place. In other cases, however, physical screening can be complemented by other measures or applied randomly for reasons of deterrence.

Air cargo security is organized differently. It is often based on procedures to secure the supply chain that require documentation to prove that the cargo has been kept secure all along the way. Because not all cargo can be screened at the airport, the system relies on State oversight and the frequency of on-site evaluation checks defined in the National Civil Aviation Security Programme (NCASP), which vary greatly from one State to another. Therefore, the security of the supply chain largely depends on the trust placed in the organizations implementing it and on related paperwork. More guarantees are needed to achieve the same level of security as the processes that bring people, luggage, or other materials on board.

POSITION

IFALPA supports the overall approach to cargo security but believes that two specific aspects should be addressed to strengthen the Standards of ICAO Annex 17 with regards to oversight and security process validation:

1. Regulated agents and known consigners, the entities having a more critical role in assessing security of the cargo in the current process, should be checked by an on-site evaluation by the Authorities **at least once a year**. These evaluations should be unannounced, as these entities should fulfil the relevant requirements every day.
2. Random checks should be carried out on a percentage of the cargo, courier, and express parcels and/or mail for carriage on commercial flights, appropriate to the level of threat. This would serve as a deterrent and, more importantly, as a way to check on the quality of the paper trail security process and its participants.

Furthermore, IFALPA would like to emphasize that the security screening of cargo should be separated from inspections for other purposes like customs or narcotics. Any effort required from screeners to perform non security related duties will significantly reduce the security level achieved.