



## Pre-board screening

Passengers are screened before they board aircraft to confirm their boarding pass information and to make sure they are not carrying any potentially dangerous items on their persons or in their carry-on bags.

Each year, more than 52 million passengers and their belongings are inspected before they board planes at Canadian airports. Screening activities are carried out by 5,400 screening officers. It is CATSA's responsibility to ensure that nothing from Transport Canada's list of prohibited items is allowed on aircraft. These items include knives, firearms, liquid containers over 100 millilitres and explosives.

Pre-board screening includes the following:

**Scanning of boarding passes:** At Canada's major airports, Screening officers use CATSA's Boarding Pass Security System to electronically scan and validate each passenger's boarding pass.

**Explosive trace detection:** Screening officers may randomly select passengers while they wait in line to swab their hands, waist and shoes with explosives-detection equipment. Once cleared, these passengers are taken to the front of the line to continue the rest of the security screening process. This equipment can also be used to screen passengers' belongings (bags, computers, etc.).

**Random selection for additional screening:** Passengers may be asked to step on an electronic mat linked to a computer that randomly selects some people for additional screening. The electronic nature of the process removes any potential for bias in the selection. Passengers who have been randomly selected are directed to a screening line where they undergo additional screening. This process can involve a full-body scan, a physical search or swabbing for explosives trace detection. The physical search can be conducted in a private area at the request of the passenger.

**X-rays of carry-on baggage:** Screening officers use X-ray machines to scan passengers' carry-on bags. When a banned item is seen on the scan, officers conduct a physical search of the bag. Depending on the item, the passenger is offered the following options:

- Items that are allowed in checked baggage may be checked with the airline if there is enough time.
- Items may be taken to the passenger's car or left with friends or family members who are in the area outside the entry to the screening checkpoint.
- Items may be stored or mailed at airports where these services exist.
- The passenger may choose to abandon the item for appropriate disposal.

Screening officers may also use explosive detection trace technology to screen the passengers' belongings.

**Walk-through metal detector:** As carry-on baggage passes through the X-ray machine, the passenger walks through a metal-detecting machine. If the metal detector's alarm goes off, the passenger is instructed to ensure that all keys, cell phones and coins are removed from pockets and go through the detector again. If the alarm sounds again, a screening officer uses a hand-held metal detector or does a physical search to determine what is setting off the alarm.

