



[When Does Extra Airport Security Make Travel Less Secure?](#)

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Long security checkpoint lines are not only tedious; they also may be dangerous for business travelers. While authorities have strengthened security to prevent atrocities onboard aircraft, attackers have adapted to targeting the areas before security checks, sometimes referred to as a "soft target" given the large number of travelers present in one area.

Metal detectors, bag searches or restricted movement like we see at government buildings and military installations are antithetical to the open flow of people, goods and services in a society with free commerce. You're not going to see these things at shopping malls and other public places, but transportation systems are different.

Airports are a mix of both public and secured areas, and attackers have identified this vulnerability as one ripe for its symbolic impact, which paralyzes movement, but also for the opportunity for mass casualties, the visual impact and the ability to claim credit. We have seen all of this recently in Brussels and Istanbul.

The natural response from European countries has been to tighten airport security, which could only lengthen security lines, leaving people waiting longer at these vulnerable airport spots.

How Can Corporations Better Protect Their Travelers?

A lot of violence has been seen in developed markets lately, which garners attention because these have been heralded as "safe nations" that didn't seem to require a lot of risk management planning. Corporations need to reassess risk estimations and encourage travelers to take some responsibility for their own safety. No matter where they are traveling, business travelers need strong situational awareness.

Understand the Security Environment: The sending organization has a duty-of-care responsibility to protect its travelers. The organization must understand the security threat level, foreseeable risks and the environment to which it's sending travelers, including departure areas. The company also needs to provide training to travelers if they're going to an area or a market that requires an in-depth security assessment.

Be Adaptable: People have routines. Frequent travelers have itineraries, clients and destinations they visit regularly. It's important, however, for travelers to take a fresh look at how they prepare for and approach travel. This includes allowing enough time to accommodate delays that result from enhanced security screenings. It also includes considering travel basics, like packing to be nimble and understanding the time needed to navigate the terminals, to ensure they can move efficiently to a secure area should the need arise.

Expedite Processes: Travelers should always have proper documentation in order before traveling. Ensuring passports are valid can help expedite movement through the airport, as can programs that facilitate quicker immigration, customs and security screenings like TSA PreCheck and Global Entry. All of these should be considered far in advance of departure.

Establish Communication Paths: The sending organization should have a mechanism to communicate with travelers quickly and concisely in the event of an emergency. A welfare check is the most basic and desirable resolution, but organizations must also be prepared to give guidance and/or deliver on-the-ground assistance to travelers in a crisis.

Of course there are cost implications for all these processes, and corporate travel managers need to justify their choices. If they're going to set certain policies and conditions around employee travel, those must be grounded in a good understanding of the security landscape so the policy is flexible and fungible to reflect rapid shifts in the environment or a "different kind of normal" from country A to country B.

Corporate travel managers should look at travel patterns, travel frequency and business destinations, and then map that against the corporation's exposure level and traveler population. The organization can then make choices around smart investments to protect people moving through those markets. Clearly, these safety programs benefit outbound travelers, but it becomes a conversation not just about security, but also about convenience and time management. At the end of the day, that benefits everyone involved.