
Association for Airline Passenger Rights Calls on TSA to Discontinue Using Full-Body Scanners Pending Radiation Tests Results; Internal review showed calculation errors and other mistakes

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 14, 2011) – The [Association for Airline Passenger Rights](http://www.flyfriendlyskies.com) (“AAPR”) today called on the Transportation Security Administration (“TSA”) to immediately discontinue using all radiation-emitting full-body scanners until the retesting ordered by the agency is completed. What TSA has characterized as “record-keeping” errors has raised additional concerns about the safety of the scanners.

TSA revealed it found calculation errors, missing data, and anomalies in some reports. The agency is retesting all radiation-emitting full-body scanners as well as other baggage screening equipment used to screen that had inaccurate reports.

“Airline passengers have enough concerns about flying – including numerous ones about how TSA conducts its haphazard security screenings – so it is TSA’s responsibility to ensure passengers are not being exposed to unhealthy amounts of radiation,” argued **Brandon M. Macsata**, Executive Director of the Association for Airline Passenger Rights. “There have been plenty of concerns already outlined by many well-respected scientists and physicians regarding the radiation-emitting full-body scanners, so this latest news doesn’t reassure the public. We need more than another press statement issued by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano or TSA Administrator John Pistole.”

Last year, scientists at the University of California at San Francisco expressed their concerns about the “potential serious health risks” of the scanners; in a [letter](#) to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”), they raised a number of “red flags” as well as specific concerns raised by dermatologists and cancer experts. They included:

- A) The large population of older travelers, >65 years of age, is particularly at risk from the mutagenic effects of the X-rays based on the known biology of melanocyte aging.
- B) A fraction of the female population is especially sensitive to mutagenesis- provoking radiation leading to breast cancer. Notably, because these women, who have defects in DNA repair mechanisms, are particularly prone to cancer, X-ray mammograms are not performed on them. The dose to breast tissue beneath the skin represents a similar risk.
- C) Blood (white blood cells) perfusing the skin is also at risk.
- D) The population of immunocompromised individuals--HIV and cancer patients (see above) is likely to be at risk for cancer induction by the high skin dose.
- E) The risk of radiation emission to children and adolescents does not appear to have been fully evaluated.
- F) The policy towards pregnant women needs to be defined once the theoretical risks to the fetus are determined.
- G) Because of the proximity of the testicles to skin, this tissue is at risk for sperm mutagenesis.
- H) Have the effects of the radiation on the cornea and thymus been determined?¹

¹ Sedat, M.D., John W., University of California, San Francisco, Letter to D. John P. Holden, April 6, 2010.

Association for Airline Passenger Rights (AAPR)

PO Box 15275

Washington, DC 20003

Visit us on the web: www.flyfriendlyskies.com



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Said **Sen. Susan Collins** (R-ME), who serves as Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on Homeland Security: “Administrator Pistole and I have discussed at length the full-body scanners, and TSA has repeatedly assured me that the machines that emit radiation do not pose a health risk. Nonetheless, if TSA contractors reporting on the radiation levels have done such a poor job, how can airline passengers and crew have confidence in the data used by the TSA to reassure the public? More than one in four reports -- randomly selected from thousands of reports over two years and covering 15 airports -- included gross errors about radiation emissions. That is completely unacceptable when it comes to monitoring radiation.”

AAPR contends that in light of the miscalculations on the radiation emissions, coupled with ongoing concerns expressed by some in the scientific and medical communities, TSA owes it to the very people they're charged with protecting to immediately stop using the scanners.

For more information about the Association for Airline Passenger Rights or passenger concerns over radiation-emitting full-body scanners, please visit www.flyfriendlyskies.com or contact AAPR directly at info@flyfriendlyskies.com.

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About AAPR: The Association for Airline Passenger Rights is a 501(c)(4) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote fairer customer service and accessibility standards in the airline industry and to improve passenger satisfaction. AAPR was formed in response to growing dissatisfaction among American consumers toward the airline industry.