



Transportation  
Security  
Administration

JUL 14 2009

FOIA Case Number: TSA09-0435

Mr. Robert MacLean  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. MacLean:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated April 6, 2009, to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS referred your request and a three page document to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for a direct response to you. You have requested an "unredacted copy of this July 26, 2003 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Advisory, title: Potential Al-Qaeda Hijacking Plot in the U.S. and Abroad." Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

This document has been reviewed and one page is being released in its entirety. However, portions of two pages are being withheld pursuant to Exemption 2 of the FOIA. A more complete explanation of this exemption is provided below.

Exemption 2 of the FOIA exempts from mandatory disclosure records that are "related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of any agency." The courts have interpreted the exemption to encompass two distinct categories of information: (1) internal matters of a relatively trivial nature – often referred to as "low 2" information; and (2) more substantial internal matters, the disclosure of which would risk circumvention of a legal requirement – often referred to as "high 2" information.

We have determined that certain portions of the requested records contain personnel rules and/or internal practices of the TSA and are properly withheld from disclosure as "low 2" information. Exemption "low 2" protects from disclosure internal matters of a relatively trivial nature, such as file numbers, mail routing stamps, initials, data processing notations, brief references to previous communications, and other similar administrative markings.

The fees incurred to process your request do not exceed the minimum threshold necessary for charge and, therefore, there is no fee associated with processing this request.

In the event that you may wish to appeal this determination, an administrative appeal may be made in writing to Kimberly Walton, Special Counselor, Office of the Special Counselor, Transportation Security Administration, 601 South 12<sup>th</sup> Street, East Building, E7-121S, Arlington, VA 20598-6033. Your appeal **must be submitted within 60 days** from the date of this determination. It should contain your FOIA request number and state, to the extent possible, the reasons why you

believe the initial determination should be reversed. In addition, the envelope in which the appeal is mailed in should be prominently marked "FOIA Appeal." Please note that the Special Counselor's determination of the appeal will be administratively final. If you have any questions pertaining to your request, please feel free to contact the FOIA Office at 1-866-364-2872 or locally at 571-227-2300.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Janet  
FOIA Officer  
Freedom of Information Act Office

Enclosure

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**Advisory**

**Title: Potential Al-Qaeda Hijacking Plot in the U.S. and  
Abroad**

**July 26, 2003**

**LIMITED DISTRIBUTION:** Any release, dissemination or sharing of this document, or any information contained herein, is not authorized without approval from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). All requests for further dissemination must be submitted to the DHS, Information Management & Requirements Division (IMRD) at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] b2

**OVERVIEW**

Al-Qaeda continues to plan attacks against commercial aircraft in the United States and abroad.

**DETAILS**

Al-Qaeda planners have primarily considered suicide hijackings and bombings as the most promising methods to destroy aircraft in flight, as well as to strike ground targets. Cognizant of changes in aviation security measures since September 11, 2001, Al-Qaeda is looking for new ways to circumvent enhancements in aviation security screening and tightening immigration requirements. At least one of these attacks could be executed by the end of the summer 2003.

Attack venues may include the United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, or the East coast of the United States due to the relatively high concentration of government, military, and economic targets. The extremists may plan to identify flights that transited the target country, so that the hijackers would not need visas for those countries.

The plan may involve the use of five-man teams, each of which would attempt to seize control of a commercial aircraft either shortly after takeoff or shortly before landing at a chosen airport. This type of operation would preclude the need for flight-trained hijackers.

The hijackers may try to calm passengers and make them believe they were on a hostage, not suicide mission. The hijackers may attempt to use common items carried by travelers, such as cameras, modified as weapons.

No equipment or operatives are known to have been deployed to conduct the operations.

**SUGGESTED PROTECTIVE MEASURES**

Airlines are reminded of their obligation to provide adequate security procedures at the airports for all passengers especially those passengers transiting the U.S. without visa. Airlines will identify to CBP any Transit With Out Visa (TWOV) passengers exhibiting suspicious behavior.

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Advisories recommend the immediate implementation of protective actions, including best practices when available. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) encourages recipients of this advisory to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to law enforcement, the DHS Watch Operations Center or the Transportation Security Intelligence Service (TSIS) watch office.

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The DHS Watch Operations Center or the TSIS watch office may be contacted at:

DHS Watch:

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]@hq.dhs.gov

TSIS:

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]@tsa.dot.gov

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DHS intends to update this advisory should it receive additional relevant information, including information provided to it by the user community. Based on this notification, no change to the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) level is anticipated; the current HSAS level is YELLOW.

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## September 11, 2001 : Attack on America FAA Sets New Standards for Cockpit Doors; January 11, 2002

FAA Office of Public Affairs Press Releases  
January 11, 2002  
FAA Sets New Standards for Cockpit Doors

Washington -- In response to President Bush's call to strengthen aircraft security, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today published new standards to protect cockpits from intrusion and small arms fire or fragmentation devices, such as grenades. The Aviation and Transportation Security Act authorizes the FAA to issue today's final rule that requires operators of more than 6,000 airplanes to install reinforced doors by April 9, 2003.

Concurrent with the rule, the FAA is also issuing a Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) to require operators to install temporary internal locking devices within 45 days on all passenger airplanes and cargo airplanes that have cockpit doors. Beginning on Oct. 17, the FAA issued a series of SFARs that authorized short-term door reinforcement by providing airlines and cargo operators with temporary relief from certain FAA standards. The major U.S. airlines voluntarily installed short-term fixes to doors on 4,000 aircraft in 32 days. The SFAR stated that a long-term fix that meets FAA requirements must be installed within 18 months.

"Fortifying cockpit doors is a critical part of assuring the safety and security of our aviation system," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta. "As we move forward, the Department of Transportation will continue to meet the challenges of protecting our nation's travelers and transportation infrastructure."

"The FAA cut through red tape and the airlines fortified cockpit doors quickly following Sept. 11," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "I strongly encourage operators to move forward with the same determination to permanently strengthen and protect our nation's fleet."

The FAA rule sets new design and performance standards for all current and future airplanes with 20 or more seats in commercial service and all cargo airplanes that have cockpit doors. Specifically, the rule:

- Requires strengthening of cockpit doors. The doors will be designed to resist intrusion by a person who attempts to enter using physical force. This includes the door, its means of attachment to the surrounding structure, and the attachment structure on the bulkhead itself. The FAA rule uses an impact standard that is 50 percent higher than the standard developed by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. In addition to intrusion protection, the FAA is using a standard sufficient to minimize penetration of shrapnel from small arms fire or a fragmentation device. The agency is providing guidance to operators on acceptable materials. All new doors must meet existing FAA safety requirements.
- Requires cockpit doors to remain locked. The door will be designed to prevent passengers from opening it without the pilot's permission. An internal locking device will be designed so that it can only be unlocked from inside the cockpit.
- Controls cockpit access privileges. Operators must develop a more stringent approval process and better identification procedures to ensure proper identification of a jump seat rider.
- Prohibits possession of keys to the cockpit by crewmembers not assigned to the cockpit.

Prior to Sept. 11, the FAA was working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to strengthen international security standards for airplanes. Today's rule expedites the work of an Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ARAC) working group that was tasked to develop harmonized security-related design provisions, including protection of the cockpit. The FAA encourages foreign civil aviation authorities to review the FAA's new rule and adopt comparable standards.

As announced by the President on Sept. 28, the FAA will administer a federal grant program to help the U.S. airline and cargo industry finance aircraft modifications to fortify cockpit doors, alert the cockpit crew to activity in the cabin and ensure continuous operation of the aircraft transponder. Funding may be provided through grants or cost sharing arrangements. The President requested \$300 million from Congress to help fund these initiatives. Congress appropriated \$100 million.

Once the designs are ready and approved by the FAA, the agency believes that airlines will have an opportunity to install the doors during routine maintenance checks. The purchase and installation cost of an enhanced cockpit door is estimated at between \$12,000 and \$17,000. The total cost to airlines is estimated to cost between \$92.3 million and \$120.7 million over a 10-year period, including increased fuel consumption costs resulting from heavier doors.

The final rule and SFAR are available on the FAA's web site at [www.faa.gov/avr/arm/nprm.asp](http://www.faa.gov/avr/arm/nprm.asp).

Source:  
U.S. Government Website

[September 11 Page](#)

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By **DAN COLLINS** / AP / April 4, 2003, 8:36 PM

# Bulletproof Cockpit Doors A Reality



A woman helps people at Roissy airport, north of Paris, Tuesday June 30, 2009, after a jet from Yemen crashed in the Indian Ocean early Tuesday as it tried to land during heavy wind on the island nation of Comoros. Khaled el-Kaei, the head of Yemenia airline's public relations office, said a 14-year-old girl survived the crash. / AP

PHOTO/MICHEL EULER

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Every large commercial plane flying in the United States will have bulletproof cockpit doors by next week, but airline security experts say the design doesn't provide the best possible protection against a hijacker entering. The Federal Aviation Administration requires that cockpit doors be locked during flight, according to agency spokesman Les Dorr. But there are times when a pilot may open the door — to visually check wing surfaces, use the bathroom and change flight crews during a long trip.

That leaves the possibility the cockpit could be rushed by a hijacker.

"It's a barrier when it's closed, it's an entry when it's open," said Capt. Steve Luckey, chairman of the Air Line Pilots Association's national security committee.

The need to open cockpit doors was one reason pilots lobbied for guns in the cockpit, Luckey said. Under a test program, about 48 pilots will begin training to carry weapons while flying commercial passenger planes this month. Thousands more could be carrying weapons by the end of the year.

Luckey would like to see another safety measure — a Kevlar curtain that acts as a secondary barrier when the cockpit door is opened. He said the curtain would delay a terrorist long enough for passengers to attack him. Luckey wants Congress to order all planes to have it.

Israel's national airline, El Al, has among the most stringent security requirements. All its planes have double doors separated by a narrow hallway, said

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Offer Einav, former security director for the airline. Pilots must close one door before opening the other, he said.

That might not work for U.S. planes, Einav said: The narrow-body planes used for most domestic U.S. flights can't accommodate a double-door system, and there's a matter of stringency.

"How strongly are they going to impose the law of flying with a closed door, and are they going to enforce it?" Einav said.

Before the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackings, cockpit doors were designed to provide a quiet office environment for pilots. After the attacks, Congress decided cockpit doors should be designed to protect pilots from attackers. Pilots are to focus on flying, no matter what happens in the cabin.

In the months after the terror attacks, airlines reinforces the existing cockpit doors with metal bars. But last year an unruly passenger on a flight from Miami to Buenos Aires managed to kick in a small breakaway panel across the bottom of the door and put his head into the cockpit before a co-pilot clubbed him with an ax.

The airline industry was given until this Wednesday to install the new doors in every passenger aircraft with 20 or more seats. FAA spokesman Greg Martin said the deadline will be met.

The new door withstands bullets and small explosives and can resist a force equivalent to an NFL linebacker hitting it at Olympic sprinter speed, said Jim Proulx, The Boeing Co. spokesman.

Boeing has delivered 4,300 kits that include the new doors, which airlines' regular maintenance crews can install, Proulx said. Boeing and its supplier designed 31 different door configurations for 18 aircraft models.

Airbus Industrie has delivered 557 kits to U.S. operators and about 1,800 worldwide.

One reason it's taken a year-and-a-half to install the doors, Proulx said, is that the company had to do basic research into materials and stress analysis, which cut into time that could have been used for design.

Congress gave domestic airlines \$100 million for the doors, which amounts to about \$13,000 per aircraft — far less than the \$30,000 to \$50,000 the FAA estimates they actually cost. Airlines are lobbying Congress for more money to pay the difference.

The Senate voted on Thursday to directly reimburse the airlines for the cost of the doors, while the House proposed giving airlines cash to pay for new security costs. The issue is likely to be resolved next week.

Foreign airlines authorized to operate in the United States also have to install the reinforced doors. Wanda Warner, spokeswoman for the International Air Transport Association, said she expects them to meet the deadline.

The International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations' aviation arm, is requiring every airliner in the world to install reinforced cockpit doors by Nov. 1.

The association estimates it will cost airlines \$2 billion to comply with the directive. The U.S. government won't reimburse foreign airlines for the cost.

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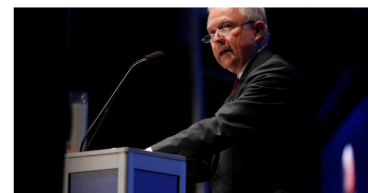
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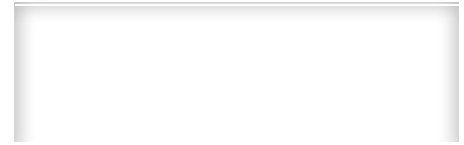
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