



Tackling the hidden security risks at airports

As airports strive to increase their capacity and improve the traveler experience with new and improved passenger and cargo terminals, it's important that safety and security isn't overlooked.

Screening of both cabin and hold baggage – and of travelers themselves – has seen substantial improvements in most countries over the last five years, both in terms of technology and procedures. We have seen a ban on laptops and tablets being carried as cabin baggage, for inbound flights from several regions. This all makes aviation security pretty fool-proof.

We take well-used analogy with increasing the levels of security in our homes – fitting additional locks, putting in a monitored alarm system, building a higher wall but, there is always somebody who will be determined enough to overcome them and gain entry if they consider the rewards worth the effort. And if they can't break in, they often try to trick their way in – posing as tradesmen, service engineer or some other seemingly-innocent visitor. It's the same at airports.

With the terrorist attacks in Brussels and Istanbul targeting airports, it's easy to understand why many air travelers are a little anxious these days.

Statistically, becoming a victim of a terrorist attack at an airport is extremely low, but security experts says it's always smart to be prepared.

Here are top five ways to stay safe at the airport:

1 Avoid line: One common characteristic in nearly every recent terrorist attack is those targeted were in confined and crowded spaces. Security experts say to stay safe, try and avoid as many long lines as you can. You can do this at the ticket counter by printing your boarding pass ahead of time.



2 Fly at off hours: Experts says longer wait times in line increases the risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack. One of the best ways to keep your wait at the security check-point short, is to fly at off hours. That would be early in the morning, late at night, or on a weekday.



3 Avoid waiting for taxi: Sitting idle in crowded pick-up areas at an airport puts you at greater risk. Avoid this area until you get a call from driver who is picking you up to limit your time in the area.



4 Know where the exits are: Especially if it's a new airport for you, check out a map ahead of time and locate the exits. This way if you start seeing something that just doesn't seem right, you can quickly get your family out of the airport. "Perhaps the most important thing people can factor is situational awareness" be aware of where the exits are and know how long it is going to take to leave.



5 Have your ticket and photo ID out before you approach for security check:

From check-in through security, you should keep your ID and ticket somewhere easy to reach. You'll have to pull both out several times, so don't put everything away in some deep, dark place in your bag – have both in your hands and ready to present so people behind you don't have to wait for you to dig around trying to find them.



Source: Securitas Canada