

Ombudsman Watch List Contact Sheet

Entered/ Logged _____
Initial

IMS File # _____

S/N/Neither _____
Initial Date

Contact Information: Requester/Passenger/Traveler

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Date of Birth: _____
Month/Day/Year

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email address: _____
SPAM Block? Y N

Home address: _____

If a Congressional or Controlled Letter:

* Has requester already been in contact with the Ombuds Office and is on the Excel Spread Sheet? ☐ yes ☐ no

* Date of contact: _____ Date PIVF letter sent: _____
(copy attached)

TSA Control Number: _____ Date to Ombuds: _____
Senator/Congressperson Name: _____

Initial Contact Date: _____

Ombudsman P.O.C.: _____

Method of Contact: ☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Letter ☐ Other

Where did you encounter problems: ☐ Ticket Counter ☐ Online Check-in ☐ Checkpoint
☐ E-Ticket ☐ Curbside Check-in

Notes: _____

Date letter/information sent: _____

Decision from Asst. Administrator for Intelligence: ☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved
☐ More info needed Date received: _____

Decision Letter to Requester (Date): _____

Case closed date: _____

SAO/No Fly CSRs and Staff.

1. Determine if this is a first contact. **If it is a follow-up see below.**
2. Obtain the caller's name, address, and date of birth.
3. Ask the individual if he/she has an e-mail address and ask if we may contact them by that means. Ask if they have a SPAM blocker that may prevent them from receiving email from TSA.
4. Complete the rest of the form as appropriate. Do not use abbreviations other than the State. **Note:** We no longer need the air carrier or the airport information but do record whether it appears to be check-in or checkpoint related.
5. Explain to the individual's information will be passed to another division for review and processing; it will take up to 2 weeks for a response. Note that an email response can take that long if we respond by email and it is returned to TSA as undeliverable. Then we will respond by mail.
6. If their name is similar to someone on the list they will receive a Passenger Identity Verification Form and instructions by mail/email. If the name is not similar or the same, a letter/email explaining that he/she is not on a TSA Watch List will be sent.
7. Tell him/her that it may take the Office of Intelligence as long as 30 days to process the request once it is received.
8. Place the intake sheet in the ORANGE hanging folder at Latoyia Williams' desk.
9. The designated Ombudsman employee will check the no fly and selectee lists. The response letter to be sent will be indicated in the upper right hand corner of the intake sheet with a circle, initial, and date the determination was made.
10. Intake sheets needing letters are passed to the appropriate CSR.
11. The CSR will enter information in an address label file and print a label for out going letters. Place a lower case s or n- for selectee or neither- in the lower right hand corner of the label. A blank will indicate a no fly letter.
12. If the PIV form is to be mailed, the CSR will place the address label on the appropriate pre stuffed envelope and place it in the designated out box.
13. If the information is sent by email, the CSR will prepare and transmit the email, enter the name, address and code described above in the label file, and place his/her initials and date on the intake form.
14. At least once daily, a consolidated copy of the label sheet(s) will be forwarded to the Office of Intelligence as notification of what was sent to the public.
15. CSRs will enter all pertinent information in the excel spreadsheet.
16. The spreadsheet will be copied to disc at least twice weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays.
17. Intake sheets and any supporting documents will be filed alphabetically by month.
18. All electronic files will be filed in designated folders on the S drive.

If this is a **call back**, first attempt to answer the caller's question. If you cannot answer the caller's question attempt to forward the call. If the person is not available, take a message. Record the message in the message logbook and place the message in the designated location for the person called. The message will be answered, the date and time noted, and maintained per instructions.

Thank you for your email message.

When checking in for air travel, some passengers have found that they are unable to obtain a boarding pass online, at curbside check-in or from an air carrier's electronic kiosk. When this occurs, they are referred to the airline ticket counter where they may experience a delay while the agent verifies their identity. If this situation applies to you, or if you are required to undergo additional checkpoint screening each time you fly, an airline ticket agent may have suggested you contact TSA for information.

As part of the security administered at airports, TSA requires airlines to verify the identity of passengers in order to implement a number of security procedures, including those connected with TSA's watch lists. TSA prepares and maintains watch lists of persons who are known to pose, or suspected of posing, a threat to civil aviation or national security. These watch lists are compiled from information provided by Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Inclusion on one watch list, the No Fly List, involves a prohibition from traveling by commercial aviation. TSA also maintains a Selectee List. Individuals on the Selectee List are permitted to fly, but are subject to enhanced screening at the passenger screening checkpoints. For national security reasons, these lists are not available to the public.

TSA recognizes that some people have been inadvertently subjected to frustrating delays at airports as a result of being mistaken for an individual who, in fact, is on a watch list. We regret this inconvenience and have developed a procedure that is designed to expedite the clearance process for individuals who experience these delays.

To better assist you, we will need the following information:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- Telephone number
- Mailing address and email address

This information will allow TSA to identify the next step and reply directly to the passenger. This process focuses on check-in procedures and will not affect established security screening procedures at the checkpoints leading into the sterile areas of an airport. The entire clearance process may take up to 45 days to complete.

You can contact TSA by phone at 1-866-289-9673 or by email at TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov or by clicking on the "Contact Us" button at www.tsa.gov.

Thank you for your email message and information concerning your recent travel experience. We will forward the information you submitted for review. TSA will respond within 14 days with additional information to assist you with this process.

TSA Contact Center

Chapter ? – No Fly List Redress Process

How the process works: A person may contact the Office of the Ombudsman as specified above if that person has been delayed when checking in for a boarding pass due to No Fly clearance procedures. The Office of the Ombudsman will ask the person to explain their experience in writing (e.g., letter or e-mail) to ensure that the delay they encountered is of a type that may be addressed by these procedures. Once the Office of the Ombudsman confirms that the person's experience may be addressed by these procedures, TSA will send a Passenger Identity Verification Form and initial letter to that person for completion and return. (Detailed in below procedures.)

Who may apply for help from this process? This process only applies to a person who has been delayed as a result of No Fly List clearance procedures when checking in for a boarding pass for scheduled or charter flights. NOTE: This process does not apply to persons who undergo enhanced screening at airport security checkpoints. (Detailed in below procedures.)

SECTION 1.0 INTAKE PROCEDURES

1.1 Telephone Calls

Travelers may contact the Office of the Ombudsman via the telephone, email or letter. If a traveler contacts the Office via telephone, use the intake form to gather information.

INTAKE FORM:

-Section I

Write the Date, Ombudsman Point of Contact (i.e. your name), and Method of Contact in the appropriate fields.

-Section II

Ask the traveler for their Contact Information: Write their Name, Phone, Cell Phone, E-mail Address, and Home Address into the appropriate fields.

-Section III

Ask the traveler to describe their experience in detail. Write this information in the Problem as Reported by Requester field. When they are finished, make sure they have given you all of the following information:

Explained their experience in detail.

Which Airports have you encountered problems with?

Which Airlines have you encountered problems with?

How many times have you encountered problems?

Has a ticketing agent or Law Enforcement Office (LEO) offered you any explanation? If so, what?

Based on the traveler's information, make a determination if the experience is No Fly List- related or Selectee/ CAPPs- related. (Use the criteria for each as defined below in Section 3.0 for making a determination.)

IF IT IS NO FLY LIST-RELATED, TELL THE TRAVELER:

"You are not on the No Fly List. Individuals who are on the No Fly List are not issued a boarding pass, nor are they permitted to fly. However, you may have the same name or a similar name to someone whom is on the No Fly List. This may be why you are encountering problems trying to obtain a boarding pass. I review your experience and determine whether you are a candidate for the Passenger Identity Verification Form. The personal information requested on the one-page form consists of two parts:

The first part includes: name, gender, place of birth, etc.

The second part requires you to submit notarized copies for at least three of the following documents: passport, drivers license, voter registration card, government identity card, military identity card, military discharge paper, naturalization certificate, and visa."

"After you gather the information, submit the information to the Office of INTEL (the address is written within the initial letter). There the information is compared against the No Fly List. The individual will then receive a reply from TSA stating either that TSA has taken appropriate action which may include notifying the airlines or TSA does not, at this time, have information that prohibits the individual from flying. It usually takes approximately a week to 10 days to get a decision from TSA."

The Office of the Ombudsman will ask the traveler to explain their experience in writing (e.g. e-mail or letter) to ensure that the delay they encountered is of a type that may be addressed by these procedures BEFORE sending the PIVF and initial letter. Tell the traveler:

"Before I can send you the PIVF, I need you to submit a brief description of your experience in writing as part of our policy. You may send it via e-mail or letter."

(Give them the address of the mailing method they choose to use.)

Our email address is TSA.ombudsman@dhs.gov.

Our address is:

Office of the Ombudsman

TSA Headquarters

601 South 12th Street, TSA-22

Arlington, VA 22202-4220

IF IT IS SELECTEE/ CAPPS-RELATED, TELL THE TRAVELER:

Use the talking points to address their concerns (i.e. enhanced screening, SSSS on boarding pass, etc.) Tell the traveler:

Enhanced Screening:

"Those individuals who are identified on the No-Fly List are not permitted to receive a boarding pass. Therefore, if you are issued a boarding pass, you are not on the No-Fly List."

There are several reasons why persons may be subjected to additional screening. These could include: resolving alarms on either the Magnetometer or X-Ray, random selection of passengers or being flagged by a computer system known as CAPPS (Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System). CAPPS was developed by the airline industry prior to September 11, 2001. The criteria used by CAPPS to flag a person are considered Sensitive Security Information, and therefore, cannot be released to the public."

SSSS:

"There are several reasons why persons could have an "S" on their boarding pass and would be selected for additional screening at either the checkpoint or the gate. Having an "S" on a boarding pass does not mean that a person is on the "No-Fly List."

The "S" is placed on the ticket by the airlines and could mean that the person was chosen at random or flagged by a computer system known as CAPPS (Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System). This system was developed by the airline industry in 1997. While it does not use race, religion, or physical characteristic as criteria, what is used to flag a person is considered Sensitive Security Information, and cannot be released to the public."

1.2 E-mail

Travelers may contact the Office of the Ombudsman via the telephone, email or letter. If a traveler contacts the Office via e-mail, first send the standard response template (See **Attachments**):

Thank you for your email message. For national security reasons, the No-Fly List is not available to the public. In addition, please note that the airlines will not give a boarding pass to individuals who are on the No-Fly List. Therefore, if you have a boarding pass, you are not on the No-Fly List.

For persons who are constantly delayed when trying to get a boarding pass, TSA has developed protocols in the hopes of addressing this issue. As such, the TSA Office of Ombudsman is available for questions or concerns from individuals who believe they are being mistaken for persons on the No-Fly List. The individual must submit a written request describing what has happened in the past that leads him or her to seek --- assistance. Should circumstances warrant it, the Office of Ombudsman will then send out a form requesting personal information. This information is sent to the Office of the Assistant Administrator for Intelligence and there compared against the No-Fly List. The individual will then receive a reply from TSA stating either that TSA has taken appropriate action which may include notifying the airlines or TSA does not, at this time, have information that prohibits the individual from flying. This procedure is focused on check-in procedures and will not affect established security screening procedures at the checkpoints leading into the sterile areas of an airport.

If passengers are interested in contacting the TSA Office of Ombudsman, they may do so by sending a detailed letter (or email) describing what happened when they attempted to obtain a boarding pass to:

*Office of the Ombudsman
TSA Headquarters
601 South 12th Street, TSA-22
Arlington, VA 22202-4220*

Use the information supplied by the traveler in the e-mail to fill out the intake form.

INTAKE FORM:

-Section I

Write the Date, Ombudsman Point of Contact (i.e. your name), and Method of Contact in the appropriate fields.

-Section II

Use the e-mail to fill out the traveler's Contact Information: Write their Name, Phone, Cell Phone, E-mail Address, and Home Address into the appropriate

fields.

-Section III

Use the email to fill out the traveler's experience in detail. Write this information in the Problem as Reported by Requester field. Make sure the email supplies you with all of the following information:

Explained their experience in detail.

Which Airports have you encountered problems with?

Which Airlines have you encountered problems with?

How many times have you encountered problems?

Has a ticketing agent or Law Enforcement Office (LEO) offered you any explanation? If so, what?

*** IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ALL OF THE NECESSARY INFORMATION, EMAIL THE TRAVELER AND REQUEST THE INFORMATION THAT YOU ARE LACKING.**

Based on the traveler's information, make a determination if the experience is No Fly List- related or Selectee/ CAPPS- related. (Use the criteria for each as defined below in Section 3.0 for making a determination.)

IF IT IS NO FLY LIST-RELATED:

Send the traveler the PIVF and the initial letter via mail.

IF IT IS SELECTEE/ CAPPS- RELATED, USE THE TALKING POINTS TO:

Address and answer their concerns with enhanced screening, SSSS on boarding pass, etc via email. In addition, e-mail the Office of the Ombudsman phone number so they may ask questions.

1.3 Letters

Travelers may contact the Office of the Ombudsman via the telephone, email or letter. If a traveler contacts the Office via letter, use the intake form to gather information.

INTAKE FORM:

-Section I

Write the Date, Ombudsman Point of Contact (i.e. your name), and Method of Contact in the appropriate fields.

-Section II

Ask the traveler for their Contact Information: Write their Name, Phone, Cell Phone, E-mail Address, and Home Address into the appropriate fields.

-Section III

Ask the traveler to describe their experience in detail. Write this information in the Problem as Reported by Requester field. When they are finished, make sure they have given you all of the following information:

Explained their experience in detail.

Which Airports have you encountered problems with?

Which Airlines have you encountered problems with?

How many times have you encountered problems?

Has a ticketing agent or Law Enforcement Office (LEO) offered you any explanation? If so, what?

Based on the traveler's information, make a determination if the experience is No Fly List- related or Selectee/ CAPPS- related. (Use the criteria for each as defined above for making a determination.)

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ALL OF THE NECESSARY INFORMATION, YOU MAY CALL THE TRAVELER OR SEND THE TRAVELER THE "NEED MORE INFORMATION" TEMPLATE. Check the appropriate boxes of needed information:

(See Attachments)

December 26, 2004

Mr./ Ms. _____

Address

Address

Dear Mr./ Ms. _____:

This letter is in response to your inquiry to the Office of the Ombudsman regarding check-in delays at airports. We regret any inconvenience you may have experienced while traveling and have developed a protocol that should provide a more efficient or streamlined process for obtaining your boarding pass during flight check in.

TSA would like to thank you for your letter. However, we need to contact you to obtain more information as listed below.

- ☐ Home phone number
- ☐ Work phone number
- ☐ Home address
- ☐ E-mail address
- ☐ Describe your experiences trying to obtain a boarding pass in detail
- ☐ Other:

If you would be so kind as to respond to the request for information above and contact the Office of the Ombudsman at (877)-2OMBUDS or:

Transportation Security Administration
Office of the Ombudsman, TSA-22
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220

Sincerely yours,

Virginia E. Skroski
Office of the Ombudsman

SECTION 2.0 ADMINSTRATIVE PROCEDURES

2.1 Sending the PIVF and Initial Letter (See Attachments)

After determining that a traveler is a candidate for the No Fly List Redress Process:

1. Address the letter to the traveler.
2. Make an envelope using the traveler's address.
3. Include a PIVF in the envelope.
4. Give the envelope to Virginia Skroski to sign the initial letter.
5. After Virginia Skroski signs the letter, take the letter(s) to the mail pick-up.
6. Keep a list of each traveler's name and their city that you sent a PIVF and initial letter to.
7. At 5 pm, send the list to Virginia Skroski. (She will forward the information to INTEL.)

SECTION 3.0 SCREENING PROCEDURES (See Attachments- Refer to Talking Points)

3.1 What Constitutes a No Fly List Related Issue?

In order for the experience to be considered a No Fly List Related Issue, the traveler will experience or similarly experience:

1. Problems trying to obtain a boarding pass at the ticketing counter (The traveler may encounter problems first trying to check in at the kiosk or electronically.)
2. The agent will make a phone call, go to a back room or call a Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) to verify the traveler's identity
3. A significant delay
4. Usually the traveler will be told that they are on some sort of list (i.e. No Fly List, Security List, FBI List, Selectee List, etc.) However, sometimes they are not given any explanation

3.2 What Constitutes a Selectee/ CAPPS Related Issue?

In order for the experience to be considered a Selectee/ CAPPS Related Issue, the traveler will experience or similarly experience:

1. Going through enhanced screening
2. Having SSSS stamped on their boarding pass
3. A delay due to enhanced screening

SECTION 4.0 TYPES OF ELEVATION

If you encounter any of these situations, elevate these contacts to Virginia Skroski:

1. Congressionals or persons calling from a Congressional office
2. VERY disgruntled travelers
3. Travelers who have gone through No Fly List Clearance Procedure and are still encountering problems
4. Newspaper reporters
5. Attorneys
6. If anyone makes you upset or uncomfortable
7. Other

SECTION 5.0 ENTERING INFORMATION INTO THE NO FLY LOG

5.1 Accessing the No Fly List Congressional and Individual Request Log

The log is only accessible to those persons who have been granted access by the Ombudsman and IT Specialist on their specific computer. (You will not need to access the Congressional section of the log.) To access the log:

1. Click on the "My Computer" icon
2. Click on the "S Drive" icon
3. Click on the "TSA Ombudsman" folder
4. Click on the "NFL" folder
5. Click on the "No Fly List Congressional and Individual Request Log

You are now ready to enter the traveler's information.

5.2 Entering a Traveler's Information

* You only need to enter a traveler's information if they have been sent a PIVF and an initial letter. There are 11 columns marked "A" through "K" that you need to enter information in.

1. Column A- *"Requester's Name"*: Enter the traveler's name
2. Column B- *"Date Received"*: Enter the initial date of contact
3. Column C- *"Method of Contact"*: Enter phone, e-mail or letter here
4. Column D- *"Issue Forming Basis for Request as Identified by Passenger"*: Enter a brief description of the traveler's experience. (i.e. How many times encountered problems, most recent date, any explanation, etc.)
5. Column E- *"Name of Airline(s)"*: Enter the name of all airlines
6. Column F- *"Name of Airport(s)"*: Enter the name of all airports
7. Column G- *"Date PIVF Mailed"*: Enter the date PIVF mailed
8. **DO NOT ENTER ANYTHING IN COLUMN H, I OR J**
9. Column K- *"Handled By"*: Enter your initials here

Click the "Save" icon after each entry.

No-Fly List

Author: Deirdre O'Sullivan

SME: [REDACTED] b6

Date: April 6, 2004

Q. What is the No-Fly list and who maintains it?

A. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had in place for a number of years security directives that prohibited aircraft operators from transporting persons who were either a potential or known threat to civil aviation or national security. Immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the FAA began administering a "watch list" or "No-Fly List" for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Individuals on the FBI Watch List were prohibited from traveling in the United States.

In November 2001, with passage of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), TSA assumed control of the No-Fly List. TSA compiles the No-Fly List based upon recommendations and information from Federal government intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Individuals on the No-Fly List pose, or are suspected of posing, a threat to civil aviation or national security.

Q. Does TSA have any comment about ACLU's suit against the TSA's No-Fly List?

TSA has a policy of not addressing pending litigation. However, TSA is confident that the systems in place have withstood the legal test subjected to thus far, and we are secure in the accuracy and the need for the No-Fly List. Issues of misidentification tied to the No-Fly List are customer service violations not constitutional ones.

Q. Is this a problem of bad Intel, a bad List, or Misidentification?

A. TSA is confident in the No-Fly List. However, what is flawed is the identification system and administration of the List as each airline has different policies and procedures. The next generation passenger pre-screening system will be done by one responsible party. That will be built on consistent principles with privacy protection and rapid and effective redress through a dedicated Privacy Officer and the Ombudsman.

As you have heard from Secretary Ridge and Under Secretary Hutchison, DHS's mission is to deter and disrupt terrorist activity. Prior to being able to deter and disrupt, we must be able to detect. The current rudimentary system is outdated and causes false positives. This is why Congress mandated that TSA replace it

with the next generation passenger pre-screening system, which has the architecture in the place to address many of these issues. This is tied to the DHS mission statement to "preserve our freedoms" which includes privacy protections.

Q. What is TSA' comment regarding the fact that two ACLU employees are part of the class action suit? Is the government singling out the ACLU?

A. While TSA will not comment on individual cases or pending litigation, TSA is looking at the issues raised regarding the No-Fly List. It is a No-Fly List, if a passenger is given a boarding pass, then they are not on the List. A similar name may constitute a delay, which is a problem of misidentification due to the current pre-screening program. The next generation passenger pre-screening system will eliminate the vast majority of the inconveniences that we are seeing today.

Q. How many names are on the No-Fly List?

A. The No-Fly List is a routinely updated, dynamic list with names of individuals being added or removed, based on information from Federal government intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Any other information pertaining to the list is considered Sensitive Security Information and therefore will not be released to the public.

Q. Why are David Nelsons across the country being delayed at airports?

A. TSA has identified individuals who are believed to pose a threat to civil aviation or national security. These individuals are sometimes prohibited from flying and other times subject to additional screening at passenger screening checkpoints.

Q. Is a David Nelson on the No-Fly list, if so, why was he put on the No-Fly List?

A. For national security reasons, the No Fly List is not available to the public. TSA works diligently to ensure that additional biographical data is available to the airline in an effort to confirm the proper identification of individuals.

Q. Who can passengers contact to find out if their name is on the No-Fly list?

A. For national security reasons, the No-Fly List is not available to the public. In addition, please note that the airlines will not give a boarding pass to individuals who are on the No-Fly List. Therefore, if you have a boarding pass, you are not on the No-Fly List.

For persons who are constantly delayed when trying to get a boarding pass, TSA has developed protocols in the hopes of addressing this issue. As such, the TSA Office of Ombudsman is available for questions or concerns from individuals who believe they are being mistaken for persons on the No-Fly List. The individual must submit a written request describing what has happened in the past that leads him or her to seek assistance. Should circumstances warrant it, the Office of Ombudsman will then send out a form requesting personal information. This information is sent to the Office of the Assistant Administrator for Intelligence to be compared against the No-Fly List. The individual will then receive a reply from TSA stating either that TSA has taken appropriate action which may include notifying the airlines or TSA does not, at this time, have information that prohibits the individual from flying. This procedure is focused on check-in procedures and will not affect established security screening procedures at the checkpoints leading into the sterile areas of an airport.

If passengers are interested in contacting the TSA Office of Ombudsman, they may do so by sending a detailed letter (or email) describing what happened when they attempted to obtain a boarding pass to:

TSA Office of the Ombudsman
2nd Floor, TSA-22
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220
Phone: 1-877-2-ombuds
Email Address: TSA.Ombudsman@dhs.gov

The entire process could take a few weeks.

- Q. How many people have taken advantage of these new procedures?**
- A. As of January 2004, more than 250 people have submitted paperwork to TSA.
- Q. Is it true that TSA has placed individuals on the No-Fly List based on their political views?**
- A. No. Individuals are not singled out based on their political views.
- Q. Every time I fly, I get flagged for additional screening, does this mean that my name is on the No-Fly List?**
- A. Those individuals who are identified on the No-Fly List are not permitted to receive a boarding pass. Therefore, if you are issued a boarding pass, you are not

on the No-Fly List.

There are several reasons why persons may be subjected to additional screening. These could include: resolving alarms on either the Magnetometer or X-Ray, random selection of passengers or being flagged by a computer system known as CAPPS (Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System). CAPPS was developed by the airline industry prior to September 11, 2001. The criteria used by CAPPS to flag a person are considered Sensitive Security Information, and therefore, cannot be released to the public.

TSA is currently developing protocols for a new CAPPS system, known as CAPPS II. The purpose of CAPPS II is to: 1) authenticate identity and 2) perform a risk assessment of airline passengers. It will dramatically reduce the number of passengers required to undergo additional screening at airports as "selectees."

Q. How is CAPPS II going to help solve these problems passengers are having when they are misidentified on the No-Fly List?

A. The CAPPS II systems is being designed to confirm the passenger's identity and then check their names against names on the No-Fly List. This will relieve the airlines of the burden of implementing the No-Fly List and add consistency to how the No-Fly List is implemented.

Q. The last time I flew, I saw an "S" on my boarding pass. Does this mean that I am on a government watch list?

A. Persons on the No-Fly List are not issued boarding passes by the airlines. There are several reasons why persons could have an "S" on their boarding pass and would be selected for additional screening at either the checkpoint or the gate. Having an "S" on a boarding pass does not mean that a person is on the "No-Fly List."

The "S" is placed on the ticket by the airlines and could mean that the person was chosen at random or flagged by a computer system known as CAPPS (Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System). This system was developed by the airline industry in 1997. While it does not use race, religion, or physical characteristic as criteria, what is used to flag a person is considered Sensitive Security Information, and cannot be released to the public.

Q. The last several times I have flown, there has been a flurry of activity at the ticket counter and calls are made to headquarters before I am allowed to get a boarding pass. Does this mean I am on the No-Fly List?

- A. The air carriers (or law enforcement officer) are required by TSA to establish the identity of all passengers boarding aircraft whose name is the same as, or similar to, a name on the No-Fly List. TSA hopes that passengers will understand the importance of a secure transportation system and bring their patience with them.

For persons who are constantly delayed when trying to get a boarding pass, TSA has developed protocols in the hopes of addressing this issue. As such, the TSA Office of Ombudsman is available for questions or concerns from individuals who believe they are being mistaken for persons on the No-Fly List. The individual must submit a written request describing what has happened in the past that leads him or her to seek assistance. Should circumstances warrant it, the Office of Ombudsman will then send out a form requesting personal information. This information is sent to the Office of the Assistant Administrator for Intelligence and there compared against the No-Fly List. The individual will then receive a reply from TSA stating either that TSA has taken appropriate action which may include notifying the airlines or TSA does not, at this time, have information that prohibits the individual from flying. This procedure is focused on check-in procedures and will not affect established security screening procedures at the checkpoints leading into the sterile areas of an airport.

If passengers are interested in contacting the TSA Office of Ombudsman, they may do so by sending a detailed letter (or email) describing what happened when they attempted to obtain a boarding pass to:

TSA Office of the Ombudsman
2nd Floor, TSA-22
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220
Phone: 1-877-2-ombuds
Email Address: TSA.Ombudsman@dhs.gov

The entire process could take a few weeks.

- Q. Some critics have claimed that TSA has mismanaged the list by not allowing innocent people to fly. What is TSA's response?**

- A. TSA's first responsibility is ensuring the security of the traveling public. TSA cannot and will not compromise that goal by allowing individuals who pose a threat to civil aviation and national security to fly. TSA rigorously attempts to minimize the dissemination of inaccurate information and to resolve any discrepancy as quickly as possible so that persons who are not on the No-Fly List can get to their destination with the knowledge that TSA has made every effort to ensure their security.

Q. Has TSA ever found an individual who was on the No-Fly List or been able to foil a terrorist attack?

A. TSA will not release any details regarding the success of the program; however, we can state that both the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security are pleased with the progress made by the program.

Q. Does the No-Fly List apply to any other modes of transportation such as Amtrak or cruise ships?

A. The No-Fly List is one of the products generated from information gathered by Federal government intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Threat and intelligence information may be shared regularly with a range of government and industry partners in all modes of transportation.