

A New Danger for Travelers: Officially Sanctioned Baggage Tampering

HONG KONG, Oct. 7 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – As security efforts increase globally, Securoseal, a company specializing in baggage security, has issued a public warning concerning a growing trend of authorities being implicated in acts of baggage tampering. This has caused unintentional security breaches internationally, endangering the welfare of affected passengers and exposing them to the possibility of criminal sanctions.

At check in, when passengers are asked “Did you pack this suitcase yourself?” a more dubious question may also now be relevant: “Do you mind if we add drugs or explosives to your luggage?” It sounds more like a plot for a Hollywood conspiracy movie than an airport security procedure.

Yet this is exactly what happened to one bewildered passenger who was taken into custody after a police raid in Dublin in January 2010 (see: securoseal.com/main.php?pg=news&news_id=6383). The passenger was shocked to discover he had unknowingly smuggled explosives onto a commercial flight from Slovakia after authorities there inserted the live explosive in his luggage for testing purposes after he checked in. He was the unlucky one of nine passengers caught out by the unorthodox screening experiment by Slovakian authorities on that day. Until the police raid at his home, he had no idea what had occurred.

For the average passenger, the security procedures affecting luggage are an invisible process that is out of sight and mind. There is public acceptance that checked luggage may be screened and searched by airport authorities. In fact, modern travel necessitates the belief that checked luggage can undergo this process and remain safe for passengers. After all, almost every passenger collects their baggage at their destination and proceeds through immigration checks without re-examining its contents. For airport authorities, there is an expectation that reasonable restraint is used during checks by agencies in other jurisdictions. Unfortunately, recent events suggest that making such assumptions could be risky business.

Another security scandal occurred at Narita International Airport outside Tokyo in May 2008 (see: securoseal.com/main.php?pg=news&news_id=361). A Hong Kong citizen who passed through the airport was shocked to find cannabis resin in his suitcase after checking into a hotel after his flight. Tokyo Customs officials acknowledged planting the drug in his luggage during a botched sniffer dog test. This turned out to be only 1 of 160 such alleged acts of tampering committed by the customs staff involved.

A significant part of the problem is that both authorities and passengers dealing with common luggage are unable to check whether an act of tampering has occurred. Zips and common locks used on luggage are able to be breached and resealed (youtube.com/user/securoseal?feature=mhum) without leaving a trace in seconds. This leaves both passengers and authorities vulnerable.

As the contents of luggage remain the passenger's legal responsibility on arrival, the need for passengers to protect themselves from luggage tampering has never greater.

About Securoseal:

With offices in Australia, Hong Kong and Europe, Securoseal (www.securoseal.com) has developed proprietary solutions for baggage security and works with authorities and the public to minimize risks to checked luggage through the application of tamper evident technology.

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