

AIRLINE SECURITY

* BAGGAGE AND CARGO *

I have been employed in the airline industry for some 25 plus years and until recently had a very extensive working knowledge of airport procedures. I have worked at a number of major airports including Sydney and Brisbane and Canberra.

I believe that one aspect of airline operations which may still provide a means of transferring illicit goods between Australian cities which has yet to be scrutinised and tightened up is the transfer of "Rush Baggage".

Rush Baggage is passenger's baggage which has not accompanied passengers on their booked flight/s for one reason or another and is directed to an alternative flight in order to be restored to that / those passengers.

The recording of such baggage is haphazard to say the least and manual baggage tags are generally used with little recording. It would not be hard to transfer a specific Blue suitcase from Cairns to Hobart with very little likelihood of any checks as to how often the case travelled or what contents were inside being made whatsoever.

Another area where illicit goods could be transferred by industry knowledgeable staff could be via interport company mail systems – these systems receive very little monitoring!

Cargo movements should also be tightened up as virtually any illicit goods could be transferred domestically with very little scrutiny. With cargo security relies on a declaration by the shipper that a package contains no goods of a dangerous nature. As far as I am aware there is no X-ray of and domestically consigned goods within Australia. It would not be difficult for any one with a little research to consign an explosive device on a specific flight within Australia.

Baggage tampering / pilfering has been rife in the airline industry for years it seems that it takes a case like the Chappelle Corby case to bring these unpleasant aspects of the airline industry into the public arena. The airlines know and will admit that this problem has been of major concern for many years – so much so that a number of covert CCTV and other technological operations have been mounted at times over the years as spates of these problems have occurred.

This information is not meant to point fingers at specific airline/s but is provided in good faith to assist in the overall improvement of Australian airline security.

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