



NEWS BRIEFS

DHS Ready to Pilot New 10-Fingerprint Technology at Airports

Ten-fingerprint scanning technology will be piloted this summer at airports in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Dallas, Houston, Miami, New York City, Orlando, Philadelphia, and San Francisco under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) U.S. Visit program. The technology has already been deployed at six embassies and consulates overseas. Also this summer, DHS will test a new approach to recording the exit of travelers whose movements fall under U.S. Visit's authority. Previously, DHS tested the use of kiosks that passengers could use to scan U.S. Visit documents to record departures, but passengers reported difficulties. Under the new method, U.S. Visit departure processing will be integrated with the general departure process at places where passengers normally stop--at the check-in desk, security checkpoints, or the boarding gate.

Experts Offer Tips on How to Avoid an Office Shooting

There are several steps companies can take to mitigate the risk of an office shooting, according to security professionals and human resource experts. For companies in larger offices and buildings, these steps include putting security at the building entrance. The company should also train its employees on how to react to a workplace shooting, meaning that the company needs to have an emergency plan for such incidents and should hold regular drills on exiting the building. Employees should be aware of where the office's exits are located, and they should mentally prepare themselves ahead of time for a shooting. If employees cannot reach an exit, they should lock their office doors and hide under desks. Human resource experts say that firings should be conducted with dignity, and time should be taken to explain the reasons for the firing. The common practice of rushing through the dismissal and quickly escorting the fired employee out of the building should be avoided, as this can cause the employee to become angry. Companies should consider firing employees earlier in the week, not Friday, so that the employees do not stew about the matter over the weekend.

Aviation Alert Level Remains at Orange 8 Months After Being Raised

Liquid explosives still pose a significant threat to the aviation sector--so much of a threat, in fact, that the threat level for the sector remains at Orange (high), even though the plot to blow up transatlantic airliners was disrupted nearly eight months ago. "The threat is very real and we need to remain at Orange until the threat no longer exists," said Transportation Security Administration (TSA) spokesman Christopher White. The transatlantic airliners plot allegedly involved about a dozen British operatives who planned to bring liquid explosives aboard planes and use the materials to construct bombs aboard the planes. U.S. authorities reacted to the plot by prohibiting passengers from bringing liquids aboard planes, but the ban was eased somewhat in September. Passengers are now allowed to bring up to three ounces of liquid aboard planes, so long as the liquid is stored in a bottle and placed inside a clear, one-quart, zip-lock bag. This allowance is known as the 3-1-1 rule. White did not say how long the Orange level would remain in place, but he did mention that both the current threat level and the 3-1-1 rule are tied to intelligence. A spokesman for the Homeland Security Department says that the investigation into the transatlantic plot is still ongoing and that terrorists remain interested in using the aviation sector to carry out attacks.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

563 Things You Need to Do to Run a Safe Workplace

Since some small companies with limited resources may be hesitant to consult a safety professional for help in meeting federal safety regulations, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has developed a comprehensive self-inspection check list to help companies determine if their facilities and day-to-day operations are in compliance. The check-list covers 563 areas where companies may need to take action, including record keeping, fire protection, exit doors, portable ladders, portable and hand power tools, LOTO practices, welding, forklifts, space entry, hazardous substances, electrical safety, and noise reduction. The check list is part of OSHA's "Small Business Handbook," which is available from OSHA regional offices and some satellite offices, as well as the OSHA Web site. The handbook also includes suggestions for small businesses, including reminders to check with an income tax preparer since safety and health improvements can be expensed or depreciated.

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