

## **50% Air Cargo Screening Achieved; Already Progress Towards 100%, Say Industry Experts**

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Leading industry experts in the air cargo industry announced that as the result of a rapidly expanding Certified Cargo Screener Program (CCSP), the screening deadlines for air cargo on passenger planes are being met ahead of the anticipated schedule. However, while the screening goals are being met, the panelists also expressed concern that the Obama Administration and new regulators at TSA may abandon a risk-based system of screening, leading to what they fear is increased security risks to the American public. At Air Cargo 2009 panelists offered a new vision of cargo security that works towards full compliance with the law, while also formulating risk-based security solutions that focus finite resources on threat detection and prevention.

"All of those in the air cargo industry have always had security as their top priority, and CCSP is a valuable tool that provides another layer of security for air cargo," said Brandon Fried, executive director of the Airforwarders Association. "Even with the progress to date, achieving 100 percent screening by the deadline will nonetheless be an immense challenge for the industry, not out of lack of will or resources, but instead because of the scope of the task and variations in cargo that do not exist in passenger baggage. "These challenges, coupled with a GAO report that indicated the quest for 100 percent may actually reduce the security of the nation, were addressed by former Under Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Asa Hutchison. In his remarks, Hutchison commended the supply chain for working diligently towards 100 percent screening. However, he encouraged industry to work together in a collective effort to redefine security in a way that is based on threat identification and detection. This risk-based approach to cargo security would ensure that limited resources are focused on high-risk cargo. That approach ensures that cargo is not idle, which is a security concern, as well as ensuring there are enough inspectors and equipment available to appropriately address threats.

Participants in CCSP offered two different perspectives on how the program fits into this risk-based system. Pfizer International chose to become certified to maintain the integrity of their medical supply shipment, while Commodity Forwarders became a CCSP

participant because it tenders perishable items that demand an efficient system to rapidly move goods from field to shelves.

The CCSP is a critical tool to achieve screening as it works through the supply chain, allowing shippers like CCSP participant Pfizer to screen as they pack shipments as well as forwarders to screen cargo tendered to them. By entrusting the experts in cargo – the shippers, forwarders and cargo divisions of air carriers – with the responsibility of screening and securing cargo, the integrity of shipments are better maintained, and the already strong chain of custody is further enhanced.