

**SENSITIVE SECURITY INFORMATION**



**Screening Passengers by Observation  
Techniques (SPOT)  
Standard Operating Procedure  
Revision 1 January 23, 2009  
Summary of Changes/Clarifications**

*Version 1.1*



**Transportation  
Security  
Administration**

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# 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this training is to provide BDOs with a Summary of Changes for the SPOT SOP Revision 1, January 23, 2009.



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# 1.2 Definitions

The following tables list new definitions.

**Accessible Property:** Property that is intended to be accessible to the individual in the sterile area or in the cabin of an aircraft.

**Advanced Behavior Detection Training (ABDT):** Training to recognize micro-facial expressions.

**Artfully Concealed:** An item hidden on a person or in accessible property in order to evade detection.

**Behavior Detection Officer (BDO):** Any 1801 or 1802 series employee who is certified in and authorized to conduct SPOT.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Behavior Resolution:** The process of determining the reason for an individual's SPOT-related behaviors by gathering additional information from the individual through verbal exchanges and the examination of the individual's documents and property.

**Casual Conversation:** Non-custodial, non-threatening discussion.

**Checked Baggage:** Property inaccessible to passengers during flight that is tendered by or on behalf of a passenger and accepted by an aircraft operator for transport.

**Environmental Baseline:** Behaviors and appearances that are typical and expected at the time and location where SPOT is being conducted.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Explosives Trace Detection (ETD):** A device certified by TSA to detect explosive particles on objects intended to be carried into the sterile area or transported onboard an aircraft.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(f)

**Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT):** Substances or materials that have been determined to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce, and which have been so designated under the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) HAZMAT Regulations (HMR).



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Law Enforcement Officer (LEO):** A sworn employee of a government entity (Federal, to include U.S. military police, and U.S. Capitol police, State, Territorial, Tribal, and local) with full power of arrest, who is trained and commissioned to enforce the public criminal laws of the jurisdiction(s) in which he or she is commissioned.

**Playbook:** A random selection of security measures to be used throughout the airport.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Screening Location:** Each site at which an individual, accessible property, or checked baggage is physically inspected for the presence of explosives, incendiaries, weapons, or other prohibited items. These physical screening locations include the screening checkpoint or boarding gate where individuals and accessible property are inspected with metal detectors, x-ray machines, and other methods; concourse, lobby, or baggage make-up areas where checked baggage is inspected with OSARP and/or ETD; locations where cargo is inspected; and other locations, as determined by the FSD.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Security Breach:** Any incident involving unauthorized and uncontrolled access by an individual or prohibited item into a sterile area or secured area of an airport that is determined by TSA to present an immediate and significant risk to life, safety, or the security of the transportation network and which requires emergency response by law enforcement.

**Selectee Screening:** A special screening requirement for individuals designated as selectees.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Sensitive Security Information (SSI):** Information obtained or developed in the conduct of security activities, including research and development, the disclosure of which TSA has determined would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy, reveal trade secrets, disclose privileged or confidential information obtained from any person, or be detrimental to the security of transportation.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Special Events:** Domestic events, activities, or meetings that do not rise to the level of NSSE but which nevertheless are significant in nature. Special Events may represent attractive terrorist targets due to their historical, political, and/or symbolic significance, size, location, media coverage, number of attendees, participation by dignitaries, proximity of critical infrastructure, or other factors.

**SPOT Assist Cards:** A set of cards issued to BDOs for use in referencing SPOT behaviors and point values.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**SPOT Coordinator:** An Assistant Federal Security Director (AFSD) Screening, or AFSD assigned by the FSD to provide general oversight of the SPOT program at an airport.

**SPOT Incident Report:** A document (including electronic versions) used to record details of an LEO notification. A copy of the Report is contained in Appendix 3 of the SOP.

**SPOT Referral Screening:** A special screening procedure for an individual who has been selected as a SPOT Referral.



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# 1.2 Definitions

**Trip Story:** The circumstances of an individual's travel as described by that individual.

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

**Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR):** Screening operations to enhance security for all modes of transportation.



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# 1.3 Acronyms

The following tables list new acronyms

**ABDT** - Advanced Behavior Detection Training

**BAO** - Bomb Appraisal Officer

**BDO** - Behavior Detection Officer

**BIPD** - Bulk Item Pat-Down

**DHS** - Department of Homeland Security

**ID** - Identification

**NIOSH** - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

**NSSE** - National Special Security Event



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# 1.3 Acronyms

**SPOT** - Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques

**TDC** - Travel Document Checker

**TSO** - Transportation Security Officer

**VIPR** - Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response

**WBI** - Whole Body Imager

**WTMD** - Walk-through Metal Detector



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# 1.4 Document Control and Availability

If an SOP is lost or stolen, immediately send an e-mail to **SSI@dhs.gov**

Identify the item reported missing, include a thorough description, and provide point of contact information.



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# 1.4 Document Control and Availability

The FSD must establish appropriate means to ensure that the following documents are available to all BDOs and those designated by the FSD as having a need to know.

- A complete copy of this SOP. This SOP must not be stored at the screening checkpoint or made available to those who do not have a need to know the contents of the SOP.
- A complete copy of the Screening Checkpoint SOP and any other SOPs, if applicable, for other deployment s, such as Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR).



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# 1.4 Document Control and Availability

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) may be accessed at:  
[https://tsaweb001/spot/edb\\_login.asp](https://tsaweb001/spot/edb_login.asp)

To request access to the FAQs, contact:  
[TSAScreeningSOPs@dhs.gov](mailto:TSAScreeningSOPs@dhs.gov)

For SOP questions not answered by the FAQs, submit the question via the FAQ site. For all other SPOT related questions, contact local TSA management and headquarters staff at:  
[SPOT@dhs.gov](mailto:SPOT@dhs.gov)



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## 2.1 General

The FSD must designate the Assistant FSD (AFSD) Screening as the SPOT Coordinator. If there is no AFSD-Screening, the FSD must designate another AFSD.

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## 2.1 General

SPOT must be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth in this SOP, applicable Operations Directives, and SPOT training, as well as Constitutional, statutory, regulatory and other legal and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy requirements.

SPOT may be conducted at a screening location or other location designated by the FSD. BDOs may also be deployed as part of a Playbook, Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR), National Special Security Event (NSSE), or other Special Events operation.



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## 2.1 General

SPOT must be conducted without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability except as directed by the FSD and provided such direction is based on specific intelligence threat information.



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# 2.1 General

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 2.2 Certification

All BDOs and STSMs must successfully complete the SPOT certification and recertification programs, which include SPOT Screening Checkpoint ETD and PHYSICAL SEARCH procedures.

All STSMs must maintain SPOT proficiency by performing SPOT at least twenty-four (24) hours in every fourteen (14) day period.

Training Coordinators must establish and maintain in the TSA OLC the training records of all BDOs and STSMs who have successfully completed the SPOT training certification and recertification, as well as the STSM proficiency requirements referred to above.



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## 2.3 Management Staffing and Responsibilities

The STSM must assign a SPOT- certified designee to assume the STSM responsibilities when the STSM is not on duty.

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## 2.4 STSM Duties

In addition to other duties specified in this SOP, the STSM must verify that BDOs are:

- Fit for duty in accordance with TSA Management Directive 1100.73-5, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct
- In the proper uniform, as set forth in the TSA Management Directive No. 1100.73-2, TSO Dress and Appearance Responsibilities



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## 2.4 STSM Duties

- BDOs are to wear proper uniform unless an exception has been granted by the SPOT Coordinator in consultation with the FSD,

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

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## 2.4 STSM Duties

- Verify that copies of SPOT Referral and Incident Reports are available
- Provide guidance and counseling to BDOs who are not following the procedures as directed in this SOP, Operations Directives, and SPOT training. The STSM should take appropriate disciplinary action as needed, and report such matters to the SPOT Coordinator
- Direct BDOs to respond to a security breach or other critical incident as necessary



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## 2.4 STSM Duties

- Immediately report all significant and/or suspicious incidents to the Transportation Security Operations Center (TSOC) via telephone at **866-655-7023** and in writing using the standard TSOC reporting format as specified in OD-400-18-2B: Reporting Security Incidents to TSOC
- Collect and review all completed SPOT Referral Reports at the end of each shift and input them into the SPOT database, or appoint a designee to do so



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## 2.4 STSM Duties

- Collect and review all completed SPOT Incident Reports at the end of each shift and enter into PARIS in accordance with Section 3.10.C., or appoint a designee to do so
- Prepare and maintain a shift summary, listing the daily activities of the BDOs to include terminal and checkpoint locations
- Review all data input into the SPOT database for accuracy and proper reporting and ensure that no personal identifying information is located in the SPOT database



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## 2.4 STSM Duties

- Meet with the SPOT Coordinator, at a minimum of once per week, to review any issues related to personnel, data collection, incident reporting, certification status, and any other SPOT related activities
- Conduct quarterly evaluations of the BDOs
- Verify that an After-Action Report (available in APPENDIX 4) is completed when BDOs are deployed as part of an operation other than the airport screening checkpoint, such as Playbook, VIPR, NSSE, or other Special Events screening



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## 2.5 BDO Duties

In addition to other duties specified in the SOP, BDOs must:

- Be in the proper uniform, as indicated in the TSA Management Directive No. 1100.73-2, TSO Dress and Appearance Responsibilities, unless an exception has been granted by the SPOT Coordinator

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## 2.5 BDO Duties

- Carry out duties in accordance with this SOP, applicable Operations Directives, and SPOT training, as well as Constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and other legal and DHS policy requirements to protect the civil rights and liberties of individuals
- Attend the daily SPOT In/Out briefing in order to receive any announcements, including intelligence updates from the STSM or designee
- Report all significant events the shift and maintain a daily log of activities in a SPOT designated notebook including, but not limited to, the STSM before the end of movements from one location to another and start and stop times associated with each location



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## 3.2 Preparation and Positioning

Before starting SPOT, BDOs must have a working black light and magnification loupe, if available.

### Walking-the-Line Positioning

- Walking the Line should be conducted in pairs, if possible. One BDO should move along the queue and observe individuals' behavior. The second BDO should observe the entire area and individuals for any reaction to their partner along with his or her own observations.



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## 3.2 Preparation and Positioning

- No BDO should remain in one position for an extended period of time. BDOs should move frequently along the queue and change positions with their partners, when possible.
- BDOs should attempt to engage as many individuals as possible in the queue in a brief, casual conversation to observe the individuals' reaction to the engagement and pay close attention to individuals who are exhibiting minimal signs of SPOT behaviors.



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## 3.4 Behavior Cues and Appearance Risk Factors

The following changes have been made to the Behavior Cues and Appearance factors listed in the tables below:

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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# 3.4 Behavior Cues and Appearance Risk Factors

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(f)



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# 3.4 Behavior Cues and Appearance Risk Factors

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 3.5 Casual Conversation

BDOs may engage in casual conversation with an individual while conducting SPOT in order to confirm or dispel anomalous behavior.

- Questions should be asked in a professional, informal, non-threatening, and non-coercive manner.

(b)(6)



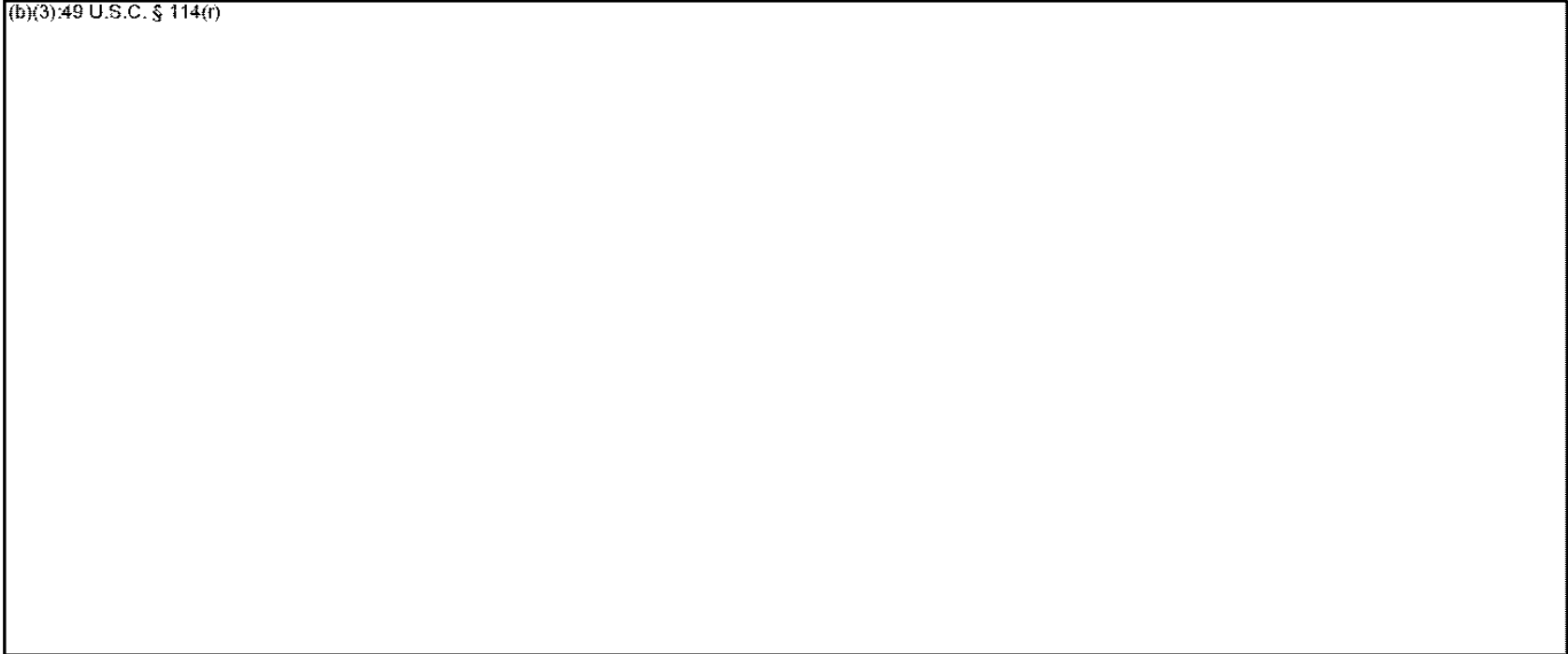
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# 3.5 Casual Conversation

- During the casual conversation, the BDO must continue to watch

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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# 3.5 Casual Conversation

- BDOs who have received TSA Advanced Behavior Detection Training (ABDT) or any other additional behavior detection training may use those techniques as tools when conducting casual conversation.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



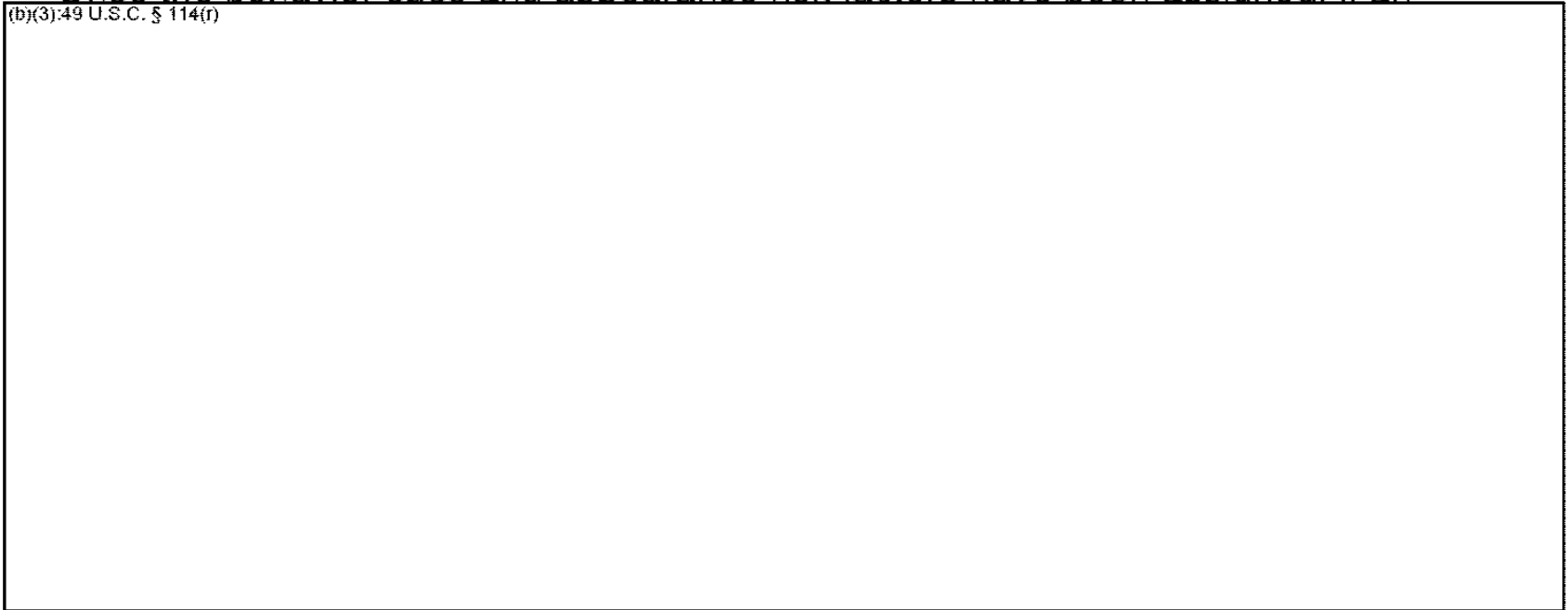
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# 3.6 Behavior Detection and Analysis

Once the behavior cues and appearance risk factors have been assigned, if an

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(f)



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# 3.7 SPOT Referral Screening Process

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

The BDO must discreetly notify the WTMD TSO or TDC that the individual (b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r) must undergo SPOT referral screening of their person and accessible property.



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## 3.7.1 SPOT Referral Screening of Persons

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 3.7.1 SPOT Referral Screening of Persons

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(f)



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## 3.7.2 SPOT Referral Screening of IDs and Travel Documents

During SPOT Referral Screening, review the individual's ID and travel documents while continuing to observe for SPOT-related behaviors. ID and travel document checking may be performed as part of the casual conversation.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(n)



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## 3.7.2 SPOT Referral Screening of IDs and Travel Documents

Verify that screening actions associated with TDC and Selectee markings are completed.

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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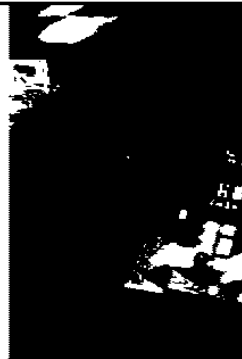
# 3.7.3 SPOT Referral Screening of Accessible Property

During the SPOT Referral Screening of accessible property, a TSO must X-ray all accessible property.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

(b)(6)



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## 3.7.3 SPOT Referral Screening of Accessible Property

A TSO must conduct Liquid Container Screening, if available, for all exemptible liquids and gels that are greater than travel size (3.4 oz or 100 ml) following the procedures of the Screening Checkpoint SOP.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 3.7.4 SPOT Referral Screening of Checked Baggage

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 3.7.6 SPOT Referral Screening Resolution

If, after completing the SPOT Referral Screening actions, including all associated alarm resolution requirements, the BDO determines that SPOT-related behaviors have been resolved, notify the STSO that the individual is clear to enter the sterile area.



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## 3.7.6 SPOT Referral Screening Resolution

If, during SPOT Referral Screening, any of the conditions that require an immediate LEO notification occur, the BDO must notify an LEO as discreetly as possible.

The BDO must also notify the STSO and the STSM when an LEO is notified.

(b)(6),(b)(7)(C)



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# 3.8 Individuals Not Entering the Screening Process

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(f)

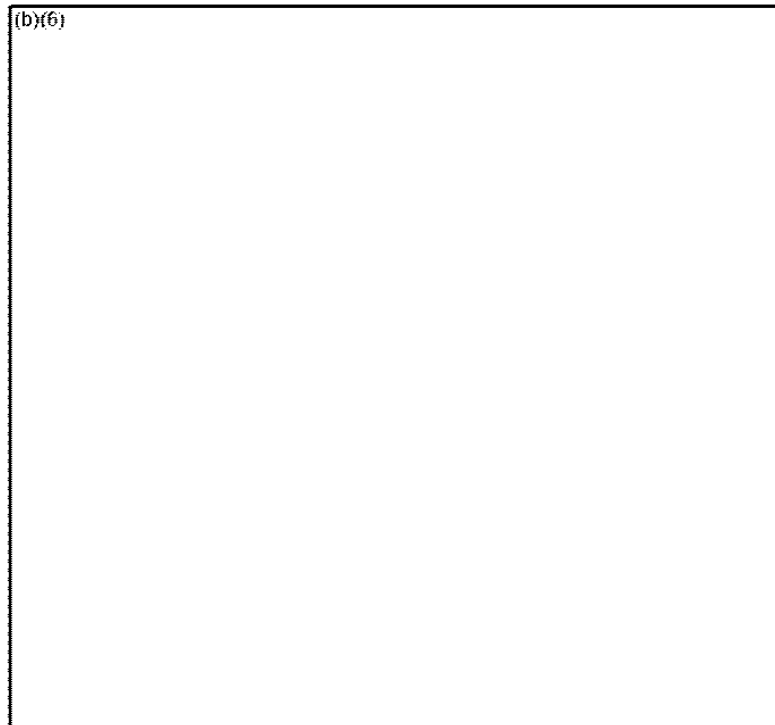


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## 3.8 Individuals Not Entering the Screening Process

During the casual conversation, the BDO must watch for Signs of Deception in Statements, Possible Suicide Bomber Indicators, Possible Surveillance Activity, and any new Signs of Deception in Statements.



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# 3.8 Individuals Not Entering the Screening Process

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

(b)(6),(b)(7)(C)



# 3.9 Immediate LEO Notification

BDOs must immediately notify an LEO when any of the following events take place:

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 3.9 Immediate LEO Notification

After notifying an LEO, the BDO must notify the STSM and the STSO if the situation occurred at a screening location. The STSM or STSO must notify the FSD.

When the LEO arrives, the BDO must:

- Brief the LEO before the LEO interviews the individual(s). (b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)  
(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)
- Remain in the general vicinity while the LEO is performing his or her duties.
- At the conclusion of the LEO intervention, inquire as to the resolution and document all relevant information regarding referrals in a detailed manner that will allow the referral and incident reports to be completed accurately at a later time.



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# 3.9 Immediate LEO Notification

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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# 3.9 Immediate LEO Notification

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(f)



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## 3.12 SPOT Assist Requests

Various TSA screening procedures call for BDO assistance for assessment of behaviors outside the standard SPOT implementation environment.

- When an STSO requests a BDO's assistance at a screening location, the BDO must communicate his or her inability to respond if the BDO is otherwise actively engaged in observing an individual who has exhibited SPOT-related behaviors. Notify the STSO when the observation is complete.



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# 3.12 SPOT Assist Requests

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(f)



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# 3.12 SPOT Assist Requests

(b)(3);49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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## 3.13 Other SPOT Deployments

BDOs may be deployed in other security operations such as VIPR, Playbook, NSSE, or other Special Events.

BDOs deployed in one of these operations should use this SOP and SPOT training to make behavior observations and risk assessments for the target population.



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# 3.13 Other SPOT Deployments

BDOs should be teamed with an LEO when participating in VIPR, NSSE, or other Special Event.

BDOs must provide a SPOT Brief to the other personnel involved in the operation.

If anomalous behavior is observed, the BDO must inform the appropriate personnel for resolution consistent with the plan of operation.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(n)



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## 4.3 Operational Audit: Performance Elements/STSMs

The semi-annual audit conducted by the SPOT Coordinator must measure whether:

- All BDOs are fit for duty in accordance with TSA Management Directive 1100.73-5, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct.
- All BDOs are in the proper uniform, as set forth in the TSA Management Directive No. 1100.73-2, TSO Dress and Appearance Responsibilities, unless an exception has been granted by the SPOT Coordinator.



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## 4.3 Operational Audit: Performance Elements/BDOs

The quarterly audits of the BDOs conducted by the STSM must include the following:

- Verify that all BDOs are in the proper uniform, as set forth in the TSA Management Directive No. 1100.73-2, TSO Dress and Appearance Responsibilities, unless an exception has been granted by the SPOT Coordinator.
- Evaluate whether BDOs properly and effectively conduct casual conversation following SPOT training procedures.
- Verify that BDOs properly complete all required paperwork and input SPOT referral data correctly and accurately into the SPOT database without inputting any passenger personal identifying data.



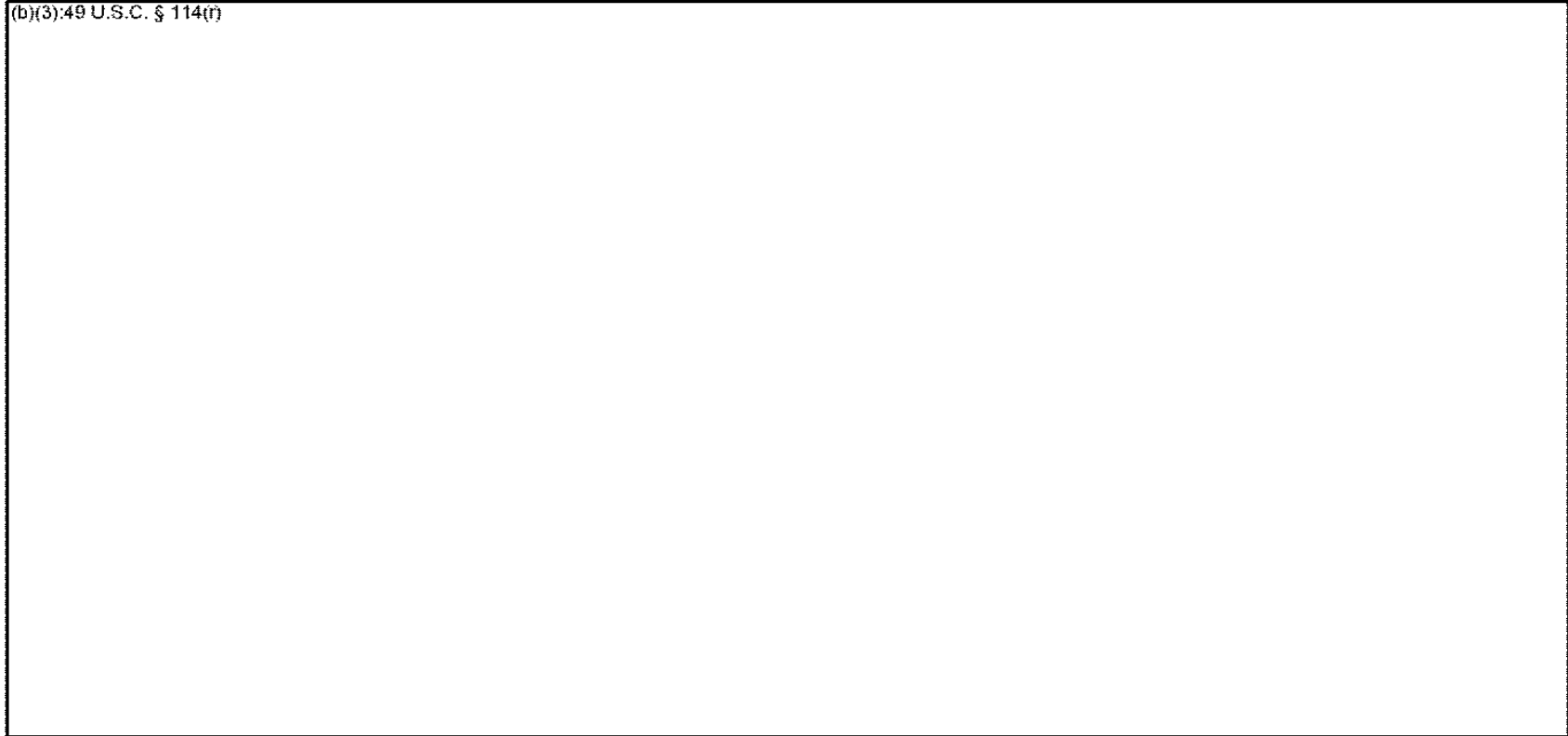
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# Appendix 1: SPOT Process FlowChart

The SPOT Process Flow Chart has been updated.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(f)



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# Appendix 2: SPOT Referral Report

The SPOT Referral Report has replaced the SPOT Score Sheet. When completed on-line, the new form will automatically total point values. It also contains new information that must be captured by a BDO.

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(i)



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# Appendix 2: Spot Referral Report

An area to record “Initial Observation Report by” has been added.

An Environmental Baseline section has been added to record a brief narrative of the environmental baseline at the time of the referral.

In the Unusual Items section

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)



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# Appendix 2: Spot Referral Report

(b)(3):49 U.S.C. § 114(r)

Information to be captured in the Passenger Data section has changed.

A LEO Resolution section has been added.



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**SENSITIVE SECURITY INFORMATION**



**This concludes the  
Summary of Changes and  
Clarifications  
for the SPOT SOP**

**Revision 1 January 23, 2009**

*Version 1.1*



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