

# United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

## Aviation Safety Alert

**No. 2003-03**

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**Subject:** Commercial Airline Security Information

**Area of Concern:** Aviation and Fire Operations

**Distribution:** All Aviation and Fire Personnel

**Discussion:** On April 8, 2002, while traveling to a Southwest Region (R-3) assignment as a prevention officer, an employee's checked baggage was subjected to a random search. During the inspection of checked luggage (a large duffel bag) a physical search was being conducted behind the ticket counter, the screener opened an outside pocket on the bag and, as they were reaching in, noticed smoke coming from the opening. The screener indicated the source of the smoke was from a zip-lock baggie containing three "strike anywhere" matches and that one or more of the matches had ignited. While completing the search the screener found two small boxes (12 matches per box) of "strike on the box" matches, which were considered a prohibited item because they were not declared and properly marked and packaged. Also contained within the checked luggage was a large box of standard "strike anywhere" matches, which are totally prohibited.

A Special Agent for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) contacted the employee's supervisor emphasizing the seriousness of the incident and the need to get the word out to other firefighters that "strike anywhere" matches are prohibited on commercial flights. Even though matches could be considered tools of the trade for a Fire Prevention Officer they could have been easily procured at the destination.

The TSA is currently investigating the incident. They appreciate the use of the Interagency Transport of Hazardous Materials guide but understand that it is geared towards non-commercial flight and is not inclusive (no mention of matches). The employee could face fines of up to \$30,000; a typical fine for a like occurrence is \$7,500.

The Special Agent discussed his Agency's concerns with the upcoming fire season and the increased mobilization expected. The Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System (CAPPS) now has 24 different factors, many of which are likely to flag most of our employees for additional screening measures. This system is likely to remain in effect indefinitely.

Since the events of 9/11 and the creation of the TSA there is far less latitude for leniency, and individuals and Agencies can be subject to substantial fines for attempting to transport un-declared, improperly packaged, and prohibited materials.

### **Air Travel Tips**

Please see the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Security Tips for Air Travelers: <http://cas.faa.gov/cas/these.html> and <http://www.faa.gov/apa/tipbroch.htm>

Travel information web site: <http://www.faa.gov/apa/traveler.htm>

For information not covered on these sites, contact the FAA Consumer Hotline: Email: [9-awa-aoa-consumer@faa.gov](mailto:9-awa-aoa-consumer@faa.gov) or Phone: 1-800-322-7873. This toll-free number is designed to respond to consumers with questions concerning child restraint systems, turbulence issues, carry-on baggage, free advisory circulars, assessment summary statements on foreign civil aviation authorities, as well as current events in the aviation industry. The number is in operation from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

In addition, we suggest you check the most recent FAA press releases at: <http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm>

If the FAQs above or the links on the left to **DOT Areas & Services** don't lead you to the answer to your question:

- You can search all DOT web pages using [DOTBOT](#)
- You can submit your question by way of [Comment/Questions for National Transportation Library](#)

*/s/Ron Hanks*

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