

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Statement of

CINDY FARKUS

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GLOBAL STRATEGIES

Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SECURITY AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 18, 2009

Good afternoon Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking Member Dent, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the security of aircraft repair stations. I appreciate the Subcommittee's timely attention to this issue as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) prepares to propose standards for security measures at aircraft repair stations and provide assistance to our international partners in meeting those standards. Today I will outline the steps we are taking to lay the foundation for the security of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certificated aircraft repair stations located in the U.S. and abroad.

I am pleased to appear along with Calvin Scovel III, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and Doug Dalbey, Deputy Director of Flight Standards for Field Operations at the FAA. TSA coordinates with DOT officials across a broad spectrum of domestic and international transportation security matters.

TSA, through both the Office of Global Strategies (OGS) and the Aircraft Repair Stations Program in the Office of Security Operations (OSO), works to develop and promote effective transportation security practices both domestically and around the world. Through diplomatic engagement and collaboration with our international partners, we are creating mechanisms to share information to help disrupt threats overseas, harmonize screening measures and practices, assess foreign carriers and airports, and build aviation security capacity.

Repair stations are facilities certificated by the FAA to perform maintenance, repair, overhaul, or alterations on U.S. aircraft or aircraft components. Components may be engines, hydraulics, avionics, safety equipment, airframes, or interiors. More than 4,000 repair stations are certificated domestically, and 712 repair stations are certificated by FAA in foreign locations. More than two thirds of certificated foreign repair stations are located in the European Union,

followed in number by locations in the Asia-Pacific, South and Central America, the Middle East, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Africa. The vast majority of repair stations are owned by private companies, many of them headquartered in the U.S.

There is no “typical” repair station. They take many forms depending upon the type of maintenance performed, number of employees, and location. Some repair stations are on airport premises, but many are located in industrial parks nearby. Work can range from major aircraft overhauls to repairing radios or sewing seat cushions.

This month TSA will propose regulations to enhance the security of both domestic and foreign aircraft repair stations as required by the Vision 100-Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (Vision 100), P.L. 108-176. The proposed regulations are aimed at preventing unauthorized access to a repair station in order to prevent the sabotage, destruction, or theft of aircraft or aircraft components.

The United States is leading the way in establishing repair station security standards, as this is an area not covered comprehensively by the International Civil Aviation Organization agreement. The proposed regulations will cover requirements for repair stations certificated by the FAA under 14 CFR part 145 to adopt and implement a standard security program and to comply with security directives. The proposed rule also will seek to codify the scope of TSA’s existing inspection program and TSA authority to enter, inspect, and test property, facilities and records concerning repair stations. Further, it will focus on procedures for TSA to notify repair stations of deficiencies in their security programs and determine whether there is an immediate risk to security. The proposal will also cover the process for a repair station to seek review of a determination that security deficiencies are not adequately addressed or that there is an immediate risk to security.

TSA has spent considerable time assessing the types and varieties of repair station operations as well as the current state of aircraft repair station security measures around the world. TSA has established an aircraft repair station program office overseen by OSO, with the international outreach efforts performed by OGS, and the agency has hired and trained International Transportation Security Inspectors (ITSIs). With the collaboration of host countries and corporate offices, we have performed numerous voluntary site visits and outreach efforts to FAA certificated foreign repair stations. The site visits provided valuable insight into the different types of facilities certificated by FAA, the variety of repair work conducted at the facilities, and the range of security measures used. During these visits, TSA discussed best practices for access control and other security measures. Worldwide, TSA found that aircraft repair stations take security seriously and voluntarily perform security measures that are consistent with the standards TSA is proposing. Aircraft repair stations are eager to protect the high value products of the customer base they serve, which in itself is a substantial incentive to maintain security at a high level.

The voluntary site visits have served the United States well in fostering collaborative relationships with our international partners as we break new ground in proposing comprehensive standards focused specifically on the security of aircraft repair stations. Through these visits, we established a dialogue on international security requirements and developed a

wealth of information about security strategies that was useful in developing TSA's Aircraft Repair Station Security Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM).

The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (9/11 Act), P.L. 110-53, requires TSA to complete audits of foreign repair stations within six months of issuance of the final repair station rule. TSA is prepared to swiftly perform these audits upon finalization of the rule. We have developed a comprehensive database with detailed repair station information that will help serve as an inspection scheduling and tracking tool. We have an implementation plan for completing all foreign repair station audits as required within the six-month timeframe.

Throughout development of the Aircraft Repair Station Security NPRM, TSA has adhered to the principles that the agency should (1) listen carefully to the diversity of interests concerning the rule, (2) ensure that the rule's proposed standards are risk-based, (3) provide appropriate flexibility to accommodate the range of repair station characteristics, and (4) complement FAA's safety regime.

TSA anticipates its aircraft repair station rule will provide an additional layer of security in the aviation domain. First, TSA will be in a position to ensure that repair stations across the board carry out a security program that clearly defines access controls for the facility as well as aircraft and components, lays out measures to identify employees and others with access, successfully restricts access by unauthorized individuals, provides security awareness training to all repair station employees, conducts employee background checks, and designates an appropriate security coordinator.

Second, TSA will have inspection authority to examine repair station property, facilities, and records in order to assess security and enforce security regulations. Consistent with Vision 100, TSA would notify repair stations and the FAA if there are deficiencies in security programs and provide 90 days for the repair station to correct the deficiencies. If they are not corrected within 90 days, TSA would notify the FAA that it must suspend the station's certificate until the deficiencies are resolved. Importantly, a process would be provided to allow repair stations to request further review of the deficiency determination. In addition, the rule addresses the process for revoking the certification of a repair station that is determined to pose an immediate risk to security as identified on a case-by-case basis, as well as the opportunity to appeal such a determination.

In closing, TSA strongly encourages all interested parties and stakeholders to review the proposed rule when published and welcomes public comment. Upon finalization of the rule, TSA will have the trained inspectors, logistical information, and plans to quickly follow through with the audits of foreign repair stations within six months as required by the 9/11 Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our plans for ensuring the security of repair stations and our proposed regulations. I would be pleased to respond to your questions.