

TSA AIRPORT FEDERALIZATION PROCESS—Assessment and Hiring Process
(as of 8-9-02)

The TSA federalization process consists of three steps:

1. a site survey to determine the best design of the checkpoints and baggage screening areas;
2. checkpoint and baggage screening reconfiguration to best facilitate security and safety of the flying public; and
3. the deployment of a general screening workforce.

The timeframe between arrival of the site assessment team and full deployment of a federal screening workforce depends on the size of the airport and other factors. The recruitment, assessment, training and deployment of screeners at a given airport will take five weeks or longer.

For ETA's purposes, a description is provided regarding the third step of the federalization process: The deployment of a general screening force. It is at this point that a number of current contract screeners are likely to become dislocated (although they are eligible for services prior to the actual day of their termination).

A MOBILE SCREENING FORCE ARRIVES AT THE AIRPORT ON A MONDAY. IT ANNOUNCES THE END OF THE PRIVATE CONTRACTOR SCREENING CONTRACT. AS SHIFTS END ON THAT DAY, INDIVIDUALS ARE TERMINATED FROM EMPLOYMENT.

TSA IMMEDIATELY REPLACES ALL SCREENERS FROM A TRAINED TSA MOBILE SCREENING FORCE. AT THIS TIME, TSA HAS ADOPTED THE APPROACH OF DEALING WITH AN ENTIRE AIRPORT AT THE SAME TIME, RATHER THAN BY TERMINALS OR "WAVES" OF WORKERS.

Establishment of a TSA "Mobile Screening Force." In late winter and early spring of this year, TSA received 10,000 applications and hired (after training), about 2,800 new screeners (that met the new federal criteria) at the supervisory level. Since February, this force has been filling in while current screeners who have passed the TSA assessment and background check are receiving federal training. The mobile force now number 3,000 with an additional 4,000 mobile screeners in a "ready pool."

NOTE: When members of the Mobile Training Force were hired last winter/spring, the understanding was that when members arrived at their "home airport" (i.e., the one they wish to work at), that they would be able to stay behind with all the newly hired and trained screeners, and drop off the Mobile Screening Team which would then move on to the next airport. They will be replaced from a "ready pool" of Mobile screeners TSA has. This means that there may not be as many "supervisory" type jobs available as might have been advertised (i.e., some will already have been taken by the Mobile Screeners who stay behind at their home airport).

HOW THE FEDERALIZATION OPERATES

The TSA assessment and hiring system consists of four phases. It is applicable to all applicants for federal airport security screener positions regardless of whether the individual applicant is presently working for a private screening contractor or is a new applicant with no security experience.

QUICK SCREENING PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

- ⇒ All current contract screeners (non-federal) at airports are encouraged to immediately complete a Screening Questionnaire for one of the new Federal airport screener jobs. However, not all contract screeners are aware of this opportunity to apply for consideration for federal Airport Security Screener positions.
- ⇒ Completion of the quick screening questionnaire is the first step for current screeners to determine if they can be hired as a federal screener. It is very cursory and very initial.

An individual can apply through the Quick Screen process two ways: (1) Online at the TSA Web site or by phone at 1-877-631-5627. Either way, upon completion of the process, individuals will receive immediate feedback (online or by voice mail on the telephone) concerning this preliminary assessment. The names of individuals who have passed are placed on a TSA roster for a specific airport. These individuals will be contacted when TSA establishes an assessment center and training activity for that particular airport. Failure to pass the Quick Screen eliminates the individual from further consideration. (Note information later on availability of a retention bonus.)

Timing

- **Monday:** A Mobile Screening Force arrives at an airport (according to a TSA schedule that can be found on its Web site for a month in advance). On Monday evening at midnight, the current contract for screeners working at that airport ends. At 12:01 AM the Mobile Screening Force takes over for them. At 12:01 AM all of the old contract screeners are officially terminated.

- **Tuesday through Friday:** On Tuesday, all of the current screeners who passed the Quick Screen preliminary questionnaire are invited to report to a TSA assessment center early in the morning (7:00 or 7:30 AM) for the full federal employment assessment process. The full assessment is in several phases and will last through Friday of that week (see detailed description below).
- The screeners going through this weeklong assessment process have no salary coming in for this period. They have been laid off and may want to apply for Unemployment Insurance in case they do not receive a job offer.
- Note: If the current screeners leave the job before they received a formal termination, it would be considered a voluntary quit for purposes of eligibility for Unemployment Insurance benefits.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants invited to the Assessment Center will be requested to bring certain information with them:

- proof of citizenship – passport, driver’s license AND Social Security Card;
- evidence of high school graduation or GED certificate or prior relevant employment as a screener or in security work;
- proof of veteran’s status such as DD-214 if planning to claim veteran’s preference;
- if claim to be a member or former member of the armed forces entitled to retirement or retainer pay, proof of such claim such as military retirement ID card or current military ID card;
- a written 10-year employment history;
- for present contract screeners, a current pay stub; and
- names, addresses and phone numbers of 3-5 work references and 3-5 relatives or friends.

FOUR PHASE ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

On Tuesday morning the full assessment begins.

UPON ARRIVAL AT THE ASSESSMENT CENTER, APPLICANTS WILL BE ASKED TO COMPLETE AN SF-85P--a security investigation form (using the employment history and reference material they are to bring with them) and to sign a release allowing for a background check. Information requested includes any police record and credit history. The candidate is also required to sign a release to allow TSA to verify the criminal record and credit information provided. A drug test is also

administered and fingerprints are taken. While the individual goes through the remaining assessment tests during the week, a security specialist clears the individual through the local police and the FBI for the initial criminal background check as well as a credit check. If there is a problem, the security specialist will tell the individual when it surfaces.

PHASE 1--COMPETENCY TEST. To determine if the individual has some of the skills necessary for the job (such as distinguishing objects by feel alone, sizes, mental rotation of objects, recognizing shapes and colors).

PHASE 2--ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST. The Act sets forth the following standards in section 111(f)(1)(C) The individual shall be able to read, speak, and write English well enough to –

- (i) carry out written and oral instructions regarding the proper performance of screening duties;
- (ii) read English language identification media, credentials, airline tickets, and labels on items normally encountered in the screening process;
- (iii) provide direction to and understand and answer questions from English-speaking individuals undergoing screening; and
- (iv) write incident reports and statements and log entries into security records in the English language.”

An individual must pass these two tests which require about four hours in order to proceed to PHASE 3.

PHASE 3--PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST. To determine the individual’s ability to the physical demands of the job such as lifting and endurance as well as ability to feel and describe what might be found in passengers’ baggage. The test includes such exercises as:

- repeatedly carrying containers representing suitcases weighing from 10 to 40 lbs. for a specified period of time (45 minutes to one hour)
- standing, reaching, bending over and performing other activities to determine their mobility, range of motion, and dexterity
- describing and identifying objects in a box by feeling them and determining what they are from a list
- meeting medical standards:
 - Vision test – Correctible with glasses to certain standards
Note: Screeners cannot be colorblind.
 - Hearing test – correctable with hearing aid
 - Drug and alcohol free as determined by test

- An interview conducted by a medical examiner (physician) to review medical history and present medical conditions including all present medicines being taken

An individual may be placed on medical hold if a remedial medical condition is identified and then return when the condition is resolved to complete the assessment. An example was given of an eye infection or other condition resolved with medication.

This phase will take 4 to 6 hours.

If the individual passes this phase, they may continue to Phase 4.

PHASE 4--STRUCTURED INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY A HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTANT to assess an individual's interpersonal skills for customer service, honesty, integrity, dependability. It includes predeveloped questions discussing the duties of the position, the individual's career goals, as well as a role-play scenario that might happen to a screener on the job. If the individual is seeking a supervisory job, questions dealing with management and leadership skills and qualities will be included in the interview. Individuals are rated on presence, conversation, delivery, judgment and overall suitability.

The candidate's suitability is evaluated as relates to how the individual has shown that they handle circumstances in their own life. One topic of discussion could be the individual's credit history.

NOTE: Bad credit is not an automatic disqualifier. It depends on what the situation was/is and what the individual has done/is doing to clear it up.

THE TSA HIRING DECISION

At the end of this week-long assessment (when the initial background check simultaneously comes through), if the applicant passes all four assessment phases, TSA will makes a job offer as a federal screener. Depending on the number of positions at the airport and the number of individuals passing all phases of the assessment process, not everyone is guaranteed immediate employment. PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY: Even for those individual who are offered and accept immediate employment, a full background check requiring several months to complete must be conducted. The employment offer provided at the end of the assessment week is a conditional hire. Three to six months later, if the full background check comes back with a negative finding, the individual can be terminated.

FRIDAY: On the final day of the full assessment week, when the job offer is made, the individual is given:

- a salary level (The salary band for screeners ranges from about \$23,600 to \$35,400 plus locality pay, where applicable. If an individual is offered a job, it will be at the same salary he/she had with the previous security contractor within the pay band. Individuals previously earning less than \$23,600, when hired as a federal employee, will be hired at the base rate of the band--\$23,600.);
 - a date for orientation as a federal employee, usually that Saturday or Sunday;
 - a date upon which to start training (40 hours of classroom training and 60 hours of OJT is required); and
 - an effective date of hire.
- o The federal employee orientation will usually be the next day (i.e., Saturday or Sunday of the assessment week). This involves information about employee benefits – annual and sick leave, health insurance, retirement, group life insurance, etc.

The training start date will be the effective date of hire. Training will usually begin on Monday of the week after the full assessment.

- 40 hours of classroom training conducted by Lockheed-Martin.
 - 60 hours of on-the-job training done by the Mobile Screening Force temporarily at the airport.
- o Current screeners who make it through the assessment should be aware that their current shifts and days are subject to change once they are hired as Federal employees, depending on the needs of the airport.

RETENTION BONUS

TSA provided the current airport security contractors with special funds which they are authorized to provide to current screeners who stay until the end of the contract as RETENTION BONUSES. The purpose of this money is to keep workers on the job until the end of the contract, even if they find out early on that they don't qualify under the preliminary online or telephone assessment process, or conclude on their own that they do not meet the TSA hiring criteria (i.e., U. S. citizenship) or may not be able to pass an assessment or background check.

The contractor must either provide it to the workers who remain until the federalization date or return it to TSA.

The company may decide on how the money is to be distributed (such as at the end, or a little bit with each paycheck, etc.). IT APPEARS THAT MANY CONTRACTORS HAVE NOT INFORMED THE CURRENT SCREENERS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THESE FUNDS.