

# Alternative Pre-Screening Method (APM) in Aviation Security

**Written by: Levent Ural, Divisional Director – Aviation Security Services, ICTS UK & Ireland**

The ICTS Europe Group has been the industry expert in aviation passenger pre-screening for over 30 years. As industry leaders we have always worked closely with airlines and regulators to develop the optimum methods for detecting potential threatening passengers. The reputation of ICTS as a leader in the field of passenger pre-screening methods has attracted many airlines in the industry over the years, and we are proud to remain the preferred security provider for international carriers.

The 21st century has presented many challenges, particularly after the events of 9/11, the *shoe bomber* and the *underwear bomber*. Civil aviation has remained the preferred target of terrorist organisations and of terrorists. Hostile organisations employ the modus operandi of sabotaging or interfering in a multitude of ways with regular air travel, by gaining access to aircraft or airport premises. The perpetrators are terrorists posing as passengers, or passengers who are unwittingly exploited by terrorists without being aware of becoming part of a terrorist plot.

After these events, it became apparent that the old passenger pre-screening method had to change and evolve in a way that respected passengers' privacy, enhanced the customer service aspect and yet maintained the ability to detect those who may pose a threat. The old pre-screening method had become known to many over the years and so there was a heightened risk of potential terrorists studying the system and circumventing security procedures.

Taking all these factors into account, ICTS introduced the Alternative Pre-Screening Method (APM) in 2014, as well as the related supporting technologies. The system was developed by ICTS in collaboration with other industry entities and has been successfully used around the globe on USA-bound flights for the past six years.

## Objective of the APM Procedure

APM implements a purposeful and systematic passenger pre-screening method, which aims at identifying deceitful individuals among those who intend to access an aircraft as passengers and/or to gain entry to sterile airport premises accessible only to passengers and to authorised personnel.

APM records the passenger's appearance and behaviour that might indicate their bad intentions. Whereas, the old pre-screening method of profiling focuses on a multitude of technicalities, that need to be resolved one by one, by applying more or less sophisticated questioning techniques. With APM, we now invest less interview time in thought-engaging clarification of technicalities and focus more effort on behaviour indications of deception through conversation.

APM is unknown to passengers and is therefore more difficult to circumvent. It is an unpredictable, flexible and less rigid interview method.



## APM and customer service

The APM's basic constituting element is the customer-service approach. It is a brief process which is comforting rather than intimidating. Passenger feedback has been extremely positive, which resulted in higher satisfaction rates and improved passenger experience. This has strengthened our relationship with the airlines and lead to contract retention.

APM is essentially considerate of cultural diversity and respects the private sphere. It does not expose passengers to uncomfortable situations in the public view.



**Good APM=Good Customer Service=Good Security**