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# Postal security – Office of exchange and international airmail security

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## Foreword

Postal services form part of the daily life of people all over the world. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is the specialised agency of the United Nations that regulates the universal postal service. The postal services of its 192 member countries form the largest physical distribution network in the world. More than 5 million postal employees working in over 660 000 post offices all over the world handle an annual total of 434 billion letter-post items in the domestic service and 5,5 billion in the international service. More than 6 billion parcels are sent by post annually. Keeping pace with the changing communications market, postal operators are increasingly using new communication and information technologies to move beyond what is traditionally regarded as their core postal business. They are meeting higher customer expectations with an expanded range of products and value-added services.

Standards are important prerequisites for effective postal operations and for interconnecting the global network. The UPU's Standards Board develops and maintains a growing number of standards to improve the exchange of postal-related information between postal operators and promotes the compatibility of UPU and international postal initiatives. It works closely with postal handling organisations, customers, suppliers and other partners, including various international organisations. The Standards Board ensures that coherent standards are developed in areas such as electronic data interchange (EDI), mail encoding, postal forms and meters.

UPU standards are drafted in accordance with the rules set out in Part IV of the "General information on UPU standards" and are published by the UPU International Bureau in accordance with Part VI of that publication.

The UPU recognizes that the safety and security of the postal sector is critical to support world-wide commerce, communication and safe transportation. To facilitate the development of security standards and recommended practices for adoption by designated postal operators, the UPU established the Postal Security Group (PSG).

The PSG is comprised of security experts from a number of member countries and is charged with the development of global and regional security strategies to assist postal operators in their security missions. Through training initiatives, consulting missions and prevention programmes, the PSG strives to protect the employees and assets of the postal operators along with safeguarding the mails from fraud, theft and misuse.

This is the third version of the document. The change to the previous version, marked by a vertical bar in the margin is the addition of a definition for "alarm resolution". .

## Introduction

One of the objectives of the Postal Security Group (PSG) is to enhance the security of all operations within the postal sector. The PSG in collaboration with other UPU stakeholders has defined a minimum set of security requirements, which can be applied to all facets of the sector. Developing measurable standards of security for the postal sector contributes to protecting postal employees and assets; protecting postal items in general; contributing to the security of the mode of transport used to carry mail items and enabling national and international authorities to apply risk assessment tools.

The physical and procedural security standards developed under the auspices of the PSG are applicable to critical facilities in the postal network. At the time of publishing, they are:

- S58, *Postal security standards – General security measures* defines the minimum physical and process security requirements applicable to critical facilities within the postal network;
- S59, *Postal security standards – Office of exchange and international airmail security* (this document) defines minimum requirements for securing operations relating to the transport of international mail.

*NOTE* In order to implement S59 as a requirement, S58 shall be implemented also. Only Regulated Agents, as defined by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, can conduct screening.



# Postal security standards – Postal security – Office of exchange and international airmail security

## 1 Scope

This document defines the minimum requirements for mail screening standards that shall be implemented at each office of exchange or airmail unit or where mail is tendered to air carriers. It applies a risk based approach in the application of screening and security controls to items within the international postal supply chain.

*NOTE 1 The responsibilities of screening can be accomplished by the DO or designee.*

*NOTE 2 Flow charts depicting the application of this screening standard are at annexes A and B.*

DOs and postal supply chain parties can provide evidence that they comply with National Civil Aviation Security Program (NCASP) or internationally recognised security certification programmes deemed to comply with the requirements of UPU Standards S58 and S59.

## 2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, or references to a version number, only the edition cited applies. For undated references and where there is no reference to a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

UPU Standard S58, Postal security standards – General security measures

International Civil Aviation Organization, Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation: Security – Safeguarding International Civil Aviation against Acts of Unlawful Interference

*NOTE 1 The Convention on International Civil Aviation Annexes 1 to 18 are available at [http://legacy.icao.int/eshop/pub/anx\\_info/annexes\\_booklet\\_en.pdf](http://legacy.icao.int/eshop/pub/anx_info/annexes_booklet_en.pdf)*

International Civil Aviation Organization, Aviation Security Manual (Doc 8973 – Restricted)

*NOTE 2 Requests for copies of Doc 8973 should be submitted directly to ICAO's Document Sales Unit (sales@icao.int). Distribution of Doc 8973 is restricted to authorised entities and individuals, sales are subject to approval by the designated authority for aviation security in each respective Member State of the Organization.*

## 3 Terms and definitions

A number of common terms used in this document are defined in the UPU Standards glossary [1][4] and in documents referred to in normative references and in the bibliography. Definitions of frequently used or particularly important terms, as well as other terms introduced in this document, are given below.

### 3.1

#### **alarm resolution**

resolution of occurrences during conveyance that raise suspicion in the supply chain

### 3.2

#### **consignment**

set of one or more receptacles of a particular mail category, using a common transport on a particular occasion, from a specific place of loading to a specific place of final destination

### 3.3

#### **critical facility**

office of exchange; air mail unit; postal facility where aviation security screening is completed; the final postal facility where mail items transit prior to despatch via air

### 3.4

#### **designated operator**

any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory

### 3.5

#### **designee**

an organization or individual designated to perform or carry out a specific duty/role on behalf of another

### 3.6

#### **explosive detection dog**

team (EDD) consisting of a canine or explosive detection dog and a canine handler that are trained to detect explosives

### 3.7

#### **explosive detection system**

technology system or combination of different technologies which have the ability to detect, and so to indicate by means of an alarm, explosive material contained in baggage or other articles, irrespective of the material from which the bag is made

*NOTE EDS machines are designed to determine the density and mass of objects being screened. Software algorithms compare the densities of the objects being screened with those of known explosives. If a threat is identified, the system issues an alarm to an operator who then examines the image to decide if the item can be cleared for travel or if it requires further scrutiny, e.g. hand search. Integrated EDS systems are installed on conveyors, and the first level of analysis is conducted automatically by the system according to pre-set software parameters.*

### 3.8

#### **explosive trace detection**

technology used to screen mail contents for traces of explosives whereby samples of particles are collected from individual pieces of mail and are then analysed using an ETD machine to detect traces of explosive residue

*EXAMPLE Operators may swab a mail piece and then use ETD technology to test for explosives. The swab is placed inside the ETD unit which analyses the content for the presence of potential explosive residue.*

### 3.9

#### **minimum security requirement**

a technique, method, process or activity which consists of the minimum measures which should be implemented to ensure secure operations within the critical facility

### 3.10

#### **prohibited article**

an explosive or incendiary device, assembled or not, and parts thereof, which could be used to commit an act of illegal interference

### 3.11

#### **screening**

examination of mail by technical or other non-intrusive means that is intended to identify and/or detect explosives

### 3.12

#### **secure supply chain**

model ensuring that mail is secured upstream in the supply chain, transported in a secure environment and delivered as secure to the air carrier



## 4 Symbols and abbreviations

DO	Designated Operator
EDD	Explosive Detection Dog
EDS	Explosive Detection System
ETD	Explosive Trace Detection
ETVD	Explosive Trace and Vapour Detection
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
NCASP	National Civil Aviation Security Program

## 5 Screening standards

### 5.1 Custody of international airmail

The DO shall maintain direct custody (by DO or designee) and control of international mail intended for conveyance by air from the time of acceptance until despatched to the carrier/agent/designee. When a DO arranges to have a contractor or other entity accept international airmail on its behalf, the DO remains responsible for acceptance and handling of the mail. As such, the DO shall have processes in place whereby the contractor or other entity complies with these standards.

### 5.2 Items exempt from screening

When despatching mail consisting of international postal items up to 500 grams, the DO may despatch it without additional screening if the DO has adhered to the security measures outlined in UPU Standard S58.

*NOTE* There may be other applicable international and/or national regulations which may define different thresholds for exemptions. Any exemptions applied should be in agreement with the appropriate national legislation or regulation.

UPU member countries may agree to permit exemptions from screening or the use of alternative security measures because of the special nature of some types of mail. Such exemptions should be clearly defined in UPU member countries' NCASP.

### 5.3 Items to be screened

In consideration of the NCASP when screening mail:

- the means or method most likely to detect prohibited articles (as defined in UPU postal security standards) shall be employed, taking into consideration the nature of the receptacle or item; and
- the means or method employed shall be of a standard sufficient to reasonably ensure that no prohibited articles are concealed in the receptacle or item.

If it cannot be reasonably established that there are no prohibited articles in the receptacles or items, they shall be rejected or rescreened.

DOs shall ensure that all personnel carrying out the screening are properly trained and supervised. Screening equipment shall be maintained, tested and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

*NOTE 1* A screening method may be inefficient and ineffective when it is not suited to the type of consignment being inspected. In some cases, a single screening method may not be sufficient to inspect all types of mail therefore, more than one method should be readily available.

The DO or designee shall screen items by at least one of the following methods in accordance with the requirements of their national civil aviation security programme. As a minimum, the NCASP should reflect the

Standards and Recommended Practices set forth in ICAO Annex 17 and the guidance material in ICAO Aviation Security Manual, Doc 8973.

- EDD;
- EDS;
- ETVD;
- manual search;
- metal detection;
- X-Ray equipment or other wave based systems.

#### 5.4 High risk items

Mail that requires additional security measures beyond baseline procedures, is considered high risk. Mail or mail items can be considered high risk if there are:

- anomalies in its nature that give rise to suspicion such as evidence of tampering;
- due to its nature, baseline security measures alone are unlikely to detect prohibited articles as defined in the UPU postal security standards;
- specific intelligence or threat information about it;
- reasons to suspect that it contains or poses a threat based on risk assessment by an appropriate authority for aviation security, aircraft operators or other actors in the supply chain.

The DO or designee shall screen high-risk items:

- by viewing the item or receptacle from two angles and complying with National legislation,

OR

- utilizing a combination of two or more screening methods below:
  - manual search;
  - X-Ray equipment;
  - EDD;
  - ETD.

#### 5.5 Screening procedures for mail receptacles/bags

When authorised by their respective national authorities, the DO or designee shall utilise technologies below to screen items already contained in receptacles/bags:

- X-Ray screening technology that is the most appropriate for the particular item or receptacle :
  - i the DO shall X-ray one receptacle at a time to search for indications of unauthorised explosives, incendiaries, and other destructive substances or items.
  - ii mail receptacles containing commodities that are too dense to render an accurate X-ray image shall be screened twice in succession, rotating the receptacle 90 degrees horizontally in either direction prior to screening it the second time,
  - iii if the X-ray image is unclear, shielded, or opaque or contains any unidentifiable anomalies, the DO shall clear the X-ray image by removing each mail piece from the receptacle and re-screen the individual pieces.

and/or

- EDD;

and/or

- EDS.

## 5.6 Alarm resolution of suspicious items

If the DO or screening designee identifies an item which cannot be cleared (alarm) during the initial screening, the item shall not be handed over to a carrier until the item is determined to be "Safe to Fly".

The item should be handled as a high risk item in accordance with 5.4.

## 5.7 Notification procedures

Cognisant of NCASP requirements, if the DO or screening designee cannot clear an item after following the procedures outlined above the item shall not be handed over, loaded or transported to any carrier/aircraft. The item shall be isolated in a secure location, controlled, and physically guarded to prevent unauthorised access to it. The DO or screening designee shall:

- immediately contact the Ground Security Coordinator (GSC), host government authorities, Police, Fire Department, and/or Bomb Squad, according to local requirements;
- inform entities identified of any additional international mail on the premises that was tendered or transferred with the suspect mail item.

## 6 Measures for mail accepted/inducted for commercial aircraft conveyance

The DO shall tender items to carriers, ground handling agents or other contractors for transport on aircraft in identifiable bags (receptacles) or containers affixed with the appropriate UPU forms and/or receptacle labels.

All receptacles/consignments shall be accompanied by the appropriate UPU documentation or its electronic equivalent as applicable:

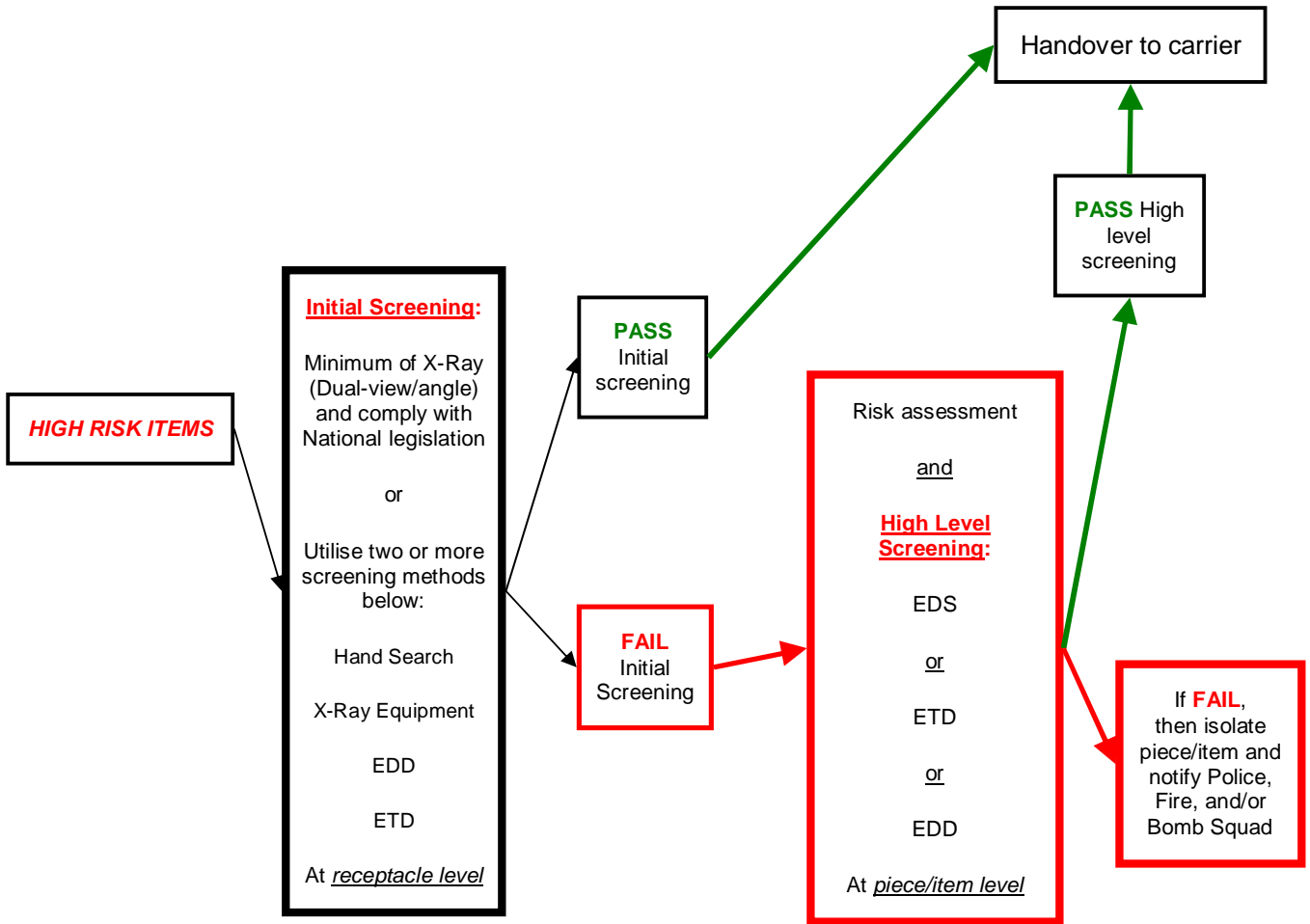
- mails handed over at the airport shall be accompanied by copies of the CN 38 delivery bill or CN 41, in the case of surface (S.A.L.) mails;
- CN 35 label in the case of airmail bags;
- CN 36 label in the case of surface air lifted (S.A.L.) bags;
- CP 84 label in the case of air parcel mail;
- CP 85 label in the case of surface air lifted (S.A.L.) parcel mail.

After screening or the application of other security controls, mail shall be accounted for and protected from unauthorised interference prior to loading on an aircraft or secure exchange with the carrier, ground handling agent or other contractor.

In accordance with their NCASP a DO who has applied screening and security controls may be required to provide a consignment security declaration to the aircraft operator. The NCASP may also require additional record keeping for the purposes of an audit trail that the DO may need to address.

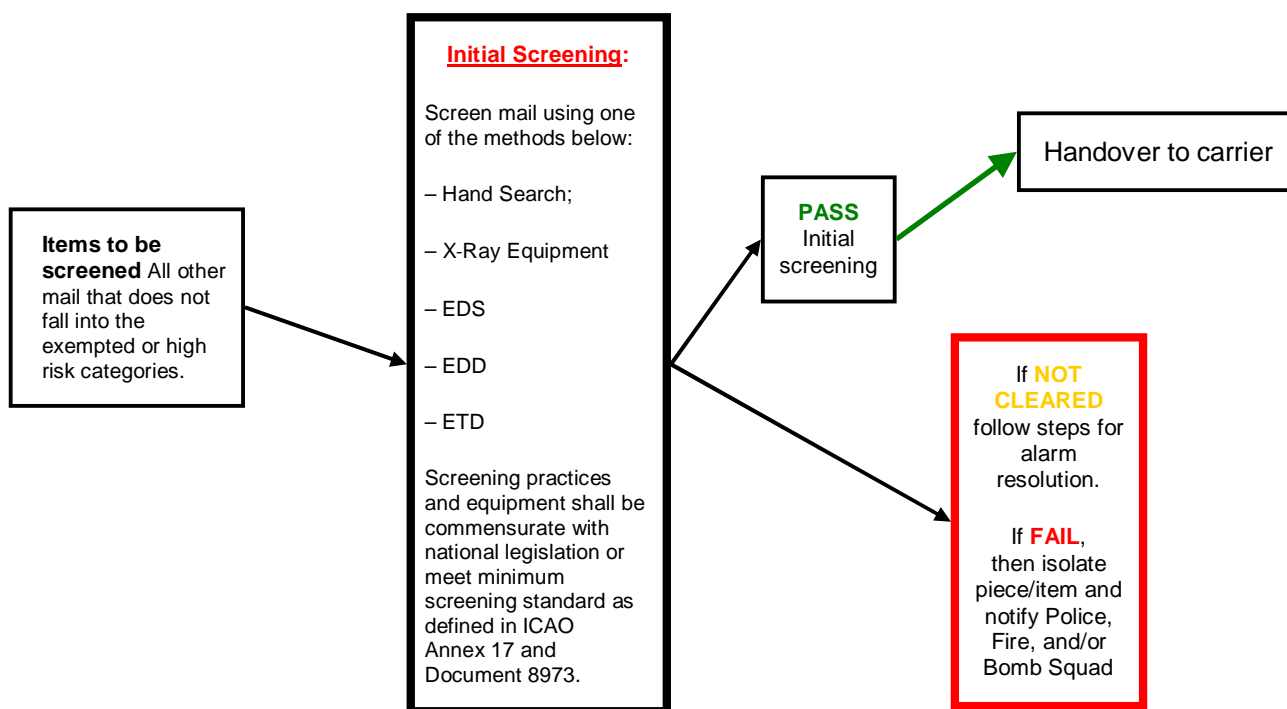
### Annex A (informative)

## Screening for high risk international outbound mail intended for air conveyance



## Annex B (informative)

### Screening for international outbound mail intended for air conveyance



## Bibliography

This bibliography provides full reference and sourcing information for all standards and other reference sources which are quoted in the above text. For references which mention specific version numbers or dates, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications might not be relevant. However, users of this document are encouraged to investigate the existence and applicability of more recent editions. For references without date or version number, the latest edition of the document referred to applies. It is stressed that only referenced documents are listed here.

[1] UPU Standards glossary (accessible at <http://www.upu.int>)

[2] Annex 18 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation – The Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air.

*NOTE* The Convention on International Civil Aviation Annexes 1 to 18 are available at [http://legacy.icao.int/eshop/pub/anx\\_info/annexes\\_booklet\\_en.pdf](http://legacy.icao.int/eshop/pub/anx_info/annexes_booklet_en.pdf)