

PRESS RELEASE

Issue 2017: 9

Tuesday, 23 May 2017
For Immediate Release
Aviation Passenger Security

AAPA CAUTIONS AGAINST OVER-REACTION ON INFLIGHT ELECTRONICS

*Wider consultation needed involving governments and industry
on effective alternative approaches*

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Air travel has established itself as an integral part of modern life. Every day 100,000 flights take off and land, carrying 10 million passengers to their destinations safely and securely. This remarkable achievement is a direct result of good teamwork and the commitment of aviation safety professionals around the world.

Air passengers today travel with multiple personal electronic devices (PEDs), such as a laptop, tablet, and mobile phone, and have high expectations of being able to do work, watch films, and stay connected to the internet and social media, even while on board aircraft. Airlines are responding to this demand by investing heavily in inflight connectivity in newer passenger aircraft.

Air passengers are already subject to onerous and inconsistent security screening measures prior to boarding a flight, with wide variations in screening procedures at different airports. Many are calling for the streamlining of passenger processing in airports.

Recent bans on the carriage of laptops and large PEDs implemented by the US and UK on inbound flights from specific foreign airports raise many unanswered questions and have had led to significant changes in airline operations and disruption to the travelling public. Implemented at short notice without prior consultation with the airline industry, this has led to scenes of confusion at affected airports, as airlines scramble to comply with the new directives whilst at the same time, addressing unhappy passengers who can no longer have the use of their devices in the aircraft cabin. In addition, safety issues relating to large numbers of lithium battery powered PEDs being stowed in an aircraft cargo bay, contrary to recognized best safety practices, remain unresolved.

The travelling public understand that no society can credibly claim to provide perfect security. In the face of terrorist threats, it takes real political maturity to remain calm, and not fall into the trap of knee-jerk reactions, such as the imposition of new security measures with unproven effectiveness. Additional security measures should only be

continued /-

justified when it can be demonstrated that the benefits outweigh the additional burdens they impose on society.

Commenting on the new measures, Mr. Andrew Herdman, Director General of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) said, "AAPA understands the need to maintain the highest levels of security in air transportation, and airlines are committed to working closely with government security agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that air travel remains safe, secure and convenient. Despite recent events, public confidence in the safety and security of air travel remains high. It would be a tragedy if that confidence were to be undermined by ill-judged reactionary measures being misguidedly imposed by those entrusted with maintaining public safety."

Mr. Herdman added, "The ripple effects of such measures, and their proposed wider expansion, threaten to disrupt the global economy and impose far greater costs on society with no tangible public security benefits. This would only serve to further the aims of the terrorists, who measure their success by how much society over-reacts to their provocations. Rather than focus on generalized screening of innocent passengers, past experience with evolving threats and terrorist plots repeatedly highlight the critical importance of effective intelligence gathering and analysis."

Mr. Herdman concluded, "Good security is all about comprehensive threat assessment and balanced risk management, not the elimination of every conceivable risk. Aviation security is a collective global responsibility and requires effective consultation to ensure that security measures are practical, cost effective and sustainable whilst minimising the impact on the wider travelling public. We urge governments, in conjunction with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), to work together more closely with industry, and strengthen multilateral cooperation in further developing aviation security measures."

ENDS

Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA)

The AAPA is the trade association for scheduled international airlines based in the Asia-Pacific region. The AAPA permanent secretariat is headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with international representation in Brussels and Washington, D.C. Collectively, the region's airlines carry 1,214 million passengers and 20 million tonnes of cargo, representing one-third of global passenger traffic and two-fifths of global air cargo traffic respectively, and thus play a critically important role in the ongoing development of global aviation.

For further information, please contact:
Office of the Director General
Tel +603 2162 1888 Fax +603 2162 6888
Email: odg@aapa.org.my
Website: www.aapairlines.org
Twitter: @aapairlines