Privacy

All scanners currently deployed at UK airports use Automatic Threat Recognition software (ATR). This ensures that passengers' privacy is respected.

No image of the passenger's body is created or stored.

ATR replaces the need for a human reviewer, and means that the data from the scan is not used to create an image.

Instead, the ATR software uses the scan data to identify areas which should be checked with a targeted hand-search.

This information is highlighted on a generic, anonymous figure.

All processing is done electronically, with no intervention by a human screener

Safeguards are in place to make it impossible to save, copy, or transfer data.

Further information

For further details on the deployment of security scanners in the UK, and the safeguards in place, including the Code of Practice for the use of security scanners, please see this website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-on-the-implementation-of-security-scanners

Department for Transport

Security Scanners – A Guide for Airport Security Officers and Passengers

Background

Security scanners are deployed at several UK airports to help mitigate the threat from non-metallic improvised explosive devices. This reflects the Government's current assessment of the risk to aviation in the UK.

Not all passengers at UK airports will pass through a security scanner, but those who are selected will be required to do so, or to undergo an alternative screening method (if the passenger opts out from being screened by the scanner).

This alternative will involve at least a private search. The 'private search' is a more extensive hand-search than the 'pat-down' search, conducted in a private room, which may involve the loosening and/or removal of clothing.

This alternative screening method will take significantly more time than passing through a security scanner and, as well as a hand search in private, potentially involves additional security processes (depending on procedures at the individual airport). Passengers may also be escorted to a different location in the airport from the main search area (e.g. a private search room).

This alternative offers comparable security assurance to being screened by a security scanner.

Health

All security scanners currently deployed at UK airports use millimetre wave technology.

The use of millimetre wave security scanners in airports is permitted under EU law (Regulation 1141/2011, amending Regulation 272/2009).

Millimetre wave security scanners use a very low power non-ionising form of electromagnetic radiation. The amount of electromagnetic radiation emitted by millimetre wave security scanners is many times lower than that emitted by a mobile phone.[1]

Limits on exposure to electromagnetic radiation have been set by the European Commission to provide a high level of protection against any potential effects on the public. Millimetre wave scanners emit far less radiation than these limits. Safety studies have concluded that, at these levels and these frequencies, there are no known health effects.

Implanted electronic medical devices such as pacemakers, implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) and neurostimulators

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the government agency which is responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work, and are acceptably safe.

The MHRA have stated that they *"are not aware of any evidence of interference problems between airport security body scanners and implanted electronic medical devices".[2]*

The MHRA advises that:

"If you have an implanted pacemaker, ICD or neurostimulator you can use airport security body scanners."

''For further information relating to your own specific implanted device please contact your local cardiac centre, doctor or the manufacturer of your device".

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[1] USA Homeland security. Privacy Impact Assessment for TSA Whole Body Imaging. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/privacy/privacy_pia_tsa_wbi.pdf

[2] Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) website:

http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Generalsafetyinformationandadvice/Technicalinformation/Electromagneticinterference/index.htm#airport