



## CURRENT CARRY-ON BAG POLICY DEGRADES AVIATION SECURITY

Since 9/11, new procedures laid out in the Common Strategy security guidance provided to airlines are critical components of an effective basic crewmember counterterrorism training program. According to this guidance, flight attendants are to carefully observe passengers during the boarding process to watch for anything suspicious. Prior to takeoff, flight attendants can ask the captain to subject a suspicious passenger to additional security scrutiny. If warranted, the passenger can be removed from the plane before takeoff or monitored more carefully in flight.

The ability of flight attendants to provide this critical final layer of pre-flight security is being severely hampered by the distraction created by carry-on baggage chaos. Flight attendants are consumed with trying to wedge excessive numbers of oversized carry-on bags into overhead bins and trying to get passengers to take excess bags back to the jetway to be stowed as checked baggage.

To improve security during the boarding process, TSA and the FAA need to issue regulations setting a carry-on limit of one bag and one smaller personal item per passenger. This would create a uniform, enforceable rule and enhance security screening actions. **The rule should limit passengers to one carry-on item with a loaded size limit of 22 by 9 by 14 inches (45 linear inches) plus one smaller personal item**

AFA-CWA has filed two petitions for rulemaking requesting that FAA enhance its carry-on baggage rule. A stronger rule would help to curb baggage-related distractions and disruptions in the cabin, delays in boarding and deplaning, physical and verbal abuse of flight attendants and passengers, and injuries and impediments to speedy evacuations. The FAA has resisted requests to set specific limits on the size and number of carry-on bags, instead providing guidance to carriers on how to establish their own programs. According to the FAA, this gives the carriers flexibility to create programs that fit their individual operations. However experience -- especially over the last year-- shows that this policy degrades security and safety.

Under the proposed rule, passengers should not be allowed to bring extra or oversized carry-on bags through airport passenger security screening checkpoints. To ensure compliance, TSA could install templates with an opening to allow screening of carry-on bags that meet the proposed standard size limit.

Reducing distractions caused by carry-on bags would allow flight attendants to devote more attention to the more important task of watching for suspicious behavior during the boarding process. A new federal policy with positive and strict enforcement of standard carry-on bag limits will greatly improve aviation security.