

US airport screenings fail to detect mock weapons in 95% of tests

 [theguardian.com /us-news/2015/jun/02/us-airport-security-raised-after-fake-weapons-missed-by-screenings](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/02/us-airport-security-raised-after-fake-weapons-missed-by-screenings)

Reuters

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The US homeland security secretary, Jeh Johnson, has ordered improved security at airports and reassigned the top Transportation Security Administration official to another role after reports that screenings failed to detect mock explosives and weapons in 95% of tests carried out by undercover agents.

Airport screeners, who are employed by the Transportation Security Administration, did not detect banned weapons in 67 of 70 tests at dozens of airports, ABC News reported, citing officials briefed on a report by homeland security's inspector general.

Johnson, whose department oversees the TSA, was briefed last week on the trials, which were completed recently.

In one test it was reported that an undercover agent was stopped when he set off an alarm at a checkpoint but that TSA screeners then failed to find a fake explosive device taped to his back when they patted him down.

Johnson said the results of the security checks were classified but he had directed the TSA to revise screening procedures "to address specific vulnerabilities identified" in the undercover operation. He also ordered that all TSA officers and supervisors across the country be trained and that airports' screening equipment be tested.

Johnson said there would be more random covert tests.

"The numbers in these reports never look good out of context but they are a critical element in the continual evolution of our aviation security," he said.

"We take these findings very seriously in our continued effort to test, measure and enhance our capabilities and techniques as threats evolve."

Johnson said in a statement that Melvin Carraway, acting administrator of the TSA, was being reassigned to another section of homeland security. The TSA acting deputy director, Mark Hatfield, would lead the agency until a replacement was appointed.

Johnson noted that President Barack Obama had nominated coast guard Vice Admiral Pete Neffenger to be the next TSA administrator and urged the US Senate to confirm his nomination as quickly as possible.