# Public Venue Security Screening Guide

## Commercial Facilities Sector

**JUNE 2021**

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

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# 1 Executive Summary

The Commercial Facilities Sector is diverse in both scope and function; the sector includes assets where large numbers of people congregate. These mass gathering places include stadiums, arenas, cultural properties, commercial office buildings, outdoor venues and events, and more. **Such sites remain attractive targets for terrorist attacks or exploitation; therefore, many of these venues employ security screenings to enhance the safety and security of their guests, visitors, and employees**.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) works closely with public and private sector partners to mitigate risk and protect our infrastructure. This mission includes working to secure public venues in partnership with the private sector owners and operators of these facilities, who are represented by the Commercial Facilities Sector Coordinating Council.

The *Public Venue Security Screening Guide* provides options for consideration when developing and implementing security screening procedures for major sporting events, concerts, fairs and expos, and similar large gatherings. This document updates and expands on the *Patron Screening Guide* published in 2015, including guidance on procedures, overviews of current technology and techniques, and best practices for venues' security screening programs.

The purpose for establishing security screening procedures is to define the nature of prohibited, illegal, and suspicious items, and to determine the screening procedures that may be used to control their entry into commercial venues. Screening procedures should:

▪ Outline how to conduct a proper security screening.

▪ Describe how to interact with individuals being screened.

▪ Define the criteria used to identify prohibited, illegal, and suspicious items during the screening.

▪ Describe the procedures to handle and discard items discovered and identified during the screening.

The security screening procedures in this Guide are options for consideration and are neither definitive nor required by any regulation or legislation. Due to the wide variety of types, sizes, and locations of public assembly venues and the events held in these sites, not all suggested procedures will be relevant or applicable. Venue owners, operators, and event organizers may choose to implement any or all the options in this Guide and should supplement them with additional resources, when available. CISA will not take any action against an entity or company that chooses not to implement these options for consideration.

Additional guidance related to the security of the Commercial Facilities Sector, as well as other helpful information, is available at cisa.gov/cisa/commercial-facilities-resources.

# 2 Security Screening

## 2.1 What is a security screening?

A security screening is a process by which any person entering a venue is assessed to determine if they are carrying any illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items that may pose a threat to the venue building, venue staff, and other visitors and guests.

## 2.2 What are the components of a secure security screening program?

A secure security screening program should include policies and processes that ensure all individuals entering a venue at any time are appropriately assessed by trained screening professionals.

Security screening programs can include the use of walk-through metal detectors (WTMDs), hand-held metal detectors (HHMDs), x-ray machines, and other emerging technologies.

Recommendations for security screening processes are in Section 3 of this Guide.

## 2.3 Who is screened?

Any person who enters the facility to conduct business, attend an event, or participate in any other activity that requires entrance into the venue should undergo a security screening. This includes both full- and part-time venue employees, full-time and temporary contractors, teams or performers, media, and all ticket holders.

> **A security screen is always required for all individuals entering the venue at any time, even if the individual has an active credential.** Credentials are an important part of the security process and should be used in tandem with screening procedures to ensure the safety of all individuals at a venue.
>
> For further guidance on credentials, please review the *Public Venue Credentialing Guide.*

## 2.4 Who conducts security screenings?

Trained security screeners should perform all venue security screenings. These personnel are trained to conduct screening of visitors and items to ensure a high level of safety. They employ a diverse array of techniques and basic security equipment, such as metal detectors, to identify potential persons and items that may pose a threat to the security and welfare of visitors, management, and other venue staff.

# 3 Security Screening Process

**Any individual who enters the venue is subject to a security screen for illegal, prohibited, and suspicious items.**

Venue management should require screening for everyone entering the facility during event preparations and the event, including part-time and full-time employees, contractors, vendors, teams/performers, concessionaires, suppliers, media and official visitors, general ticket holders, and any other individual with a verifiable reason to enter the venue. To ensure identification of and appropriate response to items not permitted in the venue, trained screening staff and supervisors should perform visitor screening in a safe and respectful manner.

> Venue management may choose to employ a diverse array of technologies and screening equipment suited to their specific needs and environments.

The level of search detail will depend on the threat to the venue as determined by the venue's security manager or appropriate venue representative.

Venue employees, security contractors, and event staff should be aware of security screening procedures and have knowledge of what is and is not allowed in the venue at any given time. A method to report any security concerns seen elsewhere in the venue by other employees should be part of this training.

> Venue management should ideally compile, inventory, and post lists of all types of illegal, prohibited, and suspicious items to provide consistency for employees and visitors. Websites, apps, toll plazas, parking lots, gates, shuttle pick-up locations, mass transit pick-up locations, and other forums can help communicate relevant information to visitors.

## 3.1 Non-Event Day Security Screening

On non-event days, access to the venue should be restricted to designated entrances based on job function, such as venue personnel, contractors, media, or event staff. Security and access-control personnel assigned to entrances should ensure that security screening equipment is available and in use at these access points and that thorough security screenings are taking place.

Events often take days, weeks, or months of preparation to implement successfully. Security personnel are responsible for maintaining a secure environment for daily operations. This includes identifying of all individuals who enter and exit the facility during non-event days.

Additional responsibilities during non-event days may include:

- Ensuring that screening technologies are functioning according to manufacturer standards
- Identifying and sharing any potential weaknesses in existing security practices
- Conducting training sessions with screening staff, including dry runs of security screenings
- Updating security screening procedures and training protocols

## 3.2 Event Day Security Screening

Informing visitors as early as possible that security screening procedures are in place to identify and regulate entry of illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items is an important part of an overall security plan. This communication will aid in the screening process and allow visitors to schedule their arrival appropriately.

> ➡ If possible, consider adding language regarding security screenings to tickets or other entry pass types for all patrons. This message could also appear on all credentials.

**Security screening is voluntary; however, refusal to allow screening will result in denial of entry.**

Venue management should make visitors aware, ideally prior to arrival at the venue, that they will be screened before entering the venue. This language should be clearly stated and made available at multiple pre-entry points. By improving a visitor's understanding of security requirements prior to arrival, venue management can reduce the length of time visitors spend at checkpoints.

Consider using these communication methods as part of an entry screening awareness campaign to educate visitors:

### Websites
Posting screening requirements on public websites, including websites for the venue and tenant(s) as well as ticket purchasing websites, will help ensure visitors are aware of screening procedures before they arrive at a facility.

### Apps
With increased use of smart phones and downloadable apps, visitors may choose to receive important information automatically. Additionally, venue management may desire creating a venue-specific app that details its own security requirements.

### Signage
Signs that explain which items are illegal, prohibited, and suspicious will reduce visitor confusion and expedite entry into the venue. Signs can also communicate that the screening process is in effect to prepare visitors for screening.

### Video Boards
These may be in parking lots and at venue entrances, which can ensure that large groups of visitors receive important security information.

### Tickets
Messaging on tickets can state, "All visitors are subject to search or screening."

### Periodic Announcements
Announcements made over public address systems at the gates or by greeters can inform visitors of basic security procedures and which items are illegal, prohibited, or suspicious.

### Social Media
Use social media pages, such as those for the venue and performers or sports teams, to raise awareness about entry screening.

### Email and Message Reminders
If a visitor allows either an email or phone number to be registered at the time of ticket purchase, they may receive updates on screening requirements, date and time of the event, and any other relevant information.

Security screening personnel should consider implementing the following guidelines:

- Screeners should always greet the individual, make eye contact, and remain courteous.

- Screeners should ask the individual whether it is okay to be searched. If the individual refuses, they should be informed of the screening policy. If the individual still refuses, they should be directed away from the venue via a separate exit line.

- Screeners must be extremely cautious when placing their hands near sensitive areas on the individual. Screeners should use the back of their hand when searching these areas.

- Venue management should prohibit photography of the screening process.

### 3.2.1 Special Circumstances

**Refusal to Search**

If an individual refuses to comply with established screening procedures, the screener should contact a security supervisor. The supervisor can communicate that screening is required for entry. This process should be conducted in a courteous, professional, and non-confrontational manner. While waiting for the supervisor to arrive, the screener should politely ask the visitor to stand aside from the screening line to allow others to pass. A separate exit lane should be available for individuals who do not wish to participate in a security screening. **Visitors who refuse screening must be denied entry.**

**Threats or Confrontations**

**Individuals making threatening statements (e.g., "I have a bomb,") should be taken seriously.** The screener should be certain of what was said by asking the individual to repeat the statement, if necessary. The individual should also be informed that their statements are being taken seriously. The screener should immediately notify security, supervisors, and law enforcement of such statements, as vocalized threats may be a crime in certain jurisdictions. Further information on threats is in Section 8.

**No Distance Between Screening and Ticket Gates**

Screening that occurs in a separate area from the ticket scanning area is most effective as resources or venue footprint allow. However, many venues conduct screening at entrance gates because they lack a sufficient footprint for separate operations, especially in urban environments. Venues should create guidelines to accommodate these circumstances.

**Special Needs Individuals**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination based on disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Screening procedures should be in place to address special needs visitors in accordance with ADA requirements. Inspection of individuals in wheelchairs or bags belonging to the visually impaired may require special treatment, such as describing the actual screening process as it occurs to a visually impaired visitor. Preprinted cards outlining the screening procedures should be available for the hearing impaired.

For further information, see the U.S. Department of Justice's webpage on disability rights laws: ada.gov/cguide.htm.

**Service Animals**
According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are defined as animals that are individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. In addition to the owner, service animals are required to be screened. Supervisors should determine locally what method is best for conducting the search. The screener should ask permission to search the service animal and the visitor. **It is illegal to ask a visitor, "What is your disability?"**

For further information, see the U.S. Department of Justice's webpage on service animals: ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

**Opposite Gender Screening**
A checkpoint should have enough screeners to conduct same-gender physical searches. If the local statutes or regulations allow opposite gender screening, consider the following:

- Opposite-gender screeners may only operate due to a shortage of screeners of the specific gender.

- The venue representative must inform the individual that no screener of the gender that the individual prefers is present.

- The venue representative must advise that a screener of the opposite gender will conduct the screening, which may include physical contact.

- The individual must consent to screening by a screener of the opposite gender. If the individual does not consent, venue staff should direct the individual to go to an area where there is a screener of the same gender.

**Headwear and Head Coverings**
The individual should remove headwear, if possible. If the individual does not remove the headwear for inspection, the screener may ask permission to feel the headwear to identify possible illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items. In some instances, individuals may be allowed to press the headwear themselves and the screener will observe for possible threats. **At no point should an individual be forced to remove any religious headwear or head covering.**

**Face Covering**
If an individual is wearing a face covering, explain the need to briefly remove or lower the covering for security and identification purposes.

**Sensitive Body Areas and Medical Devices**
Some hand-held metal detectors' (HHMD) or walk-through metal detectors' (WTMD) alarms may direct screeners' attention to sensitive body areas due to medical devices or other reasons. It is a best practice to use the back of the hand when conducting a pat-down of sensitive areas.

**Medical Screenings**
Venue management should consult current local, state, and Federal guidance and regulations during public health emergencies (e.g., COVID-19) and other national disruptions for additional guidance on screening procedures.

**Infants**
Screeners should always ask parents for permission to conduct a search of an infant by using a hand-held metal detector. Perform a physical search (with permission of the parent or guardian) when necessary to resolve an alarm.

## 3.3 Random Screening

Venue management may direct or establish procedures for random checks of selected individuals entering or leaving a facility under their purview, but screeners must not be involved in determining which individuals to screen (thereby eliminating the possibility of profiling).

> **Screening procedures should be uniform for all individuals.** Race, gender, and other demographic characteristics should not be a factor in how screenings are conducted, nor should they be a factor in conducting a random screening.

The site security manager determines the selection of visitors on a random basis. Venues may use an impersonal, computer-generated product formula (e.g., every other individual or every 10th individual) The number and frequency of the individuals checked should not affect the random nature of their selection. Accordingly, a check will be random even if it includes every person that enters or leaves the facility during a selected period.

> **Do not use random checks as a ploy to check a particular individual.** Such action could be illegal and may subject the involved screener to penalties. It is recommended that venue management use a computer-generated product to randomly select times and places for facility screening.

If illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items are discovered during a screening, immediately stop the screen, and notify a supervisor.

## 3.4 Special Considerations for Venue Staff

Venue staff may need to have separate policies or accommodations from general visitors:

- Some items that personnel are permitted to bring into a venue during non-event days may not be permitted during an event (e.g., knives, mace, alcohol). A list of these items should be posted at personnel entrances.

- Personnel should have a secure storage space to leave items (e.g., umbrellas, bags, backpacks) that are not permitted in the venue.

- All entrances that non-event or administrative office personnel routinely use to enter and exit the venue should have screening equipment.

> Venue management may also want to screen personnel as they exit the venue to prevent theft or to control event-related items.

### 3.4.1 Law Enforcement

If venue management allows armed, off-duty law enforcement officers into the venue, the following are recommended guidelines:

- Have each officer check into a central location for accountability.

- Identify each officer's seat location for security purposes.

- Give the officers an identifiable credential to wear so on-duty officers are aware of their status as an armed law enforcement officer.

> Additional information about best security practices for armed, off-duty law enforcement officers, including credentialling, can be found in the Public Venue Credentialing Guide.

# 4 Training

All venue personnel, regardless of position or job title, should be aware of general screening guidelines and procedures. They should also be familiar with all guidelines regarding their roles in responding to emergency situations (e.g., bomb threats). However, not all staff are required to undergo more formalized training to screen visitors (e.g., concessions and merchandise staff).

For screeners, venue management should routinely train individuals who conduct visitor screening in the procedures, equipment, item identification, and appropriate response when discovering items that fall into the three item categories (e.g., illegal, prohibited, and suspicious). As part of training exercises, restricted items may be intentionally placed in bags to assess visitor screening effectiveness (depending on the event and number of ticket holders entering the venue). Training should also cover how staff should respond to adverse reactions from a visitor with a denied item.

> Security screeners should consult the Public Venue Bag Search Procedures Guide for additional procedures and guidelines.

Training should be scheduled and implemented to ensure that all staff are equally knowledgeable of their respective roles and responsibilities, and all forms of training should provide a forum in which to answer questions and clarify any points of confusion.

## 4.1 Crowd Interaction

In some instances, the wait time to enter a venue can be significant because of the number of people entering and the amount of time it takes to perform a proper screening. Event staff and law enforcement working outside the screening area should be trained to interact with visitors to create a positive "wait" experience (e.g., by initiating upbeat conversations with visitors about the event or the sports teams participating). This interaction also affords law enforcement an opportunity to indirectly question people who may appear suspicious.

Venue management should also train visitor screeners, who are usually positioned on the perimeter of the site, in suspicious behavior detection. The training should also address potential coordinated attempts by visitors to avoid venue security, as well as procedures to coordinate illegal, prohibited, or suspicious item identification among screening stations and the venue's command post.

## 4.2 Visitor Communication

Venue management should consider developing communications that pre-emptively answer visitors' frequently asked questions. These materials should have consistent messaging to support the screening process.

Each screener should rehearse these responses as part of their training program. Rehearsals will prepare the screener to address visitors' concerns with confidence and courtesy and will also help to diffuse any negative interactions with visitors. It is not unusual for some visitors to become impatient while waiting to enter a venue. Those responsible for conducting security screening should receive training on how to maintain control at screening locations while also effectively performing their screening responsibilities.

## 4.3 Screening Equipment Training

Security screeners should be trained on all screening equipment used in the venue. This training should be repeated as equipment is upgraded or changed.

## 4.4 Training Frequency

Venue staff should review security screening procedures, including testing of all screening equipment, prior to every event. Supervisors should correct any deficiencies in the process prior to employees, visitors, media, or others entering the venue. Security screening procedures may change for different events at the same venue; therefore, it is important to practice the appropriate security screening procedures prior to each event.

> Venue management should consider meeting with the security screening staff after each event to review opportunities for improvement in the screening process and identify any deficient screening equipment.

# **5** Screening Equipment

Regardless of the location of a security checkpoint and screening area, particular items are needed for staff to safely conduct a proper search.

> Venue management should consider opportunities to learn about emerging technologies that may improve the security screening process. For further information, please review Section 5.4 in this Guide.

The following list of items should be available to screening staff at all locations:

Disposable nitrile or latex gloves in appropriate sizes

Flashlights, regardless of time of day

Containers to confine and sort items if they must be removed from a package or bag

Templates to illustrate permissible bag size

Communications equipment, such as cell phones and radios, with instructions on when to use or not use them, depending on the items discovered during screening

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), if necessary (e.g., disposable masks and goggles)

## 5.1 **Walk-Through Metal Detectors (WTMDs)**

Walk-through metal detectors (WTMDs) are another option for security screening. They allow facilities to screen individuals quickly and effectively, while maintaining a high throughput rate. WTMDs fall into two categories: **single zone detection** and **multi-zone detection**.

**Single zone WTMDs** will identify an anomaly; however, they do not narrow down the location of the alarm annunciation on the visitor.

**Multi-zone WTMDs** have multiple transmit and receive indicators, quickly allowing the screener to assess from where the alarm annunciation is generating a signal (e.g., left side vs. right side, head vs. feet, etc.). Consistent with general search techniques, screeners should ask if the visitor has anything metal in that general location.

### 5.1.1 Primary Screening Procedures

Venue management should standardize operational procedures for each WTMD location. For instance, each venue should establish how many attempts individuals are permitted to pass through the WTMD prior to being sent for secondary screening.

Screening staff should follow the procedures listed below:

1. Stand in a location where they can see and hear the WTMD alarm.

2. Stand approximately two feet from the WTMD, allowing individuals to get through the WTMD, but maintaining control of the flow of individuals.

3. Look directly at the individual and ask, "Have you removed all metal items (cell phones, keys, coins, anything in a foil wrapper, etc.) from your person?"

4. Maintain control of the line and indicate when the individual is to proceed through the WTMD.

5. Do not allow individuals to run, jump, shuffle their feet, or "piggyback" (following closely to another individual to avoid screening) through the WTMD. Do not allow other individuals to move ahead of each other in case multiple alarms are received on several individuals. If they do, direct them to step back and walk through again alone, using their normal stride.

6. Rescreen any areas on an individual that have set off the alarm. If there is another alarm, consider the use of a secondary screening location with a hand-held metal detector (HHMD). This practice will assist in reducing entry delays for other individuals.

7. Allow individuals to gather their personal belongings and move to the ticket scanning location if no alarm sounds.

8. Ensure individuals enter the WTMD at the same time as their personal belongings to avoid theft of items.

9. Stop the flow of passage through the WTMD if a lingering crowd develops.

10. Observe individuals closely. If screeners see any unusual bulges, draping of fabric, or extremely baggy or loose clothing, they should send the person to secondary screening.

### 5.1.2 Secondary Screening Procedures

Secondary screening procedures are implemented to accommodate special circumstances. This form of screening may require enhanced procedures (e.g., pat-downs), and screeners should always explain the nature and purpose of this form of screening. **Screeners should always request permission to conduct a pat-down screening.** This form of screening should be in place for individuals who:

- Set off WTMD alarms and cannot find anything further to divest.

- Have a medical situation (e.g., pregnancy) or implant (e.g., pacemaker, defibrillator, bone stimulator) that causes them to choose not to go through the WTMD.

- Are in a wheelchair and cannot walk unassisted.

- Have a prosthetic limb whose removal would be inappropriate.

- Are pushing baby strollers.

- Do not speak any of the languages spoken at the checkpoint.

- Cannot fit through the WTMD.

- State they do not want to go through the WTMD for any reason.

### 5.1.3 Item Removal Procedures

Removing items that would cause the WTMD alarm to sound will aid in speeding the flow of individuals through the security checkpoint. To ensure an efficient flow of visitors, venues should consider the following:

- Post signs that identify a metal detector is in use, and that visitors should be prepared to remove items such as watches, belts, phones, change, or other objects that cause false alarms.

- Consider posting relevant information in multiple languages, as necessary.

- Provide a table with containers next to the WTMD for visitors to place metal objects.

- Ensure that individuals can maintain visible contact with their personal belongings during screening, and that items placed in the container are visually inspected for illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items.

### 5.1.4 Locations of WTMD

Venue management should ensure that locations selected for WTMD placement are well lit, under cover from the elements, and have sufficient power to operate the number of WTMDs needed for that location.

- Place WTMD locations in an area where individuals will encounter them before arriving at the venue entrance locations, when possible. This practice will ensure that only security-cleared individuals are approaching the venue entrance.

- Ensure that the machine is balanced and sufficiently distant from metal gates to maintain the integrity of screening results.

### 5.1.5 Ensure Proper Working Order of WTMDs

Ensuring that WTMDs are in proper working order is a critical component of a venue security plan. The following actions allow security administrators to verify that the equipment has been properly installed, used, and maintained.

- Use the manufacturer's instruction manual procedures to test the WTMD to ensure it is operating within specifications.

- Test the WTMD on an interval consistent with manufacturer's guidance to ensure operability and determine if routine or other maintenance is required.

- Determine other times the WTMD requires testing onsite (e.g., after restoration of power loss, before an event, after sensitivity adjustment, etc.) and incorporate those instances into the testing plan.

- Ensure the sensitivity levels of the WTMD are set to address localized risk-based and intelligence-driven concerns.

- Record testing and maintenance in a log that describes the results of the testing (pass/fail), parts ordered, maintenance performed, etc. Create a unique log for each piece of equipment and maintain the log locally for the lifecycle of the WTMD.

## 5.2 Hand-Held Metal Detectors (HHMD)

A hand-held metal detector (HHMD) is a general screening device that can be used as either the primary or secondary screening tool. If used as the primary tool, one of the most effective methods is to conduct a pat-down as the secondary search. Typically, HHMDs are an alternative screening device if a visitor has set off a WTMD alarm and the operator has not been able to resolve the source of the alarm.

> ➡ Due to the physical requirements of using HHMD, as well as their routine use, screeners may need additional rest breaks.

### 5.2.1 Primary Screening Procedures

Operational and storage procedures should be standardized for each different type of HHMD in use. Checkpoints should have a basic instruction manual for each HHMD available for operators to review before gate opening if they are unfamiliar with a device. Once the individual being screened has removed any items that may interfere with the screening process, operators should complete the following steps:

**INITIAL STEPS**
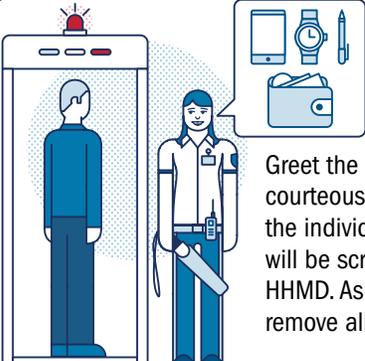
**1** Greet the individual courteously and advise the individual that they will be screened with the HHMD. Ask the individual to remove all metal items.
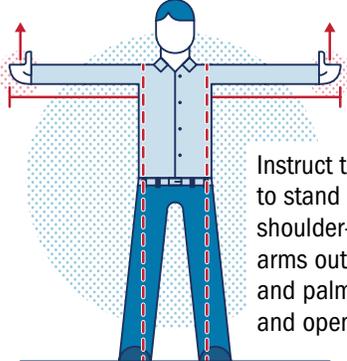
**2** Instruct the individual to stand with their feet shoulder-width apart, arms outstretched, and palms facing up and open.
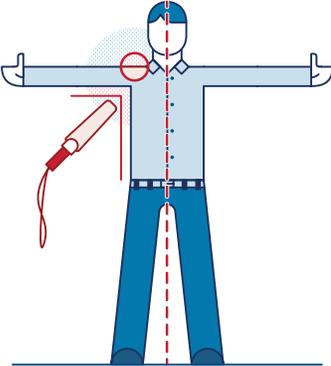
**3** Divide the body screening process in half vertically. Starting at the top right shoulder area, or where clothing is visible on the torso, hold the HHMD one to two inches from the person, and move the HHMD over each side as follows:

**A** Screen the individual with the HHMD starting in front of the person at the top of the head. Move the wand down the shoulder and out to the arm and wrist.

**B** Ensure that that individual's hand is open and visually check that they are not holding anything.

**C** Move the HHMD down the outside of the torso, to the waist, down the outside of the leg to the clothing line.

**D** Use the HHMD to screen the inside of the leg to the groin area, and down the opposite leg to the clothing line.
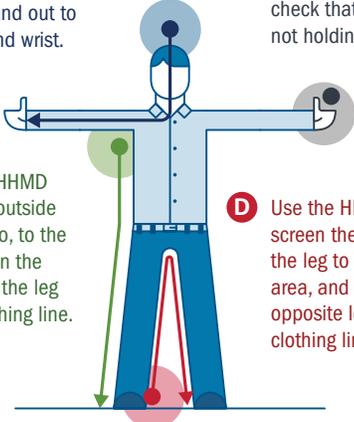
## FRONT-SCREENING PROCESS

**1**
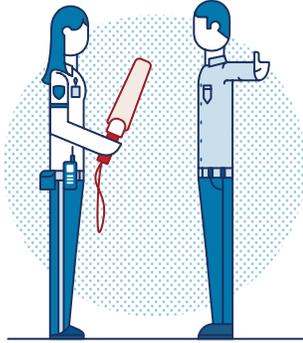
Stand in front of the person.

**2** Using one motion, move the HHMD in front of the arm, the front of the shoulder area, chest area, abdominal area, and in front of the leg, down the shin to the foot (use a systematic procedure on each side).
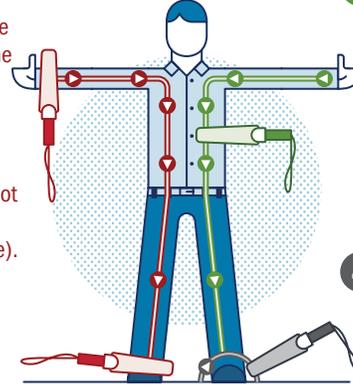
**3** Use the HHMD to screen the front of the arms, chest area, lower abdominal area, and the front of the legs.

**4** Pass the HHMD over the top of the foot.

**If an alarm sounds, stop screening and ask permission to conduct a limited pat-down of the area. If visitors are unsure or uncomfortable, explain the nature of the pat-down process. After the pat-down, re-screen the area again to make sure it is clear.**

→ Be cautious and respectful when screening sensitive areas.

### IF AN ALARM SOUNDS ON THE WAISTLINE

**1** Have the individual open and hold the belt buckle and end of belt apart.
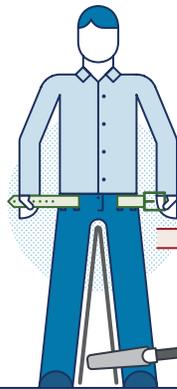
**2** Physically inspect the belt buckle to ensure it is not concealing a weapon.

**3** With the buckle and end of the belt separated, rescreen the area.

**If the alarm sounds again, ask for permission to physically inspect the waistline using limited pat-down procedures.**

## CLEARING THE GROIN AREA OF A PERSON WEARING A SKIRT, DRESS, KILT, OR SIMILAR GARMENT

**1** To screen the leg and groin areas, ask the individual to stand with one foot extended forward as if he or she were taking a step. This position should provide sufficient surface area to move the hand wand inside both legs, including reasonable proximity to the groin area.

**3** Ensure that that individual's hand is open, and visually check that he or she is not holding anything.

**2** Continue to move the wand on the outside of the opposite leg, up the waist to the torso, and the underside of the arm to the wrist.

**If the alarm sounds, stop screening and ask permission to conduct a limited pat-down of the area. If visitors are unsure or uncomfortable, explain the nature of the pat-down process. After the pat-down, re-screen the area again to make sure it is clear.**

## BACK SCREENING PROCESS

**1** Use the HHMD to screen the back of the arm, the back area, buttocks, and the back of the leg along the bottom. Continue screening up the back of the leg to the calf and around the sole area of the foot.

**2** If the alarm sounds, stop screening and ask if they have any metal on them. Once they remove, conduct a rescreening. If alarm continues to sound, request permission from the individual to conduct a limited pat-down of the area that set off the alarm. Then rescreen that area again to make sure it is clear.

> All alarms should be resolved as they occur. If the alarm sounds again, request permission from the individual to conduct a pat-down and explain that inspection of the area where the alarm occurred is necessary before entry is granted.

> Finding one prohibited object does not mean that it is the only prohibited item. Continue using the wand to screen the entire person—outline, front, and back. Rescreen or pat-down areas where an item has been removed, as there may be more than one source for the alarm.

**U-SHAPED SCREENING TECHNIQUE**
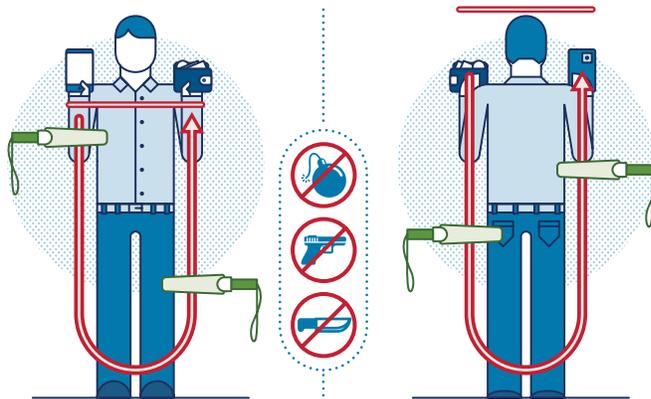


1. Greet the individual and advise them that they will be screened with the HHMD.
2. Instruct the individual to remove all metal from their pockets and hold the items at shoulder height with elbows at their sides. Inspect the items in the individual's hands.
3. Instruct the individual to stand with their feet shoulder width apart.
4. Screen the individual with the HHMD starting in front of the person at the top right shoulder area. Move the HHMD down the front of the individual to the right foot, moving to the left foot, then bringing the HHMD up to the top left shoulder area in a U-shaped motion.
5. Instruct the individual to turn around; then repeat the U-shaped motion.

**If the alarm sounds, stop screening and request permission to conduct a limited pat-down of the area in question. Rescreen the area again to make sure it is clear.**

### 5.2.2 Ensure Proper Working Order of HHMDs

Testing the HHMDs to ensure they are properly operating is a critical component of a venue's security plan. It also ensures security administrators can verify the equipment is properly maintained.

- Train screeners and have a local instruction manual at each checkpoint that demonstrates the detection areas for the HHMDs being used.

- HHMDs should be stored in a secure location when not in use.

- Screeners should practice using HHMDs to ensure they are familiar with the limitations of the device.

- HHMDs are battery operated tools with a battery life ranging from 8 to 30 hours, depending on the device. Checkpoints should have additional batteries or additional HHMDs in case of battery failure or the failure of the HHMD.

## 5.3 X-Ray Machines

An x-ray system is one that penetrates items with x-rays and produces an image of the contents displayed on a video monitor.

While the functionality of x-ray machines varies slightly depending on the manufacturer, the underlying technology is used to enhance the screening process, and it can supplement other detection equipment. The advantages of using x-ray technology for screening property are:

- It is a quick process.

- It is unobtrusive to personal property.

- It can screen virtually anything.

- It is able to identify different items by shape, color, or density.

### 5.3.1 Primary Screening Procedures

The primary screener or x-ray operator will advise all individuals prior to beginning the security screen that all property will need to be x-rayed prior to entry to the venue.

**To properly scan items:**

- Ensure all items are lying as flat as possible.

- Place each item so that there is a space of at least four inches of space between items.

- Place all metal items in a separate container and proceed through the x-ray machine.

**The responsibilities of the x-ray operator are as follows:**

- Concentrate on the x-ray images on the screens.

- Stay focused, and avoid distractions from other workers, noise, and checkpoint traffic.

- Evaluate shape, color, and density in images to identify illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items.

- Stop each image and examine thoroughly.

- Use the following x-ray machine image manipulation tools to view objects more clearly.

High Penetration (HP) – increased visual penetration

Crystal Clear (CC) – clears up edges of objects

Organic Material (OM) – clears away metal items

Inorganic (IM) – clears away organic materials

Black & White (BW) – changes color image to black & white

Zoom – magnifies specific areas of the image

### 5.3.2 Secondary Screening Procedures

If the x-ray machine identifies a potentially illegal, prohibited, or suspicious item, screeners should conduct a secondary examination of the property contents.  Screeners should always maintain an attitude of courtesy and patience, even when illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items are discovered, as individuals may have simply overlooked or forgotten about the existence of a particular item.

For additional information, see the *Public Venue Bag Search Procedures Guide*.

### 5.3.3 Locations of X-Ray Machines

Equipment should be placed in a manner that permits effective use:

- X-ray equipment must be so arranged that the operator who initiates the x-ray exposure is in a position where they can readily observe all ports and doors during the process.
- The monitor screen should be adjusted for maximum efficiency; ensure the screener can be seated comfortably at the correct viewing height.

### 5.3.4 Ensure Proper Working Order of X-Ray Machines

X-Ray machines should only be used if they meet the following standards:

- The x-ray unit is operating properly according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- The Radiation Cabinet Survey is current for state and local regulations.
- Radiation surveys have been conducted annually according to federal, state, and local regulations.
- Radiation surveys must be performed:
  - When the x-ray unit is installed
  - Every 12 months thereafter
  - After the x-ray unit has been moved
  - Whenever the x-ray unit fails to meet performance standards or imaging requirements

The x-ray machines should be additionally tested to ensure maximum effectiveness at the following times and in the following circumstances:

- If used on a daily basis on non-event days (record the date and time of the test, who performed the test, and the result: pass or fail).
- Each time the unit is turned on.
- When the system returns from maintenance.
- Any time system is not working properly.

## 5.4 Emerging Technologies

Security screening technologies are constantly evolving to ensure the safety of venue visitors and staff.  Periodically, venue management should evaluate whether older technologies are suited to contemporary needs. Emerging technologies may include RFID chips, Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT), biometric screening, and Real-Time 3-D Imaging and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scanners.

Owners and operators should ensure that any incorporation of advanced technologies into existing security practices meet the highest standards of safety and quality assurance.

# 6 Physical Searches

There are instances when a physical search of a visitor is necessary, such as:

- To resolve metal detector alarms.
- If metal detectors (walk-through or hand-held) are not available or operational.
- If a visitor refuses or is unable (for medical or physical reasons) to be screened with metal detectors.
- If standard operating procedures (SOPs) call for random secondary screening as an additional deterrent.
- If visitors display suspicious anomalies in clothing or behavior.

**Full body** and **limited body searches** may also be performed.

A **full body search** is generally used when metal detectors are not available, the person is unwilling or unable to be screened by metal detectors, or there is a suspicion of A threat. **Physical searches should be only be employed when authorized by venue management and the venue's legal department, as well as with permission from the individual**.

A **limited body search** is generally used to resolve metal detector alarms or to search parts of a body that present a suspicion of threat (e.g., bulky clothes, protruding items).

> Screeners should always be conscientious of and responsive to individuals' comfort levels.

## 6.1 General Techniques

- Use the **front** of the hands—fingers and palms—when conducting physical searches in non-sensitive areas. Always use the **back** of the hand when conducting a pat-down of sensitive areas (chest area for women and lower abdominal area for men and women).
- Use a sliding motion that applies enough pressure to detect prohibited items.
- Use an overlapping sliding motion to ensure complete coverage.
- Always look at the area being searched for prohibited items that may be concealed or become dislodged during the search. Watches and jewelry can be searched visually.
- If a visual inspection of the head area is not possible, conduct a physical search through a patting, not sliding motion.
- Do not separate family members, especially if the search is conducted on a minor traveling with an adult. Allow the adult to be present during the screening.
- Use new gloves for each physical search.

## 6.2 Before Beginning Physical Search

1. Advise the individual of the need for additional physical screening.
   - Such an advisory might be less important in a situation where everyone is physically searched.

2. Explain the process of the actual physical search. Advise the visitor that the process involves touching sensitive areas, and that the screener will be careful and respectful.

3. Ask the individual for permission before beginning the search.

4. Observe the visitor and determine if there is anything obvious that they need to remove (e.g., belts, coins, wallets, and jackets).

5. Before beginning the physical search, ask the visitor if they have any sensitive or painful areas or are wearing an external medical device. Use caution and the lightest possible pressure when screening those areas.

6. Instruct the individual to stand with feet shoulder-width apart and with their arms extended, hands open, and palms up.

## 6.3 Conducting the Search

1. Whether beginning with a front or back search, begin with the collar areas by pressing the collar between thumb and forefinger and sliding from one side to the other. If the collar is too tight and the pressing of the collar could pinch, use the fingertips of the hand to press the collar.

2. Search the arms using a sliding motion beginning at the armpit and sliding toward the wrist. Repeat as many times as needed to conduct a thorough search.

3. Search the torso using one or two hands. Begin at the shoulders and continue to the waist. Be sure to search both sides of the torso.

4. Search the waistline by pressing it between thumb and forefingers. Clothes that cover the waistline should be raised within reasonable limits to allow for visual inspection. Search by sliding hands from one side to the other. If the waistline is too tight to conduct a thorough search, slide the outside of the waistline with the front of the hand to avoid pinching the visitor.

5. If the visitor is wearing loose-fitting clothes, ask them to tighten the clothes by pulling up to improve screening of the buttocks. Use the back of the hand to search the buttocks from top to bottom.

6. Use the front of the hands in a sliding motion from top to bottom of each leg. Search the sides and back of both legs.

7. When complete with either the front or back search, instruct the visitor to lower their arms. Have the visitor turn around and raise their arms again. Then begin the other side.

> If at any time during the search the screener detects what appears to be a weapon or other illegal, prohibited, or suspicious item, they should follow the procedures outlined in Section 7.

If no illegal, prohibited, or suspicious items are discovered during the search, the screener should thank the visitor, instruct them to lower their arms, and direct them to proceed to the ticket scanner location.

> A **limited physical search** should follow the same procedure as a full-body search, but it is confined to a smaller area of the body. It is usually conducted to resolve an alarm or as additional screening. Additional screening can be random or based on reasonable suspicion.

# 7 Illegal, Prohibited, and Suspicious Items

Venue management should prepare a list of illegal, prohibited, and suspicious items and distribute this list to employees, security contractors, event staff, etc. Screening procedures should specifically state which items may be temporarily stored (assuming there are bag check facilities) or surrendered to enable the individual to enter the venue. These items can also be returned to the owner's vehicle.

The composition of each list will be at the discretion of venue management.

Training should include the identification of harmful substances (e.g., bomb-making materials) and other substances or items that pose a threat to the venue, personnel, and staff. The venue's security plan should outline harmful items and provide guidelines for identification, retention, transfer of ownership, and disposal, if applicable.

## 7.1 Illegal Items

**Illegal items are any items are illegal at the local, state, and Federal level and are therefore prohibited in the venue (e.g., explosives, narcotics, or weapons).** Venue security staff should collaborate with law enforcement to develop a general set of guidelines for these items.

### 7.1.1 Handling Illegal Items

> Venue management should consult Federal, state, and local regulations to develop a list of items that may or may not be illegal depending on the specific states in which the venue is located (e.g., medicinal and recreational marijuana, open-carry or concealment of firearms, fireworks).

Security screening personnel can identify illegal items at any point during a security screen. If they identify any illegal items, the screener should immediately notify a security supervisor who can escort the visitor and the item(s) to a separate screening area to further inspect the individual and the illegal items. **The security supervisor should always inform law enforcement upon identification of illegal items.**

The supervisor and law enforcement will aid in the final disposition of the illegal item(s). **Venue staff should not allow individuals to enter the venue with illegal items.**

### 7.1.2 Discarding Procedures

Illegal items should be specifically identified and itemized in a log by the venue staff. The venue's security screening procedures should specify that screeners who discover illegal items should report the incident immediately to supervisory staff or law enforcement. Documenting the incident may also be relevant to any future legal proceedings.

- Notification procedures may vary depending on whether law enforcement is present at the venue.
- Illegal items should be brought to the attention of law enforcement, who will then decide what to do with the item.

- If law enforcement is offsite, event security staff should escort the visitor with the illegal item(s) away from the visitor screening area to another location until law enforcement arrives.

- Illegal items should be brought to the attention of law enforcement, who will then decide what to do with the item.

## 7.2  Prohibited Items

**Prohibited items include any items that may be legal to possess outside of the venue but are specifically prohibited within the venue, either because of the item itself, its size, or its function.**

Examples of prohibited items include:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Firearms or knives | | Backpacks |
| | Glass bottles | | Multi-pocketed bags over a specified size |
| | Alcohol | | Opaque bags |
| | Hard coolers | | Pepper spray |
| | Umbrellas | | Air horns |

The venue's prohibited item policy should consider when screeners may make exceptions to the prohibited items list for medical reasons (e.g., syringes, inhalers) or for infants (e.g., diaper bags, formula).

### 7.2.1  Handling Prohibited Items

Security screening personnel should be able to identify prohibited items during a security screen. If they identify any prohibited items, the screener should immediately notify a security supervisor.

> Not all prohibited items will require the assistance of a supervisor (e.g., outside food and drinks can just be thrown away). Venue management should consider creating guidance for screeners for when to involve a supervisor.

The screener or supervisor will aid in the final disposition of the prohibited item(s) (e.g., return to visitor's vehicle or an offsite location or disposal). **Venue staff should not allow individuals to enter the venue with prohibited items**.

### 7.2.2 Storage and Discarding Procedures

Venue management has more latitude to determine whether screeners should log and handle prohibited items. It is, however, the responsibility of the venue's security and screening staff and supervisory staff to ensure that the items are properly disposed. Disposal options include:

- Confiscation of the item.

- The storage of the item(s) at a temporary storage facility (if available).

- Returning the item(s) to the visitor's vehicle or another secure location away from the venue.

The venue's security staff should ensure that all prohibited items are not left unattended and use discretion when determining whether items should be thrown away.

## 7.3 Suspicious Items

**Suspicious items include any items that are not illegal or prohibited within the venue but may be considered suspicious due to the quantity of the item or the uniqueness of the item.**

These include items such as:

a large roll of wire

a radio or walkie-talkie

a large quantity of batteries

a screwdriver

zip-ties or rope

an alarm clock

multiple cell phones

an odd-smelling item

Screeners should look for suspicious items that a visitor(s) could assemble into a harmful device. These items may look safe individually and may be carried by one individual or multiple individuals. Malicious actors could also combine suspicious items with other items already inside a venue (e.g., disassembled gun parts, electrical tape, crimpers, or wire cutters). Suspicious items could be used to produce an illegal item, improvised explosive devices, or other weapons.

### 7.3.1 Handling Suspicious Items

Screeners should practice extreme caution when dealing with suspicious items. Consistent with their training, screeners should remain calm and maintain a professional demeanor with high regard for guest service. Efforts should be made to minimize attention toward the suspicious item.

The disposition of suspicious items will depend on the item(s) discovered. For safety purposes, screeners should contact screening supervisory staff, event security, and law enforcement when they discover suspicious items.

- Coordinate between screening locations around the venue to determine whether suspicious items have been identified that may complement or be used in some harmful way with other items discovered.

- If it is determined, through observation or some suspicious activity on the part of the owner of the suspicious item, that the item may be used to cause harm at the event, it may be necessary to dispose of the item, store it at a temporary storage facility, return it to the visitor's vehicle or another secure location, or confiscate the item. Screeners should also notify law enforcement in such cases.

### 7.3.2 Storage and Discarding Procedures

If the suspicious item(s) is confiscated:

- The venue's security staff should ensure that staff discard all suspicious items properly and do not leave items unattended or simply placed in the trash.

If the suspicious item(s) is not permitted into the venue, but not confiscated:

- Screeners should inform the visitor to return it to a secure area before rescreening.

> Always use discretion when determining when and where to dispose of suspicious items. If a security screener is unsure of the best way to proceed with a suspicious item, the screener should consult a security supervisor or law enforcement.

# 8 Additional Resources

DHS and CISA provide many websites, videos, guides, and other resources that may be useful for those developing a security screening program for public venues.

## CISA Websites

| Title | Link |
|---|---|
| Active Shooter Preparedness | cisa.gov/active-shooter-preparedness |
| Commercial Facilities Sector | cisa.gov/commercial-facilities-sector |
| Hometown Security | cisa.gov/hometown-security |
| "If You See Something, Say Something®" | dhs.gov/see-something-say-something |
| What To Do – Bomb Threat | cisa.gov/what-to-do-bomb-threat |

## CISA Guides and Other Publications

| Title | Link |
|---|---|
| Public Venue Bag Search Procedures Guide | cisa.gov/publication/public-venue-bag-search-guide |
| Public Venue Credentialing Guide | cisa.gov/publication/public-venues-credentialing-guide |
| Security of Soft Targets and Crowded Places—Resource Guide | cisa.gov/publication/securing-soft-targets-and-crowded-places-resources |
| Commercial Facilities Sector-Specific Plan, An Annex to the NIPP 2013 | cisa.gov/publication/nipp-ssp-commercial-facilities-2015 |

# 9 Acknowledgements

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Please contact CommercialFacilitiesSector@cisa.dhs.gov or visit cisa.gov/commercial-facilities-sector if you have questions or to find additional resources.