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Checkpoint & the Security Environment



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The term "Checkpoint" has become synonymous with security in the past decade. It describes a location where people and their belongings are inspected in order to ensure security according the level of threat within that environment.

The structure of the checkpoint, either in aviation, borders, mass transit or other arenas has become standardized and is built of three main components:

- Standard X-ray machine
- Walk through metal detector
- Sniffer or trace detector

These tools are very effective if used correctly and can act as the final stage or layer of security prior to entering a building, boarding a plane, entering a court house.

The commonality between all elements of security, specifically technological is that they are all human operated. Human factor (HF) is the key in bringing these tools to proper operation. The creators of these systems offer us better and advanced tools (dual energy, dual tube, dual view, operator assist, etc), and entice government and private industry to spend monetary resources to upgrade our systems (because we want to have the latest and greatest). However, most of the time without incorporating the Human Factor; we are thus continuing the deficiency of the checkpoint.



While we are debating if to open our wallets and invest the money to get the "good stuff" we forget that even upgraded – these systems are still human operated. The ill-fated result is spending money on the upgrade (that will not upgrade our security – just our systems) and not on training the operator degrades the system.

A frightening scenario is that the system alarmed and indicated there is something wrong but the human factor which has been pushed to the bottom of the list has allowed the threat to pass through the checkpoint for a variety of Human Factor reasons.

The investment in the human in training and hands on experience allows a cost effective way to improve and strengthen the weak link in the security checkpoint of today's vast environment.