Frequently Asked Questions For Advanced Imaging Technology

Q. What is Advanced Imaging Technology?

A. Advanced Imaging Technology safely screens persons for both metallic and non-metallic contraband, such as weapons, drugs and electronics, which may be concealed under a person's clothing without physical contact. This type of search technology is currently in use by Prisons, Airports and Law Enforcement agencies throughout the world.

Q. How does the Advanced Imaging Technology screening process work?

A. All visitors or staff will be instructed to remove everything from their pockets (including non-metallic items) to be screened by a separate device. They will also remove their shoes, belts or other items, such as watches and jewelry. At the instruction of the Screening Officer, they will walk into the imaging portal. Once inside, they will be asked to stand in a position and remain still for a few seconds while the technology creates an image in real time. The person being screened will then exit in the direction as instructed by the Screening Officer.

Q. Is Advanced Imaging Technology safe?

A. Advanced Imaging Technology is safe and meets national health and safety standards. The system delivers an extremely low dose of ionizing radiation to the individual and is well within American National Institute standards. In fact, the energy emitted by the backscatter technology during one scan is 60 times less than you would be exposed to on Earth within a 24 hour period. It is also 1000 times less than a regular chest x-ray.

Q. Can I be scanned if I am pregnant?

A. Yes, the Advanced Imaging Scanner only emits 5 micro unit Rems during a scan. This is 60 times less than you would receive naturally on a daily basis. There is no evidence that screening by imaging technology will affect pregnancy, but persons with concerns should contact their physicians.

Q. What about exposure to my internal medical device?

A. If a visitor or staff member has an internal medical device, such as a pacemaker, defibrillator, or metal implant, it is important for them to inform the Screening Officer of this before the screening process begins. Persons who have internal medical devices should not be screened by a metal detector but can be screened with imaging technology. There is no evidence that screening with imaging technology will affect such devices, but persons with concerns should contact their physicians.

Q. What if I am disabled and use a wheelchair, cane or walker?

A. The screening process for visitors or staff members who use a wheelchair or scooter is determined by a person's ability to stand and walk. A person can be screened without standing, walking, or being required to transfer out of a wheelchair or scooter; however, a person should inform the Screening Officer of their medical ability before the screening begins.

Persons who can stand but cannot walk will be asked to stand next to their wheelchair or scooter and will be screened using a metal detector and a thorough pat search. Persons in wheelchairs or scooters who can walk may be able to be screened using a metal detector or imaging technology. A pat search procedure is used to resolve any alarms of a metal detector or anomalies identified by imaging technology. Regardless of how the person is screened, the person's wheelchair or scooter will be inspected, including the seat cushions and any non-removable pouches or fanny packs for contraband. (Removable pouches or fanny packs should have been removed prior to screening.)

Q. Will someone other than the Screening Officer be able to see my image or print it out?

A. Only the Screening Officer will view your scanned image unless an anomaly is detected. The officers are trained professionals and may not discuss viewed information with any unauthorized person. The ability to store images is not included in the software for Advanced Imaging Technology and there is no way to activate image storage functions by anyone. Images are maintained on the monitor only for as long as it takes to resolve any anomalies. If the Screening Officer sees a suspicious area or prohibited item, the image remains on the monitor until the item is cleared, either by the Screening Officer identifying the item on the monitor, or by a physical screening completed by a Security Officer. The Advanced Imaging Technology equipment cannot retain the image. In addition, Screening Officers are prohibited from bringing any device into the viewing area that has photographic capability, including cell phone cameras.

Q. Why did the TSA have to pull this type of Body screening technology out of the airports? Was it a Health Risk or Privacy issue?

A. The controversial "backscatter" X-ray machines produce black-and-white images of airline passengers as they are screened for security risks. TSA **ended** its contract with Rapiscan after the company failed to meet a congressionally-mandated deadline to produce scanners that did not reveal images of the passengers. The units were replaced by "millimeter wave" X-ray machines, which were configured to show the results of scans on generic images of the human body. The technology is referred to by TSA as Automated Target Recognition (ATR).