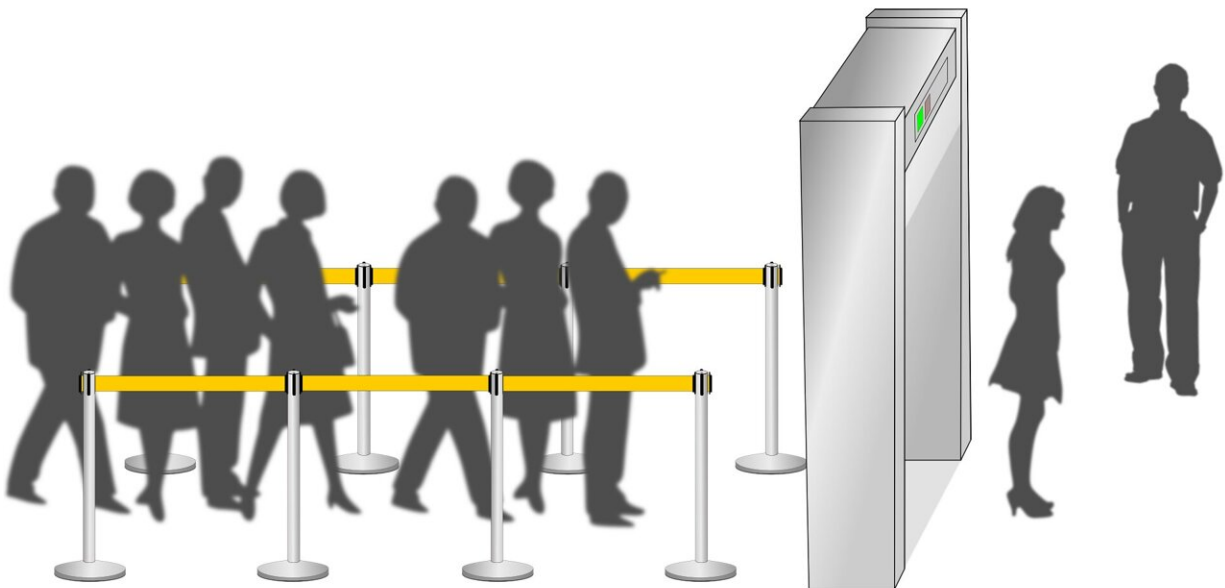


# TSA chief says biometrics and tech could lower the stress of traveling

March 15 2023, by Alexandra Skores, The Dallas Morning News

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Transportation Security Administration chief David Pekoske said the agency wants to use technology to reduce the number of screening officers in checkpoints and speed up travel processes as passenger volumes increase.

At Tuesday's panel at South by Southwest, which focused on accelerating aviation security, he boasted about the agency's computed

tomography technology and biometrics. Despite struggling with staffing a year ago, Pekoske said that nearly 2.4 million people are screened on a given day by TSA.

Pekoske said that TSA's purpose is to make sure it maintains its security and [transportation system](#) at the same time, while staying several steps ahead of threats.

"It's critically important that this system has as little friction as it possibly can, while we provide for safety and security," Pekoske said.

Biometric technology, such as [facial recognition](#), is increasingly being used in TSA's identity verification process. Newer technology the agency is using is more than 99% effective. He said it hasn't found any problems with passengers with darker complexions, like older technology once did.

At the forefront of the agency's mission is to make sure it is transparent with the public about what information is being taken from a [passenger](#), how long TSA will keep the information and for what purpose the agency plans to use the information, Pekoske said.

"We're upgrading our camera systems all the time, upgrading our [lighting systems](#)," Pekoske said. "(We're) upgrading our algorithms, so that we are using the very most advanced algorithms and technology we possibly can."

He said passengers can also choose to opt out of certain screening processes if they are uncomfortable, for now. Eventually, biometrics won't be optional, he said.

In general, he said, TSA puts its latest technology in TSA PreCheck lanes because those passengers are looking for convenience.

Passenger loads are going to increase 4%, year-over-year, he said.

"With the technology we've already deployed, we know we don't have to increase the size of our workforce," he said.

He also touched on firearms and the frequency of guns being brought to airports. More than 1,300 guns were found on passengers at Texas airports in 2022, including nearly one a day at DFW Airport.

"If you carry a firearm in checkpoint, we're going to see it," he said. "It's gonna take you obviously a lot more time, because we're going to bring [law enforcement](#) over, we're going to do an investigation, you're likely going to face a civil penalty from us."

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