

Security at airports under investigation

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A U.S. Homeland Security Department investigator is looking into allegations that security screeners at six airports were tipped off about security tests. Homeland Security Inspector General Richard Skinner said he has begun an investigation to determine whether screeners at the six airports, which weren't identified, were warned in advance about tests designed to determine the effectiveness of airport workers in finding bombs, guns and knives, USA Today reported Friday. The investigation comes after Skinner found that San Francisco and Jackson, Miss., airport screeners were warned of impending undercover tests in 2003 and 2004. Spokeswoman Tamara Faulkner said he is probing "whether (screeners) at other airports received advance notice of any covert testing." U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, welcomed the investigation. Cheating on security tests "weakens our security systems at airports," Thompson told USA Today. Faulkner said the investigation is expected to be completed by late autumn. Transportation Security Administration spokesman Christopher White said to the newspaper that the agency "will do whatever we can to facilitate the investigation." The TSA acts as employer for both the airport screeners and the undercover agents that perform the security tests.

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