



Transportation
Security
Administration

Advisory – Security Information for Aerial Application Operators/Airports

November 5, 2004

On November 1, 2004, a crop dusting aircraft was stolen from Ejido Queretaro, near Mexicali, Mexico. Although there is currently no indication that this has any connection to terrorist activity, the theft is cause for concern. Past information indicates that members of al-Qa'ida may have planned—or may still be planning—to disperse biological or chemical agents from crop dusting aircraft.

The stolen aircraft has been identified as a Piper PA 25, Pawnee, and is similar to one depicted below. It is registered in Mexico and bears the tail number XBCYP.



If you see the aircraft described above, you should immediately contact the TSA General Aviation Hotline at (866) 427-3287.

Law enforcement agencies continue to investigate suspicious incidents and inquiries involving crop dusters and spray equipment. In September 2001, the National Agricultural Aviation Association issued an advisory to its members. The advisory warned members to “be vigilant to any suspicious activity relative to the use, training in or acquisition of dangerous chemicals or airborne application of same including threats, unusual purchases, suspicious behavior by employees or customers, and unusual contacts with the public.” The advisory also instructed individuals to report any suspicious circumstances or information to local FBI offices.

TSA wants to remind aerial application operators and airport operators to review the security measures contained in the TSA Information Publication, Security Guidelines for General Aviation Airports (available at http://www.tsa.gov/public/interapp/editorial/editorial_1113.xml), and the National Agricultural Aviation Association security measures (available at www.agaviation.org). For example, aerial application operators and airport operators are encouraged to consider the following:

- Store aircraft and crop protection products in locked hangars with electronic security systems when not in use.
- Park and disable loader trucks, forklifts, or other equipment to block aircraft.
- In cases where the aircraft must be left outdoors, use propeller locks, propeller chains or tie-downs on aircraft.
- Remove batteries from planes and disassemble engines from unused aircraft.
- Install hidden security switches to prevent unauthorized startup of the aircraft.
- Outdoor security lighting around hangars and operations is encouraged.
- Establish contact with Federal and local law enforcement agencies to coordinate responses to security breaches at agricultural aviation facilities. Encourage operators to list the appropriate law enforcement agency telephone numbers in a prominent place within their operations.

Persons should report any suspicious activity immediately to local law enforcement and the TSA General Aviation Hotline at 866-GASECUR (866-427-3287).