

NTEU TSA UPDATE

News and Information for TSA Employees from NTEU

June 24, 2009

News Alert!

NTEU Seeks Suspension of Annual Skills Test in Letter to TSA

In response to numerous reports of high failure rates and widespread employee dissatisfaction with TSA's annual Practical Skills Exercise (PSE) at airports nationwide, NTEU President Colleen M. Kelley has [sent a letter](#) to Gail D. Rossides, the Acting Administrator of TSA, urging an end to current testing and the invalidating of all 2009 PSE test results.

The letter also details the results of an online survey NTEU developed earlier this month to gauge overall TSO sentiment about the PSE test. TSOs have raised numerous complaints about the objectivity of testing protocol, with nearly 75 percent of all survey respondents rating the test as "Unfair" or "Very Unfair."

"There is nothing worse than being told you let a bomb onto a plane and then not being told how it happened so as to avoid it in the future."

TSO (Hawaii)

Other problems cited include insufficient training of those administering tests; unfair testing methods; an inability to verify or question test results; and a lack of meaningful remediation.

"These testing problems are so serious and so prevalent that they undermine the Agency's credibility with employees," President Kelley wrote in her letter. "NTEU believes that the current round of PSE tests should be suspended. All negative impacts associated with failure of these flawed tests should be eradicated."

Anecdotal reports have placed TSO failure rates at several airports between 75 and 90 percent. These failures have appeared prevalently in basic skills like wandering, X-ray scans, pat downs and baggage tests.

"Many employees think TSA is engineering failures to lower PASS scores as a method of controlling agency salary and bonus costs," President Kelley wrote. "This indicates a serious morale problem."

PSE scores are used by the agency to help determine a TSO's year-end PASS rating and performance bonus award payments.

"The main problem is that our testing is not recorded in any way. If there is a disagreement with a (PSE) grade it is impossible to argue it."

TSO (New York)

"We are tested on things we never do on a daily basis"

If you are an NTEU TSA chapter member who has suffered, or been threatened with, an adverse action or workplace discipline due to a low PSE score, NTEU can represent you. Contact your local NTEU representative to speak with an experienced labor attorney who can effectively represent

basis.

TSO (Florida)

your interests on critical workplace issues such as performance appraisals and promotions, disciplinary actions, shift bidding and scheduling, overtime and leave issues as well as EEO issues.

If you have received an unfair PSE score and you want to help start an NTEU chapter at your airport, call 1-866-591-5735 or e-mail TSA@nteu.org.

**NTEU is ready and willing to help.
If you have questions, call toll-free
1-866-591-5735 or e-mail TSA@nteu.org.**



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NTEU's Mission: To organize federal employees to work together to ensure that every federal employee is treated with dignity and respect.

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