

Plastic gun from 3-D printer seized at Nevada airport

August 10 2016, by Scott Sonner And Ken Ritter



This Aug. 4, 2016, photo, provided by the Transportation Security Administration shows a plastic replica revolver TSA agents recovered from a passenger's carry-on bag at Reno-Tahoe International Airport in Reno, Nev. The man agreed to leave the prohibited, fake firearm made from a 3D printer behind and was allowed to board the plane without incident. (Transportation Security Administration via AP)

Airport screening agents confiscated a plastic handgun produced with a 3-D printer from a man's carry-on luggage last week at a Nevada airport in what a federal official said Wednesday might have been the first discovery of its kind in the U.S.

A report by Reno-Tahoe International Airport police said the white gun

was a replica that couldn't fire and was loaded with five .22-caliber bullets.

"Whether it's a replica or not, it's not allowed," Transportation Security Administration Agency spokeswoman Lorie Dankers said, noting that people in the airplane cabin might not be able to distinguish a real gun from a replica.

The bullets were detected on a luggage scanner, according to the police report obtained Wednesday.

The passenger was identified as Frederick Vandeman, 64, who told police he was a medical doctor who owns a 3-D printer and wanted to show his work to colleagues. He also said he had flown with the gun from Indiana and forgot it was in his bag.

Vandeman, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, declined to comment.

He chose to leave the gun and ammunition behind at the Reno airport and was allowed to continue traveling, Dankers said. He wasn't charged with a crime.

Vandeman could face a fine up to \$7,500, "depending on the circumstance," Dankers said. Such a process would be administrative, not public.



This Aug. 4, 2016, photo, provided by the Transportation Security Administration shows the plastic replica revolver TSA agents recovered from a passenger's carry-on bag at Reno-Tahoe International Airport in a bowl used at the security checkpoint in Reno, Nev. The man agreed to leave the prohibited, fake firearm made from a 3D printer behind and was allowed to board the plane without incident. (Transportation Security Administration via AP)

The police report said the early morning American Airlines flight on Aug. 4 was bound for Dallas-Fort Worth. It said the FBI was contacted to interview Vandeman at his final destination in Memphis, Tennessee.

An FBI spokeswoman in Las Vegas referred questions to the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

ATF spokeswoman Helen Dunkel in San Francisco said she had no

immediate information about the case.

Dankers said she couldn't be sure if any other 3-D plastic guns had been found at other airports but noted that her inquiries didn't immediately find any cases.

Nationwide, the TSA screens more than 2.1 million passengers a day.

Using 3-D printing and materials ranging from plastics to food products, designers have replicated jewelry, fancy chocolate confections, sunglasses, shoes and even a child's hand.

Dankers said firearms are always prohibited in carry-on baggage along with ammunition and firearm parts. But all those items can be transported in checked baggage, as long as the traveler declares them to the airline during check-in, she said.

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