Geneva Airport Sees 70% Reduction in Shoe Alarms at Security With Slimline Sensors

28 June, 2017 in Services Written by Maryann Simson

Image: Maryann Simson

APEX Insight: This week at FTE Dublin, Sedect SA displayed Seeflow SMD, an ultrathin sensor for early detection of metal in shoes at security checkpoints. Geneva Airport has been using the technology since late 2016 and measured a 70 percent decrease in shoe alarms, year over year.

We've all been through this at airport security. That moment when you've put your belt, keys and loose change into the bin, taken off your jacket, pulled your laptop from its case and tossed in your clear bag of liquids and gels. But alas, despite your best efforts and preparation, your shoes have made the metal detector beep. Instead of heading to the gate or duty-free shops, you're being manually searched and asked to take off your shoes, while watching the rest of your gear roll out of the scanner and away from

you.

This scenario is a major annoyance for passengers and airport customs workers alike, and it happens so frequently at most airports outside the US that it often causes longer wait times and unnecessary stress.

This week at FTE Dublin, an exhibitor called SEDECT SA displayed an innovative product called Seeflow SMD (the SMD standing for Shoe Metal Detector), an ultra-thin sensor for early detection of metal in shoes at security checkpoints that's been in use at Geneva Airport since late 2016.

Image via Sedect SA

The sensor is placed on the floor where passengers stand to load their bins at security, telling them (and security workers) clearly on a digital screen whether their shoes contain enough metal to trigger further search. If the amber symbol shows, some metal is present or nearby and the passenger must stand more directly on the sensor. The red shoe signal means "put your shoes in the bin" and the green arrow means "go through".

According to security officials at Geneva Airport, Seeflow SMD has led to a significant reduction in the number of security holdups triggered by metal in passenger footwear. "We measured the number of shoe alarms sounding since the Seeflow SMD was installed at the end of 2016 and compared the results to the same period in the previous year," commented Adrien Semoros, technical manager for Geneva Airport's security department. "We observed a 70-percent drop in shoe alarms… [That is] the number of passengers that could fill 7.2 A320 planes, every day."

Sedect SA's head of Sales and Marketing Oliver Denis told APEX Media that the passenger experience benefits are clear, and that the technology can remove some of the emotion from the security check process. "For example, you don't have anyone asking why they have to remove their shoes while neighboring passengers don't," he said. "It's easier, because it was detected and shown to them. It's not based on feelings or ideas, it is simply measured."