

# Sky Marshalls: Heroes in the Air?

*After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, security – especially civil aviation security – has taken another position in the minds of people.*



In Germany, politicians are talking about safety and security during flights. Otto Schilly, the German Federal Minister of the Interior, is thinking about armed flight companions, or so-called sky marshalls. He would like to involve the special-strengths of the Bundesgrenzschutz (German Federal Border Police) GSG9 anti-terrorist unit. However, this would not be practicable and affordable in the long term. These tasks require not only officials with highness-rights. Trained men and women from Israel's Condor-the Security & Combat Academy provide special security services. Condor is represented in Germany by WE-secure & protect GmbH of Steinhagen, which offers complete protection and security services. They offer a good combination of education and service. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the Israeli airline El Al has been protecting its flights with sky marshalls. The service has been proven and there have not been any significant incidents.

Security measures begin on the ground and not only in the air. Specialists then work with particular abilities. What characterises these specialists in the air? How do they look? Are these people heroes? The answer to these last questions is definitely no! These security specialists have done lengthy training in anti-terrorism, anti-hijacking and VIP-protection in Israel and Germany. To date, they have been working as bodyguards and provided security risk management for companies in Europe. Their past pro-

fessions included careers in the army (MP), police (SEK), national border protection, or the justice system. But such experience does not mean that someone is a security professional ready to work as a sky marshal. Those seeking to work in this security field should receive special training in Israel to become professionals. Furthermore, it should be stressed that even former special-unit police or army officers aren't necessarily qualified to work as air marshalls. Through continuous training, their skills and abilities are refined and enriched with the years of experiences gained from Condor's security work in Israel. Armed flight companions are well aware of their tasks. A big danger is the use of weapons at high altitudes. For this reason, the very latest methods have to be used against abductors and terrorists. Approved special ammunition minimises the risk of shots to penetrate the airplane's outside skin. An important part of the education involves psychological training. On board, the security forces also behave like ordinary passengers. Inconspicuously, they don't act alone. They sit in accessible areas and other passengers are unable to recognise them during the flight. Condor and WE secure can organise air marshal training and/or supply professionals for commercial and private flights. Here, we cannot divulge exact details such as the number of employees or the equipment used by security companions. Their special strengths on board can be

used to defuse other situations, not only terrorist attacks. One of the team can appear as mediators during short flights to deal with air rage situations. Special de-escalation tactics provide security for the cabin personnel (and passengers) against aggressive and drunken soccer-fans (hooligans) or cone-clubs, for example. Sky marshalls are not heroes in the air. They are highly motivated and trained security specialists. Their work is momentary and hopefully never has to be really applied in the air. This type of the security involves only little additional cost when calculated by flight-hour and passengers.



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