

CHROMATICS ALERT!

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Sept, 2003 - AIRLINES WARN TRAVELERS:

NEW BAGGAGE SCANNERS DAMAGE FILM !!!

Airport security scanning devices now incorporate many new technologies. There's always been controversy about so-called "x-ray" scanners used at passenger security checkpoints damaging film but any problems were usually limited to high speed films of ASA 800 or more. The new CTX scanners used for checked baggage are a different technology and there's no question: they can and often do damage film. Some airlines have now posted signs at ticket counters warning travelers to remove film and cameras from checked baggage.

This film sample clearly shows the damage. At Chromatics we've seen this soft-edged, geometrical "sine-wave" exposure on approximately 30 rolls of film (out of many thousands processed) this year. In every case the film had been through recent airport baggage screenings, sometimes several. Bob English, E6 Lab of Atlanta owner, has seen the same exposure damage on some customers' film.

The unwanted exposure pattern is very distinctive and impossible to create by any processing fault. The pattern has appeared on ASA 100, 400 and 800 speed negative film, both 35mm and 120 formats, both color and B&W. As of September 18, we haven't seen it on slide or transparency film. It may simply be less susceptible. We don't know.

In every case the photographer had multiple rolls but all were not affected. The rolls were processed together, side-by-side, and again, there's simply no way to create this exposure pattern with dip & dunk processing. You couldn't make this exposure pattern with any stray light source, either, even if you tried.

I invite anyone with additional information on this phenomenon to contact me at Chromatics. Meanwhile, all film should be hand checked or, if the guards refuse, run through the scanning machine at the passenger security checkpoint, not the "checked baggage" scanners.

Be Forwarned!

Mike Borum, Chromatics PhotoImaging

