



AP PHOTOS

ATTENDING TO SECURITY: Pat Friend, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, speaks to her colleagues yesterday about airline security.

Flight attendants rip Logan security

By ROBIN WASHINGTON

Boston-based flight attendants blasted Logan Airport security yesterday as their union president took airlines to task for failing to make meaningful security improvements.

About 100 members of the Association of Flight Attendants crowded an East Boston union hall, where several members said for years crew members with early morning departures were allowed to pass through Logan checkpoints without being screened.

United flight attendant Terry Phillips said it last happened to her on Sept. 11, the same morning two flights from Boston — one United — were hijacked and slammed into the World Trade Center.

"I had a 5 a.m. check-in and the security wasn't open," she said.

"I arrived about 4:45 and someone walked over, opened the door for me, and I walked through. None of my luggage was put through the X-ray machine," she said, adding that she has experienced the same scenario several times during her three years with the airline, each occurrence at Logan.

United colleague Karan Scopa said the practice is commonplace at the airport.

"You just walk on through. That's what happens," she said.

Jessica Neal, a spokeswoman for Huntleigh USA, which handles checkpoint security for United, said her company is only required to begin screening at 5 a.m.

"If United requires us to open at 5 a.m., that's when we get there. That's totally out of our control," she said, adding that she had never heard of the practice.

A United spokesman did not return a call



CONCERNED: Karan Scopa, a flight attendant with United Airlines, speaks yesterday during the meeting. She said lax security is commonplace at Logan Airport.

seeking comment. Jim Peters, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration, said the practice was forbidden.

"Did they go through a screening point? They should have been screened," he said.

The complaint was one of many expressed by the flight attendants, who said the airlines' stricter measures were more cosmetic than effective.

"I continue to hear concerns every day that the security changes are not happening," said Patricia Friend, president of the 50,000 member union.

Scopa said Logan's food service area con-

tinued to be a weak point. "Look at the kitchens. You can get a job washing dishes in the kitchen, come right across the ramp and get on my airplane," she said.

That contention was supported by Logan ground workers who said a gate to one food service area was left unguarded before this week.

"You punch in your code and the gate opens very, very slowly. If anybody's behind you they can come in, too. You don't even have to work there to put in the code," one worker said.

Some flight attendants asked that the FAA reconsider its decision to resume curbside check-in, which is slated to return to Logan on Friday.

- Other issues include:
- Limiting carry-on baggage to one per customer.
 - Limiting alcohol service.
 - Support of the air marshal program.
 - Support for non-lethal weapons in the cockpit, such as Tasers and stun-guns, but not guns as some pilots have demanded.

"They would be carried by employees who would be walking around inside security, creating a situation where someone who shouldn't have access to that gun could in fact get one," Friend said.

Phillips, whose friend, Karen Martin, died aboard American Airlines Flight 11, disagreed with that position — even if it meant she could be killed by mistake by a pilot shooting behind a locked door.

"You know what? If (the alternative is) being on a plane and then crashing into a building, so shoot me. If it's going to save everyone else," she said.