

## In Response to COVID-19, Puerto Rico's Main Airport Installs Thermographic Cameras



Due to the recent worldwide emergency, government officials, corporations, and various agencies are being scrutinized by their onlookers. And rightfully so. However, there is no doubt that some places are reacting to this unpredictable situation better than others. Let's take Puerto Rico, for instance. Even though this is a small island that is inhabited by just over two million people, it seems to understand how vital it is to act quickly. It's even participating in groundbreaking innovations that further solidify their devotion to the safety of Puerto Ricans.

Puerto Rico's main airport, Luis Muñoz Marín (SJU), is actually part of the aggressive response to COVID-19. They have now become the first in the Caribbean and in all the United States to utilize thermographic technology.

Although Governor Wanda Vázquez has mandated that anyone who flies into the island must promptly self-quarantine for 14 days, the airport is still strengthening their procedures.

Aerostar Airport Holdings, the operator of Luis Muñoz Marín, alongside Puerto Rico's National Guard, has launched Sistema de Alerta Temprana de Fiebre (SATF) or an Early Fever Warning System within the establishment. This is a new technology that will quickly and effectively measure the temperature of 100 percent of the passengers arriving to Puerto Rico from domestic and international flights.

The system is composed of an intelligent mass temperature detection technology, which contains 11 infrared thermal imaging cameras. If anyone scanned has a temperature of 100.3 F or higher, the system sends out an alert that automatically activates an alarm. After the alarm is set off, the National Guard receives a warning, allowing them to stop and guide the passenger towards where they can obtain additional evaluation. The image remains stored, creating a video for documentation. It is important to note that even if it detects a higher temperature, it continues monitoring everyone else coming in without disrupting the process, thus, creating a seamless experience throughout the airport.

To provide everyone with further insight, the operator of the island's principal airport explained that the cameras measure the infrared energy emitted by a human body, while recording a high-definition image of all passengers arriving into Puerto Rico through all terminals. The temperature of anyone passing through any of Luis Muñoz Marín's terminals will be monitored as well.



According to Jorge Hernández, Aerostar Airport Holdings' CEO, the installation of the cameras will allow the National Guard to shift the focus of their resources in this moment of emergency and be more efficient using this technology so that soldiers can be distributed to other airports.

Aerostar's investment in this new system was estimated to be around \$125,000, which covered the cost of technology, equipment, and its installation.

Hernández declared that the Early Fever Warning System (SATF) has been used in the past as a temperature detection mechanism for SARS prevention in several countries in Asia and was recently successfully used in Taiwan in order to fight against the spread of COVID-19.

All of this is very exciting because it means that Puerto Rico is taking the right steps to stay protected. It is noteworthy to mention that other parts of the island have been stepping it up too.

For example, once the first few COVID-19 cases were reported, Governor Wanda Vázquez implemented a curfew almost immediately. She's not playing around, either. Anyone who wants to rebel against the curfew will get fined and sent to jail (though it's worth considering the reality that putting people in confinement right now is a recipe for disaster, as the close quarters of jails and prisons puts both staff and inmates in an environment where an outbreak could take hold quite quickly). Aside from that, she just released an attractive \$787 million financial package that will provide assistance to a multitude of Puerto Ricans. The extent of this lavish aid has yet to be seen by any other US territory or state.

As you can tell, Puerto Rico is not treading lightly around this situation at all. Let's hope other countries (and their mainland) follow suit before it's too late.