

## Airport-style scanners on London streets

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

London police plan to use airport-style scanners and hand-held weapons

Scanners will be used in crackdown against worsening knife crime in London. There have been more than 100 stabbings reported in London this year

**LONDON, England (AP)** -- A surge in violent knife crimes has prompted London police to introduce a new program that will rely on mobile, airport-style scanners and hand-held metal detectors for use against people suspected of carrying concealed weapons.



A similar scheme was introduced in the northern city of Liverpool last year.

The new program, called Blunt 2, started this week in one borough and should be in place in all 32 London boroughs within the next few months, said a Metropolitan Police spokesman, who asked not to be identified in line with police rules.

The scanners have been in use by police for several years, but many more have been purchased and they will now be used much more aggressively under a law that gives police the right to search people without having to demonstrate beforehand that there is reasonable cause to believe they are committing a crime, the spokesman said.

"We've put it in under Section 60 of the Public Order Act, which is slightly more in your face," the spokesman said. "We can give officers on the ground the powers to go ahead and do it. We've got 550 metal detector wands and 244 search arches that can be used. If there's a problem, we can place them outside a row of shops or a shopping center and check people going in."

The spokesman said it will be possible for police officers to take the mobile wands onto buses and check passengers for weapons.

He declined to name the borough where the program started.

London's reputation as a generally safe city has been rocked this year by a marked increase in stabbings, with more than 100 reported in the capital so far this year. Most have not been fatal, but the slaying Monday of a 22-year-old man outside a McDonald's in the busy Oxford Street shopping area generated gruesome headlines.

The victim, who had been facing charges for rape and other serious crimes, was killed after an argument between two groups of young people that took place during the evening rush hour, when Oxford Street is usually filled with thousands of pedestrians.