

# Toronto Pearson International Airport: partners in security

Jim Bertram, Director of Public Safety and Security Steering Committee, ACI-NA (Airports Council International – North America)

**With the ever-changing aviation industry, security at airports worldwide has been called upon to adapt in preparation of new and rising global threats. At Toronto Pearson International Airport, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) mitigates the risk posed by global and local events by administering a comprehensive security program.**

As the operator of Canada's busiest airport, the GTAA meets and frequently exceeds standards mandated by Transport Canada and other governing bodies. In the decade since assuming responsibility for Toronto Pearson, the GTAA has transformed the business of security from one that was once a department to that of an environment of shared responsibility. All tenants and employees of Toronto Pearson are partners in its security.

Policies and procedures that are in place have been scrutinised to the fullest extent. When the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) announced their intent to assess security programs of member states to ensure compliance with regulations, the federal government requested an audit date earlier than the one identified by ICAO. The request was granted and so confident was the government in the GTAA's approach to security that Toronto Pearson was selected as the host airport for the audit.

Mid-way through 2005, audit teams evaluated the GTAA and other tenants at Toronto Pearson on their ability to fulfill regulatory obligations and to implement the requirements of annex 17 – Security to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, in operational areas including organisation and

administration of the airport, access control, passenger and baggage screening, hold baggage, in-flight security, cargo, catering, the airport's response to acts of unlawful interference and airport contingency plans.



Due to Toronto Pearson's state of readiness and its ability to be on guard for any eventuality, the audit was considered successful. One reason for this level of preparedness is the approach the GTAA takes to managing security. Rather than focusing and responding to immediate threats, a long-term approach was chosen as a framework for how policies and

procedures are implemented. Security is a function supported across the organisation. As detailed in the GTAA's Mission Statement, every decision made by the GTAA is first scrutinised for compliance with current security practices.

Toronto Pearson has been affected – like so many other international airports – by events that have tested the strength of its security model. Be it the Gulf War, 9/11, or the blackout of 2003, the GTAA knew that meeting the challenge was one thing, but being prepared for the next event was even more important. Where other airports returned to what they considered "normal," Toronto Pearson took the opportunity to assess what worked and what didn't and amend the security procedures accordingly. Returning to status quo was not an option. As each event came to a close, Toronto Pearson's level of preparedness was ratcheted up a notch so as not to be left behind during future situations.

The net benefit of this approach meant that the airport community didn't have to react to each minor issue because of the already high levels of preparation.

The GTAA's commitment to maintaining secure facilities and property is evidenced through its actions. One of the most visible components in the delivery of security related initiatives is the presence of a canine unit, capable of carrying out explosives detection. Toronto Pearson has the only private canine service in Canada with six handler/canine teams maintaining an around the clock presence.

Improved response times was the motivator for going to a full-time, airport managed unit. In some airports where

explosives detection canine are not on site, response by agencies could take upwards of three hours. At Toronto Pearson, that time averages 10 minutes – critical considering the amount of travellers and employees that rely on continuous operations 24 hours per day.



The dedicated single purpose dogs have a unique environment in which to work and train. Unlike canine from police forces or security firms that have a range of capabilities including suspect takedown, GTAA canine are not subjected to aggression training.

Toronto Pearson and the GTAA's Canine Unit often host canine teams from external police forces for training purposes. The airport environment serves as a unique training facility



The Flowslide demonstrates it is possible to combine freedom of movement with complete control by preventing two streams of traffic merging while allowing both to cross over a junction point.

Designed specifically to separate arriving and departing passengers in single storey passenger terminal applications, the Flowslide combines revolving and sliding door technologies to provide an alternative to costly renovations and building costs.

The Flowslide is just one of our innovative Revolving and Special Purpose door products offered worldwide.

*The perfect solution to separate passenger flows*

*We know your world. With over hundred years of experience, we know that, together, we can meet any challenge in entrance technology – now and in the future. So why not call us for more information?*

and the specialised knowledge of the unit members is in high demand from external agencies.

The recently completed Airport Development Program (ADP) was undertaken with the motto of "Security by Design." From concept through design to final deliverables, the newly built Terminal 1 and recently renovated Terminal 3



feature dozens of unique security elements. In conjunction with the redevelopment – and ahead of a government issued schedule – Toronto Pearson undertook 100 per cent hold bag screening at all terminals. Every piece of checked luggage making its way through the system is electronically scanned to ensure its integrity.

The GTAA firmly believes that although technology has advanced the way in which security is now being carried out, it is people that make us secure.

Supporting the many human faces of security including the Peel Regional Police, contracted guards, GTAA Security Response Officers and Canadian Air Transport Security Authority screeners, the Airport Authority maintains a state-of-the-art Airport Operations Control Centre with fully equipped Security Operations Centre (SOC) contained within. Working closely with a contractor (Visual Defense) the GTAA has been able to integrate its security systems with visual imaging. SOC operators have the ability to pull up images from any CCTV camera located throughout the 4,400 acre campus. From their vantage point, operators can also establish two way voice communication with most points of entry where the presentation of a key card is required.

Most recently, Toronto Pearson took a quantum leap in managing access to restricted areas of the airport. All employees are now required to have in their possession a valid Restricted Area Identification Card (RAIC) when attempting to transition from public, non-secure locations to those designated as restricted.

RAIC is the world's first-ever dual biometric airport identification system using finger print/iris scanning technology; a technology that ensures accurate, real-time validation of those wishing to access the restricted area.



Every employee in possession of a RAIC who has a need to access restricted areas of the airport is required by the GTAA to partake in a security awareness training session. This requirement is unique to many airports and has proven to be useful in educating employees of their responsibilities while carrying out their daily tasks.

Through stakeholder participation, Toronto Pearson (recently voted by ITM as the Best Global Airport) has become a more secure facility. From employees to passengers, thousands of people are assisting the GTAA in delivering one of the most secure airport environments possible, capable of meeting future demands placed on the aviation industry. □

**Jim Bertram**



Jim Bertram currently holds the position of Director of Public Safety for the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA). He is the Chairperson of the Canadian Airports Council (CAC) Security Committee and an active member of the Public Safety and Security Steering Committee of ACI-NA (Airports Council International – North America). Jim is a member of both the Canadian and Ontario Chiefs of Police, and was most recently appointed as a member of the Government of Canada's Advisory Council on National Security. Prior to joining the GTAA, Jim held the position of Deputy Chief with the Peel Regional Police.