

# CASE STUDY

## Port of Halifax

### Technology, teamwork keep Canadian port safe

Leading-edge technology and solid interagency relationships are helping maintain safety and security for the Port of Halifax and goods and people moving through its facilities – and for all tourists and residents of the historic capital city of Nova Scotia.

Since 9/11, the Halifax Port Authority has taken a leading role within the marine community to ensure awareness of, and action on, port security. This effort has included a more prominent relationship with the Halifax Regional Police, with dedicated port officers providing 24-hour service, access to intelligence and specialized policing services, such as canine units. And it has encompassed official port credentialing, increased personnel, an incident management system and enhanced communication with colleagues at other ports as part of the North American security perimeter.

Furthermore, the Canadian Border Services Agency has put in place passive radiation detection portals that scan all import cargo containers – now standard practice across Canada. If threshold levels of radiation are exceeded, the portals immediately transmit an alarm to the CBSA's National Risk Assessment Center and the Laboratory and Scientific Services Directorate to determine appropriate action.

“We strongly believe that, with the security enhancements undertaken in the past few years, we have the appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety of our facilities, on-site workers, our city, its visitors and goods in transit,” said Deidre French, manager of marine operations for the Halifax Port Authority, who noted that some \$20 million of major security enhancements have been implemented at the Port of Halifax.

The centerpiece of the Port of Halifax's commitment to security is the Halifax Port Authority Command and Control System, known for short as HPACCS. Through a fiber-optic network, it can assist the port in deterring and responding to both criminal and terrorist activity if either were to materialize, as well as achieve proficiency in response to threats through scenario-based training.

“We feel our Command and Control System is among the leading security systems in port operations in the world,” Ms. French said. “The HPACCS was built based on an exhaustive threat-risk analysis with the

assistance of security experts who have an astute understanding of modern-day security challenges.”

The system includes:

- Sensors and alarms that provide situational awareness, including radar, automatic identification system, or AIS; high-definition infrared cameras; biometric-based access control and intrusion protection equipment;
- Secure emergency communication feasibility;
- Incident-based scenarios for training and response purposes; and
- Data collection over a dedicated, secure fiber-optic network.

The HPACCS has the ability to detect and track vessels and initiate alarms upon incursion into predetermined zones. It can automatically cue cameras onto targets of interest using intelligent object recognition, tracking and scene analysis.

A port security committee has been established, and strong working relationships are maintained between port police, port operations staff, first responders, harbor pilots and independent marine facilities to ensure communication is open and clear on all security issues and risks. In an effort to be prepared for any threat, drills and exercises are conducted at least quarterly, sometimes with greater frequency.

With these numerous physical security enhancements as well as sophisticated technology upgrades, Ms. French said, the Port of Halifax is as prepared as any port on the globe to handle cruise tourists and cargo safely and securely. ◀



At the Halifax Port Authority's South End Container Terminal, a container is scanned by a radiation detection portal.