The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority was given additional responsibilities in November 2002, on top of those outlined in the April 2002 CATSA Act. These include the screening of non-passengers, launched last month, and enhancing the Restricted Area Pass program.

Unlike the United States, Canada has screened and fingerprinted workers requiring access to secured areas through the Restricted Area Pass (RAP) program since 1987. CATSA is now ready to augment the credentialing capabilities of RAP through a new "Restricted Area Identification Card (RAIC)" program for 150,000 airport employees coast to coast. Starting with pilot projects in Vancouver, Montréal-Trudeau, Charlottetown, and Kelowna, biometrics (finger and potentially iris), and new smart cards will be used every day to authenticate individual identities and authorities to enter restricted areas. CATSA is targeting to roll out RAIC at 29 major airports in 2004.

**Key Advantages**

The biometrics selected for RAIC (Bioscrypt finger, LG Iris cameras) and the smartcards (HID) will significantly augment the fidelity of the restricted areas. The probability of an individual not authorized to enter a restricted area would be significantly diminished. Furthermore, the use of a central CATSA database will allow for a "national pass" system capability.

**Major Deployment Considerations**

The deployment of RAIC in 2004 will face key challenges. Clear communications with airport workers and change management strategies are needed to successfully deploy RAIC to the Canadian airports environment. For instance, there continues to be a misconception amongst Canadians about the significance of biometric cards and the privacy of biometric templates. Moreover, the deployment of a system that is a condition of employment may have implications for labour relations.

One of the critical operational considerations is the speed for which someone accessing the restricted area can be cleared to proceed. In larger airports, for example, a 5 second transaction time could create a queue of nearly 10 minutes during morning peak periods. Furthermore, solutions and standards for anti-piggybacking have yet to be advanced to prevent 1 cardholder from allowing passage of multiple individuals into a restricted area.

**What about Perimeter Fence Security?**

Airport operators are still responsible for maintaining the primary security line. CATSA’s RAIC program simply provides an advanced set of tools that are deployed nationally. Some of the possibilities include the deployment of readers at the perimeter fence for larger airports; however the choice of finger biometric may need to be modified in order to deal with freezing temperatures.

**Integration with other initiatives?**

CATSA is not the only agency deploying biometric card systems. In past issues of the Industry Review, these have been detailed as Nexus-Air, Canpass-Air, and the potential national identity card. Of direct relevance to airport workers is the new Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) being advanced by the TSA. Whether RAIC will be interoperable with the TWIC card remains to be seen. This integration would be a positive step in streamlining the passage of flight crews from airports in the U.S. and Canada alike.