

Approach to Mass Transit Security in the United States

July 8, 2005

It is widely recognized that mass transit poses one of the most vulnerable areas of urban transportation infrastructure. Events such as the Tokyo Sarin Gas subway attack of March 1995; the Madrid train bombings of March 2004; and yesterday's tragic London metro transit system attacks, have resulted in heightened U.S. efforts to secure its mass transit systems. We are again reminded of the vulnerabilities of complex, urban transportation systems.

Open and readily available transportation for commuters, students, local residents, tourists, and business travelers is a key ingredient to a successful and vibrant metropolitan area. By its very nature, urban transit requires stations to have many entrances and exits, and allow passengers to enter the transit systems with backpacks, briefcases, and suitcases. The sheer number of people that can be found in a terminal or station at one time and the debilitating effect of crippling the system makes mass transit systems attractive targets for terrorists. Even small attacks or accidents can undermine public trust and confidence in the safety and security of such systems.

Representative measures of efforts being made across the United States involve a layered approach to enhancing the safety and security of its mass transit systems. Some of the elements of this approach include:

- the **increased presence of law enforcement** to deter potential terrorists and to possibly identify threats, as well as to provide additional first response capabilities should an event occur
- the selected **deployment of sensors and other detection devices** to deter terrorists and to quickly identify the presence of various chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive materials in order to minimize the consequences of an attack
- the application of **facial recognition and other screening technologies** in order to identify suspect individuals
- training for employees and the traveling public to **increase awareness of suspicious individuals and packages** and the need to promptly report such incidents
- daily **sharing of threat information and best practices** for protective measures across different mass transit systems
- development of **emergency response and evacuation plans** to assist in rapid evacuations and control of any situations that occur
- development of **recovery plans** to allow safe operations to resume as quickly as possible after a shutdown (with or without an actual attack)
- **selective closures of entrances and exits** where the service benefit is low and the security concerns are high
- greater **separation of passenger areas** from those that are open to the public at large
- use of **badges and uniforms to more readily identify employees** and those that are supposed to be in restricted areas
- **greater cooperation and interaction** with local, state, and federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies to ensure that critical information is shared

While no one measure alone will ensure the security of these systems, collectively these measures can improve our safety and security while still allowing us to operate in a free society.



Transportation safety is a concern of high priority to the government, the public, and commercial business.

With increased attention on terrorism, the security and safety of our transportation infrastructure is an even greater priority, and industry must adapt to a rapidly changing landscape.

For transportation systems and facilities, the level of security must be cost effective and consistent with the threat.



Federal Solutions

In addition to the state, local, and industry efforts in mass transit security, two key federal efforts are supporting the nationwide approach to transportation security protection and response.

Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan. The Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) provides the starting point for developing the national, cross-sector plan for Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP). This first iteration of the NIPP ensures consistent and comprehensive identification of assets, assessment of vulnerabilities, and prioritization of assets to guide the effective implementation of protective programs across seventeen critical infrastructure sectors, including transportation. The NIPP identifies the general roles and responsibilities for each set of stakeholders, highlights best practices and initiatives already underway, and introduces features, such as metrics and stakeholder engagement, for ensuring that the program is successful. The transportation sector is among the 17 sectors covered under the Interim NIPP, with the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) as the designated lead. The transportation sector includes six modes of transport: mass transit, pipelines, aviation, highway, rail, and maritime.

National Response Plan. The National Response Plan establishes a single, comprehensive approach that is necessary to enhance the ability of the United States to respond to domestic incidents. The National Response Plan sets out the mechanism whereby the Federal Government coordinates its interface with state, local, and tribal entities and the private sector. It establishes incident management protocols to help protect the Nation from terrorist attacks and other natural and manmade hazards; save lives; protect public health, safety, property, and the environment; and reduce adverse psychological consequences and disruptions to the American way of life.

Our Approach

For more than 20 years, ICF Consulting has been providing emergency management and transportation services to numerous private companies, industry associations, and government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the TSA, including recent work addressing domestic preparedness and transportation security.

ICF Consulting also helps government agencies provide industry and the public with guidance on transportation security matters, security studies, exercises, training, and outreach. Further, transportation agencies may be challenged to develop regulations quickly to address transportation security and may need to develop audit programs to ensure security compliance. For regulatory support, many government agencies have turned to ICF Consulting for our extensive knowledge of the regulatory process and our technical expertise in emergency management, transportation, and security.

For transportation systems and facilities, the level of security must be cost effective and consistent with the threat. We assist transportation managers or agencies in performing security assessments to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities to the transportation system. We propose countermeasures, which may include physical and nonphysical actions taken to deter or prevent a terrorist incident or to mitigate the damages in the event of an incident. We develop customized transportation security plans to formalize the strategy for implementing the recommended countermeasures.

No security program is complete until those responsible for its execution have been trained and allowed to demonstrate their proficiency in executing the plan or program. ICF Consulting conducts awareness training for local transportation organizations and emergency responders. Also, we develop and facilitate exercises to verify the capability to respond to terrorism attacks.

About ICF Consulting

ICF Consulting is a leading management, technology, and policy consulting firm. Drawing upon extensive industry knowledge, distinguished professionals, and innovative analytics, the firm develops solutions to complex defense, homeland security, energy, environment, social program, and transportation issues. ICF Consulting's approach to these issues is strengthened by its expertise in information technology, organizational improvement, program management, and communications. Since 1969, ICF Consulting has been serving major corporations, government at all levels, and multinational institutions. More than 1,200 employees serve these clients from key business centers in the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

For more information:

Lisa Bendixen
781-676-4013 (tel)
781-676-4005 (fax)
lbendixen@icfconsulting.com

ICF Consulting
33 Hayden Avenue
Lexington, MA 02421
USA