

Best Practice: Gamma Ray Inspection



Category:	Access Control
Location First Observed:	Port of La Haina, Dominican Republic
Date First Observed:	November, 2004

Description: The Port has purchased a fixed vehicle and container gamma ray machine that has been installed at the port. All trucks dropping off or picking up containers at the port are required to pass through the gamma ray machine which displays and prints a clear gamma ray image of the inside of the truck cab and attached container. It takes less than 5 minutes for a truck and container to be scanned for contraband or stowaways.

Discussion: Gamma ray inspection is both an excellent detection tool and deterrent to smuggling of contraband and persons. In addition to benefiting anti-terrorism efforts, illegal drug trafficking, the collection of customs duties, and port state control, gamma ray inspection lessens national and international crime as it makes it much more difficult to smuggle stolen items in and out of a country. Inspecting a vehicle via gamma ray takes far less time and personnel than de-vanning a container and manually inspecting the contents, and is more effective as it permits the inspector to see through boxes, bales, and other internal containers that cannot be done by manually de-vanning a container.

Potential Down-side: If not manufactured, maintained, and handled correctly, gamma rays can pose a significant threat to the machinery operator, truck driver, and other persons in the vicinity of the gamma ray machine. Requires the employment of a full-time trained technician. Gamma ray machinery is very expensive to purchase and maintain.

Conclusion: The port's investment in the gamma ray machinery is perceived to be an excellent investment in the nation's efforts to curb stowaways and deter illegal smuggling – both of which cost the nation millions of dollars in lost revenue and increased security expenses.

Cost: Approx \$3,000,000.00 US dollars to purchase, \$100,000 per year to maintain, \$100,000 per year salary and benefits for each gamma ray operator.