Best Practice: Port-wide Identification System

Category:	Access Control
Location:	Port of Antwerp, Belgium
Date Observed:	26 October 2006
POC:	Mr. Ernie Scheerlinck: 32(0)3 203 94 70
WWW:	www.alfapass.be

Description: The Port of Antwerp maritime industry led the implementation of the Alfapass system, which allows dock workers and truck drivers to have limited access to various facilities in the port area.   Implementation of this system ensures availability of an adequate supply of vetted workers and truck drivers.   The Alfapass is being used in all port facilities in Antwerp and some in the Port of Zeebrugge.

Discussion: The Alfapass is an internet based identification-verification and credentialing card-management system employing electronic and biometric technologies.   To date, over 8,000 credentials have been issued.   When completely implemented, it is estimated that Alfapass identification cards will be issued to more than 20,000 longshoremen, truck drivers, employees and visitors to the port's 71 private terminals.   Private terminals will have real-time access to data about all personnel cleared to do business with the port. Port authorities and government officials can obtain up-to-the-minute reporting on all port activity for those access points intergraded into the system.

Each of the Alfapass cards is equipped with radio frequency identification (RFID) technology that allows the card to be scanned up to 10 cm away from the reader.   The system stores information about employee certifications, work experience and access restrictions, as well as biometric identifiers.   The handprint of each card recipient is prerecorded on their Alfapass for use at terminals using biometic hand readers.   Individual terminals can integrate additional security and safety technologies, such as closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras and time-and-attendance with their individual systems.

Potential Down-side: The cost/benefit of this system is probably cost prohibitive at smaller ports.

Cost: The initial cost for this system is very expensive.   The maritime industry developed this system through a cooperative effort which resulted in a shared benefit to all users.   All Port Facility Security Plans should establish the means of identification required to allow access to the port facility.

Conclusion: Joining in a cooperative effort allows port facility operators to share the financial burden while also facilitating the free movement of port workers such as truckers and stevedores throughout the port.