

Best Practice: Cargo Screening for Personnel



Category: Guards and Police
Location: Port of Zeebrugge, Belgium
Date Observed: 26 October 2006
POC: Commissioner Dirk Calemyn
050 55 60 40
E-mail: fedpolspnz@skynet.be

Description: The Port of Zeebrugge was faced with a large number of transients trying to emigrate through Europe to locations abroad, primarily the United Kingdom. Personnel with port security responsibilities joined together to conduct multi-layered random screening of exported cargo.

Discussion: The Federal Police have established several screening areas along the roadways leading to the various facilities within the port area. All containerized cargo is subject to random X-ray examination. The X-ray equipment is mounted on a mobile unit and its location is changed frequently to hinder a driver's ability to anticipate where an examination might take place. In addition to X-ray screening, the Port of Zeebrugge uses canines to detect humans in containers. The table below illustrates a significant decrease in the Port of Zeebrugge's illegal emigration due to the deterrent effect of cargo screening.

Year	Number of Interceptions
2003	4,235
2004	1,852
2005	628
2006	516

Potential Down-side: Using a random selection process means that all containers are not screened. The possibility exists that some emigrants will not be detected.

Cost: This procedure is very expensive. Initial purchase of mobile X-Ray equipment is approximately \$3,000,000 (USD). The annual cost for a three person operation (driver, analyst, and assistant) is estimated to be \$150,000 per year. A fully trained dog is approximately \$3,600 and the annual salary for a police officer is approximately \$40,000.

Conclusion: Although initially the cost of conducting random cargo screening is expensive, the proven track record indicates that the cost is recouped due to its effectiveness. The port is able to keep exports moving through the maritime transportation system without significantly delaying the cargo or increasing costs to the port users.