



CATSA backgrounder

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) is a federal Crown corporation with a mandate to protect the public by effectively and efficiently screening air travellers and their baggage at designated airports in Canada.

CATSA is responsible for a number of services related to security, including screening passengers and baggage before they board a flight (known as pre-board screening), screening passengers' checked baggage (hold-baggage screening), and the random screening of workers and other non-passengers entering restricted areas of the airport that are not accessible to the public. CATSA is also responsible for the deployment, administration and maintenance of the Restricted Area Identity Card (RAIC) program.

Following are summaries of each of these services.

Pre-board screening:

Each year, more than 52 million passengers and their belongings are inspected before they board planes at Canadian airports. Screening activities are carried out by 5,400 screening officers. It is CATSA's responsibility to ensure that nothing from Transport Canada's list of prohibited items is allowed on aircraft. Screening officers look for dangerous or potentially dangerous items such as knives, firearms and explosives.

CATSA's pre-board screening is compatible with that of its international partners in aviation security, and CATSA updates its security technology, workforce training and operational procedures accordingly.

Hold-baggage screening: The 62 million pieces of luggage checked by passengers each year is screened using explosives detection equipment.

Non-passenger screening: Non-passengers are airport workers who have access to restricted areas at Canada's airports. These people include flight and cabin crews, airline customer service personnel, baggage handlers, vendors and other airport staff. CATSA randomly screens about 715,000 non-passengers annually at Canada's 28 major airports, as per Transport Canada regulations.

Restricted Area Identity Card (RAIC):

The RAIC program, developed and maintained by CATSA, is the first dual biometric airport-identification program for non-passengers. A computer chip on each identity card stores fingerprint and iris information about the card-holder. The RAIC program, which has operated at Canada's 28 major airports since 2007, includes cards, fingerprint and iris readers at airport terminals, and a network linking airports to a secure central database.

CATSA works closely with Transport Canada, aviation industry partners and screening contractors. Its goal is to provide professional, effective and consistent security service, at or above standards set by Transport Canada.

CATSA is accountable to Parliament through the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. It is governed by a board of directors, with front-line operations directed by its president and CEO and senior management team.

CATSA operates under a third-party business model. It contracts the delivery of screening services to screening contractors who are responsible for employing the screening workforce. The following companies are responsible for delivering screening services at designated airports in Canada:

- G4S Secure Solutions (Canada) Ltd.: Pacific Region (British Columbia and Yukon);
- Garda Security Screening Inc.: Prairies Region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwest Territories);
- Garda Security Screening Inc.: Central Region (Ontario); and
- Securitas Transport Aviation Security Ltd.: East Region (Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavut).

