

COMPETITORS

Mexican companies dominate the market for low-technology products and services, but more sophisticated products are almost entirely imported.

Canadian suppliers of safety and security products face competition from both Mexican and foreign companies. In general, Mexican manufacturers dominate the low-technology end of the market. They are highly competitive for such products as fire extinguishers, locks and basic protective gear such as shoes, gloves and hats. The more sophisticated the product, the more likely it is to be imported. A notable exception are bullet-proof vests, which are produced and distributed by *Mantenimiento y Comercialización Industrial (Macoisa)*.

Mexican distributors are very active in this sector, especially where imported products are involved. Some of them also provide consulting services. This gives them a good understanding of customer needs for new products. They are especially influential in guiding purchase decisions for smoke detectors and sprinkler systems, along with home alarms and security devices.

Professional safety and security consulting companies are fairly new to the market and are mainly foreign. Large commercial and industrial buyers have shown interest in signing contracts with consulting specialists with international experience. Foreign consultants include International Security & Defense Systems Ltd., of Israel. This company has sold protective services for refineries and other installations to *Pétroleos Mexicanos (Pemex)*, the national oil company; it also features training programs for VIP protection.

Government agencies provide security advice as well. The *Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil*, National Civil Protection System, provides consulting services to individual home builders and construction companies regarding fire and earthquake protection. General contractors are obliged to follow city building codes and to respect federal guidelines for the distribution of liquid gas. Fire departments provide assistance only for federal buildings or private buildings with fire alarm networks that are directly linked to the fire department.

The *Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS)*, Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare, provides a health and safety consulting service. It sets minimum safety standards and operates watch-dog committees through *STPS's Dirección General de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo*, Safety and Hygiene Division. Each company is responsible for adhering to the minimum standards and registering compliance with the *Dirección General de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo*, but there are no significant consulting companies that could help them.