

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Financial institutions have been the largest victims of the recent crime wave. During a three-month period in 1995, banks were being robbed at the rate of two per day. The banks have their own police force that works in conjunction with local police. At a recent meeting, the banks acknowledged the "grave inefficiency" of their own security force, and called for total reform. As a result, new cars, arms and bullet-proof equipment have been ordered. Protecting clerks and clients is also a priority, creating increased demand for bullet-proof glass.

Bank robbers have grown increasingly sophisticated and daring. The banks have responded with technological solutions, which include closed-circuit television, systems for tracing money and perpetrators, and alarms and direct links to police stations. The demand for armoured trucks is also rising.

Industry observers note that the financial sector has been one of the first in Mexico to establish a "prevention and safety culture" within its managerial and administrative staff. Financial-sector buyers are recognized by distributors and agents as being demanding in terms of quality, guarantees and customer service. They are also regarded as punctual payers and the most susceptible to marketing and publicity. Financial institutions tend to prefer foreign brand names and like dealing with prestigious companies. Most of the safety-related goods in this sector come from the United States, Israel, Germany, Japan and France.

INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES

All types of industrial corporations are potential customers for safety and security products. The most important industries are construction, mining, oil and gas, chemicals and the manufacturing sector. While security from theft is always a problem, worker health and safety presents the biggest challenge.

Industrial companies in Mexico are less likely than their commercial counterparts to have adopted a "prevention culture". Personal protective equipment is still the largest market component. The primary driving force is government regulations, which require specific safety apparel and equipment in individual industries.

According to data provided by the *Dirección General de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo, Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS)*, the Safety and Hygiene Division of the Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare, industrial accidents cost more than \$25 billion Mexican pesos and 89 million hours of lost working time in 1995. In spite of these losses, the industrial sector as a whole has been slow to invest in worker safety.