

Canada is a key entry point and desirable destination for criminals, smugglers and illegal immigrants for several reasons—one being the high standard of living enjoyed by Canadian citizens; another, easy access into the United States.

Whenever individuals evade the customs and passport securities, enormous human and financial resources are expended to investigate, prosecute and extradite them. There is also an enormous strain placed on law enforcement agencies to track illegal individuals and organizations, from terrorism to drug trafficking, from smuggling rings to espionage. While these issues rarely come before the public eye, repercussions from mistakes have an extremely high profile, as well as being politically, economically and socially damaging.

The Passport Office achieves the goal of security by developing a document that has numerous security features and trademarks. Strict procedures are followed that ensure the authenticity of the passport and the eligibility of the applicant. This level of security provides comfort and security, home and abroad, for all Canadians and foreign government authorities. Due to the high cross-border travel between the United States and Canada, a special sensitivity exists.

AR > 22

Goals> The Passport Office set several distinct goals regarding security for 1996-97.

Card Technology: Secure and Easy Access Into the United States...

Goal 1: As already mentioned, the introduction of machine readable cards for travel to the United States, to provide a secure way of crossing the border with minimized delay.

The Passport Office selected optical cards and is in the process of having them tested for tamper resistance and durability by an independent testing laboratory. The card uses the most advanced optical card technology and maximizes the memory capabilities to accommodate the combined needs of the Passport Office and CIC. These measures are being tested with the utmost care, with the awareness that electronic information is to be protected.

In addition to card technology, security measures were also taken with the CANPASS—Airport Enrollment Centre—a pilot project to test the effectiveness of passport cards used by frequent cross-border travellers at the Vancouver International

Airport. Two passport officials were assigned to accept applications for the project, which included confirming the applicant's identity and nationality and referring the file electronically to the CANPASS Registration Centre...all information of the bearer was confirmed and approved by the authorized official, and complete security precautions were taken.

So far both projects have shown great success, and once fully tested, should prove to be a strong and secure measure to deter illegal crossing while maintaining speedy access between the two countries.

Goal 2: To initiate steps leading to the introduction of the next generation of passports with the objective of preventing counterfeit or altered travel documents.

In preparation for the next passport design, the Security, Policy and Entitlement directorate has entered into productive discussions with most of the major players in the security ink, paper and printing business. As well, initiatives have been taken to study and implement new/emerging technologies and systems.

Improvements in the exchange of information from central headquarters to regional offices, and future improved electronic linkages were studied, with the view to improve security procedures. With careful consideration, both for the protection of individual information and national security, these electronic connections will meet regulatory information technology security standards.

Goal 3: To examine opportunities and parameters for the Passport Office to apply its expertise in document security by conducting a quality control evaluation of deliveries by manufacturers on behalf of other Canadian government organizations responsible for secure documents.

The quality assurance evaluation of deliverables on behalf of other Canadian government organizations responsible for secure documents had to be postponed this year. While much work and effort was applied by the Passport Office, a satisfactory agreement with what was then the Canada Communications Group could not be achieved prior to their privatization.

The Passport Office plans on continuing this objective, and will continue negotiations to provide expert services to other departments and organizations regarding secure documents.