# THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURITY AWARENESS IN SUPPORTING A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE SECURITY CULTURE

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## Threats against aviation

New and emerging global threats against civil aviation necessitate a more proactive approach to aviation security. In mitigating threats, we will help safeguard civil aviation against the loss of lives of passengers, crew, aircraft, properties and the intended collateral damage to the general public.

## Measures and Guidance

It is no secret to know how potent the security threat of terrorist groups affects some States in the Region. In this vein, the WACAF Regional Office has taken measures and shared interactive security guidance with States and industry to help mitigate threats against civil aviation.

Guidance includes the *ICAO Toolkit on Enhancing Security Culture*.



In addition to sharing security culture best practices, the toolkit reminds stakeholders that effective security is critical to business success.

## Security Awareness

**Training**: Security awareness training is a robust measure put in place in the region to ensure that everybody (directly and indirectly) takes ownership of security at the airport because *"security is everyone's business"*. Security awareness training is for all staff including airport cleaners, taxi drivers, porters, personnel of airlines and handling companies, and other aviation stakeholders.



**Preparation for Eventualities**: Likewise, technical support has been given to States on crisis management. This includes simulated exercises to sensitize airport users and to improve their security awareness. These exercises enable the readiness for an appropriate response to any security related emergency, such as an airport attack and hostage taking within the airport ecosystem.

**Security Challenge**: In the past, it was believed that only security operatives have the right to challenge non-compliance with ai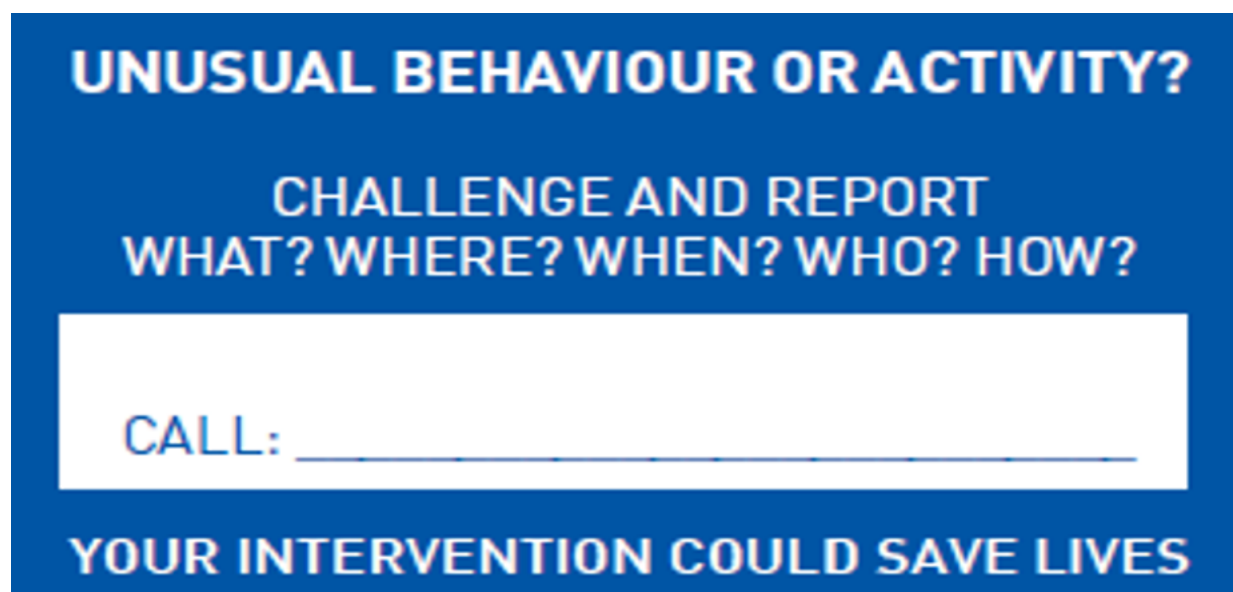rport security measures. This could include the right to challenge airport staff not displaying their access permit within the security control areas. However, by virtue of security awareness training received prior to the issuance of the access card, all cardholders understand they too have a role to play in the security process. They have the right to request the correct display of badges by coworkers within the airport control areas/zones.



**Landside Protection**: The practice of parking vehicles too close to the airport

terminal buildings, especially when dropping or picking the "VIP airport users", is gradually disappearing in the region. This is a result of security awareness given to the VIPs and to the general public through radio jingles; the display of security signage; and bollard/barrier controls. Visible armed personnel in front of terminal building has also served as a deterrent to would be perpetrators that may like to attack the airport.

**Information Sharing**: The airports in the region have benefited immensely from security awareness training given to car hires and cleaners. There was an instance of a car hire driver spotting an unfamiliar person fixing an explosive to a terminal telephone charging point during the early hours of the day. The driver reported the incident using the contact number given to them during security awareness training, thereby preventing the airport from being blown up! The importance of timely reporting of security violations and/or plans is essential and lifesaving in most cases.



**Security as Highest Priority**: Relegation of aviation security to mere security has done havoc to the aviation system in the past. However, technical liaison and interactions has moved States, airlines and stakeholders to understand that aviation security is a professional area. A profession that requires specialized training.

Aviation security regulations and procedures should be given the highest priority. And they should be supported with a reporting system that allows for timely responses of incidents and suspicious behaviour. This will help to protect lives, aircraft, terminal buildings and the general public. Any delay in communicating aviation security related information, may cause collateral damage that could have been easily averted.

## Conclusions

States and the entire civil aviation stakeholders should always embrace measures to promote security awareness. Security awareness supports a strong and effective security culture, which helps to safeguard lives and prevent unlawful acts that may jeopardize all other efforts or investments in aviation.



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