



SECURITY CULTURE IN GHANA



Nathaniel Kwadzodeh

An article by Nathaniel Kwadzodeh, Ghana Airports Company Limited, KIA, Accra, Ghana

Company details

Ghana Airports Company Limited has a vision to position Ghana as the preferred aviation hub and leader in airport business in West Africa. In pursuit of this goal, a lot of effort has led to Ghana receiving direct flights from Europe, America, the Middle East, and many African countries. The sheer growth, however refreshing, has its associated threat on inbound and outbound traffic.

Security measures

Because of the threat, strict adherence to aviation security measures at our airports (and off-airport facilities such as Airline offices and Travel and Tour Agencies in Ghana) has become part and parcel of our **security culture** over the past two decades. These serve as part of our overall means of managing aviation security risk in the air industry in Ghana and particularly our airports.

Managing Risk

Managing aviation security risk can be expensive. Ghana has had relative success in managing the risks through the commitment of the Government, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL), and other stakeholders. Their support for the effective implementation of aviation security measures across all facets of aviation cannot be overemphasized.

Security Awareness

In our quest to reduce the risk to the barest minimum at our airports, the leadership of the GACL (Airport Operator) creates and implants security awareness among workers. This supports **a culture that makes everybody responsible for the security of the airport** and its facilities, the workers, passengers and the public at large.



Security Awareness Orientations

The GACL has introduced detailed mandatory security awareness orientations for all airport workers requiring access to facilities located airside and landside. This is in addition to adherence to existing security measures in line with ICAO Annex 17 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and the National Civil Aviation Security Program (NCASP).

Security is
everyone's
responsibility

Together, we've got it covered.

The security awareness orientation is not limited to those working in restricted areas. But it is extended to restaurant operators, hotel guest attendants, government and private protocol officers, airport car rental/taxi operators, car park management staff, shop attendants, and many more. This is because **security is everyone's responsibility**.

Some of the key items highlighted in the orientation include - but are not limited to - objectives of aviation security (AVSEC); acts of unlawful interference; threats to aviation; insider risk (conscious and unconscious use of airport workers); reporting systems; suspicious signs, behaviours and items; dealing with unattended items and vehicles; adherence to security measures; vigilance and being alert for abnormalities.

Security Awareness Orientations

Apart from the general security awareness orientation conducted for all airport workers, GACL also designed a syllabus for Private Security Service Providers licensed to work at the airports. This training is mandatory for all before admission to work as security agents. It helps to initiate personnel into the AVSEC fraternity, thereby supporting the implementation of security measures. Upon request, annual refresher training is organized. AVESC personnel also undergo mandatory annual refresher training. This training aims at updating personnel with current events in the industry and various amendments to Annex 17 and other security-related documents. It also serves as a recertification of AVSEC Screeners. Some of the updates include but are not limited to insider risk (conscious and unconscious); recognition of IEDs; access control (permit system, over familiarization with airport workers, subjecting everyone to appropriate security controls); screening (staff, passengers, cabin items, hold baggage, cargo); methods of attack; MANPADS countermeasures; active CCTV monitoring (focusing on risk, busy, quiet, isolated areas) and the use of security equipment.



Reporting System

There are other initiatives to ensure robust security at the airports. This includes telephone installation at vantage points and offices, with numbers provided to call in an emergency. Workers and the general public are encouraged to use these telephones to report any abnormality or unusual activities observed.



Announcements

Security announcements are also made at regular intervals to alert workers and the general public to incidents and to raise security awareness. For example reporting unattended items and unattended vehicles, loitering and suspicious behaviours/activities.

Signage

Security posters and signage are located in the terminal buildings, on the airside, landside, and along the perimeter fence to serve as cautions and deter perpetrators.



Task Force

The GACL has also formed a strong and vibrant Task Force. The Task Force is mobile, conducts a patrol in and around the airport and its facilities, and is always available on call 24/7 to respond to unusual or abnormal activities. The Task Force patrols the perimeter fence at irregular intervals to serve as a deterrent to adversaries.

Information Sharing

There is also a focus on information sharing. Apart from formal and informal daily information flow, quarterly Airport Security Committee meetings are used to elicit information and share the same with the stakeholders. AVSEC Management is also a member of the Airport Facilitation Committee, where security issues are discussed and aligned with facilitation and passenger experience at the airports. Members are encouraged to show interest and get involved fully in all security matters. Some highlights are information sharing, security layers, changes in security arrangements, reporting systems, adherence to security measures, and the importance of a good working relationship.

Quality Assurance

GACL also implements an internal quality assurance management system to continuously monitor the effective implementation of existing security measures within the layers and uses only certified security equipment. The purpose is to ensure compliance with the National Civil Aviation Security Program (NCASP), Airport Security Program (ASP), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and other industry requirements.

Security Culture Programme

As part of its quest to support the *ICAO Year Of Security Culture 2021*, GACL has developed a Security Culture Programme. The programme outlines management commitment to a strong and effective security culture in aviation, with security culture champions identified (at all levels) and stakeholder responsibilities identified. The programme also outlines security culture dos and don'ts.





GACL is preparing to launch the programme before the end of the second quarter of 2021 and to roll out support activities. Some of the activities include training and workshops for security and non-security staff, campaigns (office-to-office), sharing of flyers, and organizing security symposiums and quizzes. These activities will create a deeper awareness of the aviation security risk and why everyone must get involved and be part of the security team.

In addition to GACL's efforts to keep the airports safe, Airline Operators, Ground Handlers, Cargo Operators, Catering Service Providers, and Fuel Companies have approved Security Programmes that have been implemented. GCAA has oversight responsibility for their activities and ensures full implementation of various aspects of the NCASP.

