

INTENSIVE TRAINING TO MAINTAIN PORT SECURITY



'The Bridgetown Port - It is the first and last impression a ship's crew and passengers will have of Barbados'

Having been awarded the coveted title of Safest and Secure Port in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Shipping Association in 2011, Barbados Port Inc (BPI) is moving to safeguard this title.

Barbados Port Inc recently hosted an intensive 8-week security training session for its staff in an effort to keep its officers fully proficient in this area. This training was also extended to our strategic partners, and officers from the Customs, Police and Immigration departments participated along with personnel from Port Security and the Barbados Defence Force.

The training exercise, which was sponsored by the Organisation of the American States (OAS), was conducted by the USA-based consultancy group Halcrow at the request of the Government of Barbados.

Facilities Audit

According to Lead Trainer and Director of Maritime Security at Halcrow, Alan Westerman, the training involved an audit of the current security facilities at the Bridgetown Port and Port St. Charles aimed at identifying strengths and potential weaknesses.

It was designed to be both proactive and reactive in addressing major areas of concern such as illegal drugs, hazardous waste and weapons trafficking.

The evaluation, though not identifying any major potential vulnerabilities, showed the need for refresher training. The Halcrow team also consulted with a number of relevant agencies, including police, immigration, customs, the cruise and cargo sector, and Port security departments.

Particular attention was paid to the benchmark in maritime security - the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, formulated and administered by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The ISPS Code is a comprehensive set of measures which enhance the security of ships and port facilities, developed in response to several incidents - the Achille Lauro hijacking in the Mediterranean in 1985, the bombing of the USS Cole in Aden Harbour, Yemen in 2000, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. The ISPS Code is designed to instill confidence in the shipping industry from the perspective of the shipper and the port.

Westerman asserted that the Bridgetown Port was in compliance with the ISPS Code, and recommended that the Port highlight some of its practices on the IMO website for use as best practices for ports around the world.

Westerman further acknowledged that security overall at the Port is of a high standard. "However", he added, "since the Bridgetown Port is the economic driver of the nation, it is critical that Barbadians are protected from any and all possible threats".

Stakeholder Meetings

Consultant on the project, Anton Edmunds, indicated that one-on-one meetings were conducted with stakeholder representatives from across the public and private sectors in Barbados to gain comprehensive feedback on the results of the facilities audit and input on training needs. The group included members of the hotel and tourism sectors, disaster management and shipping sectors.

Training sessions were then developed following a major consultation meeting with all of the stakeholders. The schedule was developed with the objectives of meeting the needs of key Port stakeholders.

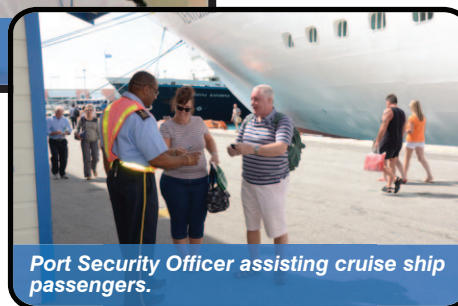
Specialty Training

Following approval from the OAS, the training programme was implemented over ten (10) modules including: *Advanced Port Training, *Customs Intelligence Analysis, *Surveillance Training, *Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Training (HAZWOPER), *Women in Security, *Incidence Command, *Continuity of Operations and Contingency Planning, *Closing and Reopening of the Port, *Advanced Port Facility Security Officer Training, and *Audits and Access Controls.

These sessions comprised both class and field exercises, and were conducted by instructors with several years experience in port security. A number of sessions on Maritime Security were also conducted at Almond Casuarina Beach Resort.



L-R Jeff Jelinek, Todd Kuschel, Instructors for the Advanced Port Training Course



Port Security Officer assisting cruise ship passengers.

Certification

After successfully passing the final test for each training module, officers were awarded the appropriate certifications. These certifications are internationally recognized and are eligible for credits at universities worldwide in fulfillment of the requirements for advanced degrees.

Participants agreed that the training was indeed very useful and enjoyed the interactivity. One Port security officer commented - "the trainers were extremely knowledgeable in Advanced Port Training. I really appreciated this course as I gained practical knowledge, and it affirmed the importance of my work to the Port and to Barbados. We received training on the newest hazard detection equipment and are now poised to be even more efficient at our jobs".

The 'Women in Security' module was specially organized and covered issues such as sexual harassment in the workplace and self-defence. Here, female officers entered into candid discussions about the role of female officers in the Port and uniformed divisions.

Manager of Security Services at the Port, Anthony Benn, concluded that the exercise was indeed important. "Halcrow has done an excellent job with this training, and the officers have certainly benefitted from this opportunity," he observed.