



OFFICE of INSPECTOR GENERAL
NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION

SAFETY AND SECURITY:

Observations on Security at the [REDACTED] Facility

Certain information in this report has been redacted due to its sensitive nature.

OIG-MAR-2023-006 | May 9, 2023


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Memorandum

To: Steve Predmore
Executive Vice President/Chief Safety Officer

Christian Zacariassen
Executive Vice President/Digital Technology and Innovation

From: Jim Morrison 
Assistant Inspector General, Audits

Date: May 9, 2023

Subject: *Safety and Security: Observations on Security at the [REDACTED] Facility (OIG-MAR-2023-006)*

On January 30 and 31, 2023, we conducted a site visit at the [REDACTED] Facility¹ ([REDACTED] facility) as part of an audit to [REDACTED].² During our visit, we observed—and employees told us about—significant safety and security risks at the facility. Most of the 26 employees we interviewed raised concerns, often unsolicited, about trespassers and their impact on employees’ safety and the security of company assets, such as locomotives, track switches, and inventory stored outside the materials warehouse. For this reason, we are issuing this management advisory report to bring immediate attention to these risks.³

We identified three key vulnerabilities that created these risks:

- [REDACTED]
- The company does not have [REDACTED] on site.
- The facility’s video surveillance system is [REDACTED]

¹ [REDACTED] While onsite, we conducted group and individual interviews with 26 employees—20 from the Mechanical department and 6 from the Material Control group in the Procurement department—to understand how [REDACTED]

² [REDACTED]

³ We conducted our review in accordance with standards we developed for alternative products. We performed our work from January 2023 through May 2023 in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

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The company's stated top priority is to ensure the safety of its employees and passengers. Officials in Amtrak's Police and Digital Technology and Innovation departments told us they plan to augment security personnel and infrastructure at the facility. These efforts, however, could take several years to fully implement. Until that time, the risks we identified to the safety of company employees and the security of company assets will remain acute concerns. Accordingly, the company should consider implementing interim solutions to keep its employees safe and assets secure at the [REDACTED] facility until it can fully implement its longer-term plans. In commenting on a draft of our report, the Executive Vice President/Chief Safety Officer, Executive Vice President/Digital Technology and Innovation, and Executive Vice President/Service Delivery and Operations agreed with our consideration for management and outlined actions the company has taken and plans to take to implement it.

PHYSICAL SECURITY VULNERABILITIES AT [REDACTED] FACILITY

While on site at the [REDACTED] facility, we observed—and employees volunteered—three noteworthy vulnerabilities in physical security.

Public access to company facilities. The [REDACTED] facility is situated between [REDACTED] [REDACTED]—passing directly between buildings on the property, as Figure 1 shows.⁴ The company's badge access control system protects the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but we observed that the public has full access to the [REDACTED] from this street, including access to [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Additionally, officials from the Digital Technology and Innovation department told us there is no company-wide strategy for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but they plan to hire a consultant in fiscal year 2024 to start identifying ways to protect these assets from trespassers.

⁴ The site is partially enclosed with fencing that, according to a company official, was installed sometime after April 2022.

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Figure 1. Map of Amtrak [REDACTED] Facility, 2023



Source: Imagery ©2023 CNES/Airbus, Maxar Technologies, U.S. Geological Survey, USDA/FPAC/GEO; Map data ©2023 Google; OIG notations and photographs

No company-provided [REDACTED]. The company does not have a dedicated [REDACTED] or other [REDACTED]. The Amtrak Police Department has [REDACTED] in the area, based in [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] includes the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]; therefore, [REDACTED]. A senior manager in [REDACTED] told us a commuter railroad that stores trainsets and other inventory items on the property hired [REDACTED] to work the night shift, [REDACTED] are on duty during the day.

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[REDACTED] **video surveillance system.** We observed that a video surveillance system is in place at the facility, but it is [REDACTED]. Company officials and employees gave us conflicting reasons. Senior managers in the Mechanical department and the Material Control group in the Procurement department told us the cameras have [REDACTED] because the network is [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]. Officials from the Digital Technology and Innovation department told us they only recently found out that no one at the facility has the [REDACTED] therefore, the system is [REDACTED]. Regardless, without a [REDACTED] employees told us, they [REDACTED]. In addition, according to the Amtrak Police Detective [REDACTED] crimes have occurred in front of the cameras, but because they [REDACTED] and it is not currently [REDACTED] there is [REDACTED].

SECURITY VULNERABILITIES PUT COMPANY EMPLOYEES AND ASSETS AT RISK

Company employees raised significant security concerns, citing examples of physical security vulnerabilities that have put employees and property at risk.⁵

Employee safety compromised. Most of the 26 employees we interviewed raised concerns about safety and security at the facility. For example, they told us there is [REDACTED] company-provided [REDACTED] and they believe that local authorities' support is limited. As a result, it is a general practice for Mechanical foremen to confront trespassers, who the employees said are sometimes violent and dangerous. Several employees told us this happens on a regular basis, and one such incident occurred during our visit when a trespasser with a weapon gained access to a rail car and defecated inside it. Two foremen we interviewed told us they had to detain the individual until first responders arrived. As another example, employees told us one employee stopped a trespasser from stealing a company welding machine by unhooking the hitch from the truck as the trespasser drove away.

In addition, trespassers have assaulted and threatened multiple employees on the property, including one incident in which a trespasser threw a hammer at an employee.

⁵ We have not independently verified these examples. Other than the incident that occurred while we were onsite, employees provided these examples verbally during our interviews or through email correspondence between site management and an Amtrak Police Department Detective. The Amtrak Police Department provided a list of three years of reported incidents from 2020 through 2022, which also supported instances of trespassing, theft, and vandalism.

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One employee told us that during the previous week they were approached and threatened while walking from a company building to their car. The Amtrak Police Detective [REDACTED] agreed that if the risks remain unaddressed, an employee could be seriously injured.

Company property vandalized. Employees told us—and company records supported—that trespassers break into rail cars and locomotives and access the rail lines. Specifically, among other incidents, trespasser actions include the following:

- attempting to steal a locomotive
- realigning unlocked railroad switches
- starting fires in locomotives or other areas
- breaking a locomotive Positive Train Control screen
- sleeping in rail cars parked in the [REDACTED]

Theft of company property. Company property is often stolen, including copper wires, generators, tools, and batteries, as well as items from employees' cars, according to company employees and records. One employee told us property is stolen every night.

THE COMPANY'S PLANS TO ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES COULD TAKE SEVERAL YEARS TO FULLY IMPLEMENT

Company officials in Amtrak's Police and Digital Technology and Innovation departments told us they recently became aware of the security vulnerabilities we identified and, although the [REDACTED] facility is one of the most challenging locations to secure because of the [REDACTED] they have plans to augment the police presence and infrastructure. These plans, however, are expected to take several years to fully implement. Specifically, the company plans the following actions:

- **Increase police presence.** In May 2023, company management stated that they will begin reallocating four commissioned police officer positions to [REDACTED]. As we previously reported, however, each state uses its own standards to commission officers and this process can be time consuming—typically taking 18 to 24 months.⁶

⁶ *Safety and Security: Management of the Police Department Has Recently Improved, but Foundational Decisions Are Needed on its Role and Priorities* (OIG-A-2020-012), July 1, 2020.

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- **Upgrade security infrastructure.** The company is in the process of designing security enhancements to the [REDACTED] facility. Planned enhancements include enclosing the parking lot and selected buildings with fencing and access controls, but they will not address the access from [REDACTED]. The Senior Director of Corporate Security told us the Amtrak Police Department plans to request approximately \$3.5 to \$4.5 million in fiscal year 2024 to execute the proposed security upgrades. If the company approves the request, the department would start the process of soliciting vendors, awarding contracts, and initiating work. In addition, the facility is a historic site, and alterations to it require approvals from the state historic preservation office and others, which could delay the project. Given these timelines, it could take several years to complete the planned infrastructure upgrades.
- **Upgrade the video surveillance system.** According to the Senior Director of Safety and Security in the Digital Technology and Innovation department, the company recently began upgrading the video surveillance system at the facility. The Senior Director also told us the upgraded system will include 70 cameras that will be connected to the companywide surveillance system, allowing access to its feed from anywhere in the country, and it should be completed by the end of fiscal year 2024. The Senior Director told us she was only recently made aware of the potential [REDACTED] issue after our site visit and is exploring ways to [REDACTED].
- **Secure access to [REDACTED]** According to a senior company official in the Digital Technology and Innovation department, the company plans to secure access to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] or other storage facilities across the network. This official noted that they had set aside \$350,000 to hire a consultant to identify options for better security over these assets, but the consultant would not start until fiscal year 2024, and a solution could take several years.

Until the company implements these longer-term plans, however, the risks we identified to the safety of employees and company assets at the [REDACTED] will remain imminent unless the company implements interim solutions.

CONSIDERATION FOR MANAGEMENT

To reduce physical security risks to Amtrak employees and company assets while the company works on more permanent solutions, the Executive Vice President/Chief Safety Officer—in consultation with the Executive Vice President/Digital Technology

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and Innovation—should consider implementing interim security solutions at the [REDACTED] facility. These might include establishing an [REDACTED] and assessing the feasibility of temporarily [REDACTED] to the site’s existing video surveillance system.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTS AND OIG ANALYSIS

In commenting on a draft of this report, the Executive Vice President/Chief Safety Officer, Executive Vice President/Digital Technology and Innovation, and Executive Vice President/Service Delivery and Operations agreed with our consideration for management. They reported that the company has begun implementing interim safety and security enhancements with additional actions planned over the short- and long-term.

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APPENDIX A

OIG Team Members

J.J. Marzullo, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Audits

Dorian Herring, Director

Jana Brodsky, Senior Audit Manager

Sarah Brandes, Senior Auditor, Lead

Alexander Cullen, Senior Auditor

Frank Mazurek, Counsel to the Inspector General

Nadine Bennett, Associate Legal Counsel

Alison O'Neill, Communications Analyst

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800-468-5469

Contact Information

Jim Morrison

Assistant Inspector General, Audits

Mail: Amtrak OIG

10 G Street NE, 3W-300

Washington D.C., 20002

Phone: 202-906-4600