



Avianca Airlines

Avianca Airlines Combats Drug Trafficking with American Dynamics™ Security System

Avianca Airlines has a powerful tool to fight drug trafficking. Using state-of-the-art American Dynamics™ CCTV surveillance cameras and digital video management systems from Tyco International, airline authorities can stop illegal activities and provide visual evidence to prosecute drug smugglers.

The largest airline in Colombia, South America, Avianca operates out of several international airports, with daily flights to major U.S., European, and South and Central American cities.

A longtime Tyco International customer, Avianca recently decided to install American Dynamics SpeedDome programmable dome cameras and Intellex® digital video management systems to gain more control over airport security.

Today, Avianca protects its assigned gates and cargo warehouses with nearly 100 dome and fixed cameras positioned to record

CASE SUMMARY

Location:

Colombia, South America

System:

American Dynamics:

Domes

Cameras

Intellex

Matrix Switcher

Network Client

specified activity inside and around the perimeter of its facilities. CCTV footage is recorded via Intellex, which provides easily accessible video. Intellex systems are connected through a local area network and are viewable using American Dynamics Network Client software.

Having replaced old VCRs with Intellex digital video management systems, Avianca security can also access footage of interest within minutes instead of having to run through hours of video tape to find what they are looking for. In addition, the airline records footage directly from the dome cameras onto Intellex 24/7 in high-traffic areas. For less traveled areas, such as the baggage warehouse, officials have programmed Intellex to record footage only when the dome cameras have certain motion in their field of view. This system helps Avianca use valuable network bandwidth more efficiently by only recording footage of interest.

Avianca also purchased a matrix switcher system, which makes it easy for operators to manage a complex CCTV system. Security personnel can control more cameras and easily switch between different camera views and monitors in the control room. This provides greater situational awareness helping to identify and address problematic activities more effectively.

“The systems help us to prevent illegal or dangerous incidents among passengers and employees,” said Edgar Cano, chief manager of National Airports for Avianca Airlines. For example, using American Dynamics cameras and Intellex, Avianca security personnel work alongside authorities in Colombia to monitor for illegal activities and apprehend suspects. In several instances, the airline caught drug smugglers by identifying illicit behavior via the CCTV camera recordings on Intellex.

A real-life example presented itself on April 18, 2006 when an unaccompanied 5-year-old girl arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport aboard Avianca Airlines Flight #020 from Bogota, Colombia with two hard-sided suitcases. An inspector conducting a routine examination opened one of the girl's suitcases and noticed an unusually thick side. The inspector probed the siding of the suitcase and discovered a white powdery substance that field-tested positive for heroin. The officer seized the heroin which weighed approximately 1,042 grams. While customs contacted the Administration for Child Services, Avianca officials retrieved surveillance footage to determine if the child's mother acted suspiciously on tape when she dropped the child off.

The American Dynamics surveillance system gives airline authorities the means to provide visual evidence for criminal trials by burning footage from Intellex onto CD to share with authorities. The airline is able to share surveillance footage with authorities within minutes, aiding law enforcement personnel in faster identification and apprehension of suspects. The visual evidence, in conjunction with the substance found in the girls' possession, was enough to prosecute the mother for illegal drug possession, illegal drug trading and child exploitation. She is now serving time in jail for her crimes.

American Dynamics solutions also assist with other important, although more administrative airline tasks. For example, the FAA and other regulatory agencies have stringent guidelines for various aspects of airline operations, such as procedures for maintenance of airplane fleets. The American Dynamics solution monitors maintenance crews as they perform repairs and regular maintenance activities for tighter global control of airport operations.

“We’ve had extremely positive feedback from our passengers as well as our employees about the system,” Mr. Cano said. “It’s very easy to use, so our staff is able to get up to speed very quickly and has already been a more recognizable force throughout the airports. Passengers also feel the difference. They know they are safer traveling with us because they know that they are in good hands.”

Due to its initial successes with American Dynamics products, Avianca plans to unify its control centers at various airports, using Tyco International solutions within a newly established control center. In addition, there are installations of CCTV systems in airports in three other major cities where American Dynamics systems are being installed.

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Edar Cano

*Chief Manager of National Airports,
Avianca Airlines*