

ANNUAL REPORT
on the
Access to Information Act
2004 – 2005

Introduction ...

Since its creation in April 2002, through Bill C-49, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) is responsible for several key aviation security services, namely in the area of screening passengers and their belongings.

CATSA's mission is to protect the public by securing critical elements of the air transportation system as assigned by the government.

As a recently established Crown corporation, this is the second annual report on the *Access to Information Act* that CATSA has tabled in Parliament.

Highlights and accomplishments ...

CATSA is always working to perfect its programs. In the 2004-2005 fiscal year, CATSA reorganised its Access to Information program with a view to creating a team of professionals who would assume the key legislative responsibilities surrounding access to information issues.

In addition to the purchase, in January 2004, of the ATIPflow software, which proved to be an important step in improving CATSA's administration of requests for the Access to Information program, CATSA hired two consultants to process requests made to CATSA much more efficiently.

Statistical report and trends ...

In the 2003-2004 fiscal year, CATSA received thirty-four (34) requests under the *Access to Information Act*, thirty (30) of which were carried forward to the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

As the enclosed statistical report shows, in the 2004-2005 fiscal year, CATSA received twenty-three (23) requests under the *Access to Information Act*. Forty-three (43) requests were processed during the reporting period while ten (10) requests were carried forward to the current fiscal year.

Of the twenty-three (23) new requests received in 2004-2005, three (3) came from the public, seventeen (17) from the media and three (3) from businesses. On that basis, we may say that the majority of Requests for Access to Information received by CATSA come from the media.

Regarding the disposition of requests completed, in the forty-three (43) requests processed in 2004-2005, partial disclosure was provided for ten (10) requests, full disclosure for five (5) requests, six (6) requests could not be processed because there were no records relating to the request, twenty (20) request were abandoned, and finally, two (2) were totally exempted.

The trend for exemptions invoked in 2004-2005 was relatively similar. Section 19(1) (personal information) was most frequently invoked by CATSA, followed by sections 16(2) (Security) and 15(1) (International affairs and defence). Other sections invoked with reference to access requests processed during the reporting period were sections 16(1) (Law enforcement and investigations), 21(1) (Advice, etc...) and 24 (Statutory prohibitions against disclosure).

Of the forty-three (43) requests processed during the past fiscal year, ten (10) were processed within thirty days, one (1) within 31 to 60 days, seven (7) within 61 to 120 days, and twenty-five (25) took more than 121 days to process.

During the reporting period, CATSA extended the time limit prescribed by the *Access to Information Act* in seven (7) of the thirty-seven (37) requests in which full or partial disclosure was provided. In all the cases where an extension was invoked, it was due to the fact that interference with the operations of the institution or consultations were necessary.

CATSA recognizes that there is room for improvement and will make every effort to ensure that the next fiscal year (2005-2006) sees progress in processing times. The following are some new developments undertaken by CATSA to achieve this goal:

- The re-organization of the ATIP unit
- The hiring of an experience ATIP Advisor
- The establishment of defined procedures for processing requests
- The development of a training/awareness program for CATSA employees

Complaints and investigations...

The Information Commissioner of Canada received two (2) complaints in the 2004-2005 fiscal year concerning requests for access to information processed by CATSA.

The complaints filed with the Information Commissioner were mostly relating to the exemptions and exclusions that were invoked or the failure to process the request within the statutory timeframe.

The Office of the Information Commissioner launched an investigation into these allegations. To this date, the investigations are still open and CATSA is waiting for the Commissioner to make a decision regarding these matters.

Organization of activities and procedures ...

CATSA is based in the National Capital Region and employs approximately 220 persons.

The organisation is headed by Mr. Jacques Duchesneau, C.M., President and Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Duchesneau is also the person designated as head of CATSA for the purposes of the *Access to Information Act*.

During this reporting period, the Director of Communications was responsible for CATSA's Access to Information program. In CATSA's organizational structure for the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the Communications Division was under the Risk and Quality Branch, whose Vice-President reported directly to the Executive Vice-President, who reported to the President and Chief Executive Officer.

In addition to her communications responsibilities, the Director of Communications served as Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator. Thus, CATSA's Access to Information program had a Coordinator and a communications analyst who were responsible for administering requests received by the organization, in addition to purchase orders to enable CATSA to hire consultants in time of need.

Regarding information management, CATSA believes that sound management of records and information is a prerequisite to the successful application of the *Access to Information Act* and a key component of good governance.

It should be observed that the current Information Management program supports a Subject Classification System (SCS) to define CATSA's programs and functions. The SCS is used to organize official records.

The organization's Information Management division is working with Library and Archives Canada on the new functional classification system for government records. This approach will further increase record-keeping efficiency by offering the option of tailoring the system to CATSA's programs. The new approach will continue to ensure CATSA's compliance with the *Access to Information Act*.

Like any responsible organization, CATSA has established institutional procedures for the requests for access to information it receives. These procedures provide that once the requests are entered in the management information system, they go directly to the Access to Information Coordinator. Program staff takes care of the administrative and statutory duties related to information access, particularly administering fees, coordinating the collection of records, consulting, issuing notices of extension, reviewing records, coordinating approvals and drafting replies.

The Access to Information program staff coordinates the retrieval of the requested records from the organization's other programs. The program staff is responsible for reviewing records relating to the request and applying the exemptions and/or exclusions provided under the *Act*.

Once all the exemptions and exclusions have been identified, the program staff coordinates the executive approval process. The process established by the organization provides that first, the Access to Information Coordinator approves the exemptions and/or exclusions, then the records go to the Director of the program concerned for approval, next to the Vice-President of the program concerned, followed by the Executive Vice-President, and

finally to the President and Chief Executive Officer for final approval, as the person responsible for the application of the *Access to Information Act* at CATSA.

Once the senior management approvals have been obtained, the Access to Information program staff prepares the records to be disclosed and a reply is sent to the applicant by the Coordinator.

Since last year, CATSA is proactive in posting on its website the travel and hospitality expense reports of its President and Chief Executive Officer, and senior management executives. CATSA also regularly publishes on its website the approximate numbers of prohibited items intercepted at Canadian airports.

CATSA's Access to Information program realizes that it is essential to ensure ongoing employee training on our obligations under the *Access to Information Act*. In the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the program Coordinator started developing an information session for CATSA employees to raise their awareness of the importance and scope of the *Access to Information Act*. The information sessions are planned to begin in the next fiscal year.

Conclusion...

CATSA recognizes and respects the fundamental principle behind the *Access to Information Act*: to provide a right of access to information in records under the control of a government institution in accordance with the principles that government information should be available to the public and that necessary exceptions to the right of access should be limited and specific.

As such, CATSA recognizes the importance of the *Access to Information Act* for Canadians and promises not only to meet its key statutory responsibilities and obligations with respect to access to information, but also to strive to continually improve its performance in processing requests for access to information.