



Fact Sheet

January 2005

Pallet Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System

The Pallet Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS) is a self-contained stationary gamma-ray scanning system that captures images of pallets and large pieces of freight in customs commercial examination facilities. This state-of-the-art technology assists officers in examining dense freight in order to detect contraband, weapons, and other potentially dangerous goods.

The Pallet VACIS units use a low-level radiation source to penetrate cargo. The *Cobalt 60* energy source emits a gamma-ray beam that provides an image similar in many ways to those produced by X-ray systems. Using this scanning method, operators view radiographic images of goods on a computer to quickly and easily identify hidden compartments associated with the concealment of dangerous goods. Pallet VACIS units enable operators to determine if commercial cargo is consistent with the declared manifest.

The CBSA has purchased three units, which have been installed at marine container examination facilities in British Columbia; Montreal, Quebec; and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

The equipment is manufactured by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), based in San Diego, California. Each unit costs approximately \$2 million CDN.

This safe and secure technology allows shipments to be scanned quickly, thereby minimizing disruptions and costs for importers while enhancing container security. This is the latest in a series of innovative technologies that the Canada Border Services Agency has invested in to stop dangerous goods from entering Canada, and to better protect Canadians.

Investing in Pallet VACIS units re-enforces the CBSA's commitment of ensuring a safe and secure border. The CBSA will continue to explore the use of new state-of-the-art technology to maintain its commitment as an innovative leader in border management.