

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Everyone at VIA Rail recognizes that safety and security is a primary concern for travellers. Passenger rail is widely recognized as the safest mode of public transportation, and an increasingly attractive alternative for Canadians concerned about the dangers of travelling on congested highways. We are proud of VIA's safety record and we are also especially mindful of concerns about security.

### **SECURITY**

Given recent world events and continuing concerns about terrorism, security has become an even more important element in our focus on safety management. We have developed a wide range of measures to mitigate risks and potential threats, and to ensure that security vigilance is practiced throughout the organization.

We developed a Corporate Security Master Plan, which identifies actions to be taken to protect the Corporation, its employees and its customers from external acts which are intended to cause harm or loss. Key points of the plan and updates on security issues are communicated regularly to all employees. An important focus of communications is to develop a heightened "security awareness" among employees, and to maintain vigilance regarding security throughout the Corporation.

VIA has conducted a complete review of security measures, with the help of experts in international security and counter-terrorism. As a result, we made a number of improvements to enhance security and have strengthened information-sharing networks with other rail operators, both domestically and internationally, as well as with government agencies and emergency services.

A key initiative coming out of this exercise was the establishment by Management Committee of the Strategic Security Planning Committee (SSPC) to review, assess and adjust VIA's wide range of security measures. VIA's Strategic Security Planning Committee regroups participants from many key VIA departments, and its activities are also linked to those of unions, government departments, security intelligence services and other railways.

## **SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

As a result of the five-year review of the *Railway Safety Act* in 2001, all federally-regulated railways are required to implement a Safety Management System (SMS). VIA participated in the development of this regulation as well as the guidebook for implementing such a system.

We implemented our own Safety Management System in 2001, and submit it annually to Transport Canada. Transport Canada has recognized VIA as a leader in the industry, consistently praising our willingness to take immediate actions in order to improve our Safety Management System when required.

Transport Canada conducted an implementation audit of the System in the fall of 2002, issuing its report in 2003. The audit included an exhaustive review of all components of the System, including the setting of annual safety targets, reporting and accountability procedures, employee involvement, risk management and compliance with rules and regulations. In its findings, Transport Canada recognized the efforts and commitment demonstrated by VIA management, unionized employees and representatives, as well as the success achieved to date by VIA. The report confirmed that the overall implementation of the system is proceeding well. A number of opportunities for further improvement were also identified, and a third audit was scheduled for 2004.

The 2004 audit report once again showed very good results, particularly with regard to an ongoing commitment towards the Safety Management System at all levels within the organization. VIA was also given good marks for the corrective actions that were taken to improve the system's documentation and ongoing implementation.

VIA continues to refine the system, improving communication of safety performance targets to front-line employees, documentation of safety procedures, and continued integration of the system into all facets of VIA operations.