



# Case study | Lac-Mégantic, QC

## Getting through the unthinkable

### Protecting people and the environment after the Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster

On July 6th, 2013, in the small city of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, an unattended freight train carrying crude oil derailed causing the massive explosion of numerous tank cars that caught fire. Forty-seven lives were lost, nearly half of the downtown area were destroyed and the town became a contamination site due to spilled petroleum. It was the deadliest non-passenger train disaster in Canadian history, and the deadliest overall rail disaster in Canada since 1864.

The town desperately needed assistance to help control access to the damage site and ensure the safety of the people in the surrounding areas, as well as a minimal impact on the environment. After the explosion, GardaWorld was quick to the scene.

Security professionals were deployed without delay. Each security guard received a detailed breakdown of the sequence of events leading up to the disaster from a Sûreté du Québec representative. They were all given coping mechanisms to mentally and emotionally adapt to the situation and assumed their duties with a sense of pride in being able to provide assistance in a time of tragedy.

### Strict access control in the public eye

The access control provided by our guards was of the utmost importance for the fenced-in crash site at Lac-Mégantic. A strict accreditation process was conducted for more than 4,000 individuals who frequented the site, and trucks and ambulances had to be able to leave efficiently in the event of an incident.

One unique addition to the guard duties at this site was that the disaster was covered in the media internationally, putting our security guards in near-constant contact with reporters. Our employees had to manage media representatives' multiple attempts to gain access to the site. It was crucial for the 200+ guards to remain alert and sharp to ensure that the site and those around it were well protected, and to properly represent GardaWorld on a large scale.

### A trusted public-private partnership

The contract between the city of Lac-Mégantic and GardaWorld included general site management, soil decontamination, land rehabilitation and the reconstruction of multiple buildings in downtown Lac-Mégantic.

With highly dedicated security staff representing GardaWorld 24/7 at the three entrances to the site, access was controlled in an organized manner which promoted safety oriented practices on a still-recovering piece of land. Security guards performed their duties diligently and efficiently to secure the land and represent their company in the media.

GardaWorld's collaboration with multiple stakeholders, such as government officials, the Sûreté du Québec, fire station officials and Lac-Mégantic workers, helped assure citizens of the small town that they would be properly protected and well taken care of in the aftermath of the tragedy.

To learn more about our security services, contact your regional public security expert:

- **Western Canada, Central & Atlantic**  
Scott Young, [scott.young@garda.com](mailto:scott.young@garda.com)
- **Quebec**  
Patrick Nadon, [patrick.nadon@garda.com](mailto:patrick.nadon@garda.com)

**1 855 GO GARDA (464 2732)**