



## CASE STUDY

# GardaWorld and the Edmonton International Airport

A solid partnership built on open communication, teamwork and a shared commitment to ensuring the airport is safe and secure.

**GARDAWORLD**

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# Introduction

At GardaWorld, we have been providing full-service security solutions to the Edmonton International Airport for more than two decades, and we just signed another 10-year contract. The YEG management team believes GardaWorld has been instrumental in keeping the airport running smoothly and protected from threats—not only on a daily basis, but also for special events and during times of crisis. It all comes down to our unparalleled expertise and seamless, effective collaboration with airport management and other organizations involved in YEG's operations, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Keeping any airport safe and secure is no simple job, as the operating environment and challenges change regularly. YEG is no exception. In fact, there are heightened complexities to navigate with YEG, as compared to other airports, because it is on the largest land mass of any airport in Canada, with more than 17 miles of perimeter fence line and 7,000 acres of land to patrol. Furthermore, airport property contains the terminal building, fixed-base operators (FBOs), plus a range of other businesses on airport ground—including a mall, a casino, a horse track and the Edmonton base of STARS, which provides life-saving critical care on the ground, in the air and virtually. YEG is also Canada's fifth-busiest airport, serving 8.2 million passengers per year, and offering non-stop service to 50 destinations worldwide.



# Our solutions at work

## A thriving partnership that continues to evolve

GardaWorld has grown and adapted over the years to respond to YEG's changing needs. We began with simply manning security doors more than 20 years ago, and now deliver a comprehensive suite of solutions that combine on-the-ground security personnel, high-tech Perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems, behind-the-scenes operators for security surveillance and much more. A lot of new value-added service initiatives have been incorporated over time and continue to be added as the airport's needs change, and as new technologies become available. The number of security personnel we have at YEG has also grown tremendously. We currently have more than 110 security personnel assigned to the site. Additionally, we have a reserve staff of 25 to 30 people, and another 80 seasonal staff members during the construction season.

## An approach to security that leads with customer service

Prioritizing the safety and security of airport staff, passengers and their belongings does not have to come at the expense of positive work and traveling experiences. That is why at GardaWorld, we train our personnel to be customer-service oriented, so any tactics do not have to be used until the last minute, and only if necessary. Our approach of leading with customer service entails keeping everyone safe and everything secure, while those working at or passing through the airport have experiences that are as pleasant and stress-free as possible.

This approach involves a combination of efficient security measures, clear communication, greeting passengers with a friendly smile, answering questions in a helpful and informative manner, and addressing any concerns or complaints promptly and professionally. A few simple examples of our customer-centric approach are as follows: how our airport security personnel are available to assist travelers with their luggage if needed, how they push wheelchairs, and how they help passengers obtain any personal items they have lost or forgotten on the aircraft. In fact, our customer-centric approach is based on the Disney Training program for customer service, and we are so committed to it that we have a dedicated on-site trainer. Furthermore, this type of training is repeated yearly to maintain the skill set among employees.

## For GardaWorld and YEG, it is communication above all

Clear and open communication is key in any successful relationship, and that is very much the case for the relationship between GardaWorld and YEG. Mr. Sean Power, Manager, Terminal Operations & Security at Edmonton International Airport, said the following: "We're very lucky that we have an open style of communication with GardaWorld." He speaks about working hand in hand with the GardaWorld team and coming up with ideas on how to do things better and differently.

Mr. Garry Holland, GardaWorld Branch Manager, Protective Services, Edmonton International Airport agrees. "It all comes down to teamwork and working together to find the best solutions to ensure that the airport is safe and secure," said Mr. Holland.



## Securing the airport with a wide spectrum of solutions

From the terminals to airside to the retail and commercial areas of the airport, we have implemented a broad range of tried-and-tested security solutions. These solutions both minimize the risk of threats, while putting our personnel in optimal positions to take fast action if required.

**Here are the high-level security services GardaWorld provides to YEG:**

- Access Control
- Airside Enforcement and Perimeter Patrols
- Terminal and Landside Patrols
- Investigations of Security Infractions
- Emergency Response for Airfield Emergencies, Terminal Evacuation, Bomb Threats and other Active Threats
- Medical Assistance Response, including non-EMS and simply escorting ambulances/paramedic personnel
- Safe Walk initiative
- Security Escalation Plan—our Response Protocol is aligned with the Airport Security Plan
- Static Surveillance Patrol Initiative, with a focus on high-theft target areas
- Deterrence Patrol Protocol, with strategically positioned Security Personnel in terminal building to ensure High Visibility
- Cooperative Security Program—partnering with the Airport RCMP on foot patrols
- Tactical Patrol Officers
- Airside Enforcement Officers Unit
- Airside Traffic Directives Enforcement
- Infiltration/Penetration Testing Program—testing our Security personnel for competency
- Red Team Testing/Drills Program—testing Uniformed Personnel and Security Surveillance Operators for competency

**“We’re happy to provide a positive reference for GardaWorld as we value our partnership and the top quality services they provide for our airport. I feel very comfortable coming to work every day knowing that GardaWorld is doing the job we need them to do — providing safety and security in our airport.”**

*—Mr. Sean Power, Manager, Terminal Operations & Security at Edmonton International Airport*



## **Comprehensive and advanced training that makes GardaWorld a cut above**

The training we offer our staff not only gives us a competitive edge over other security services companies, but also gives our clients at YEG peace of mind. This is because our guards are prepared to react to any situation—big or small—that could arise in the airport.

We have strong training programs in place that produce high-quality security personnel who are confident to tackle any situation. Specifically, all new recruits are put through the Aerodrome Security Officer Training (ASOT), a regulatory requirement during onboarding, while more seasoned guards can enlist in advanced training sessions, including the Pressure Point Control Tactics (PPCT), De-Escalation Training, and Airside Vehicle Operators Permit (AVOP) Training programs and certifications. Other notable courses are Human Trafficking Awareness Training, Active Threat/Active Shooter Awareness Training, and Indigenous Awareness Training. Management is also involved in regular training from the Airports Council International, with certifications and courses, including Airport Security for Executives, Office for Bombing Prevention, and Surveillance and Threat Detection. These are all available to ensure employees at all levels are up to date with the most relevant knowledge.

Offering diverse and enhanced training produces an impressive caliber of guards, which is why we are continuously incorporating new training into our programs. Our commitment to arming our staff with the latest knowledge and tools does not go unnoticed by YEG management.

**“GardaWorld has always been proactive with training their guards, resulting in more confidence and expertise in working through different scenarios. This provides a better experience for passengers in our airport.”**

*—Mr. Jason Sangster, Director Terminal Operations, Security & Safety for the Edmonton International Airport*

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## Case studies

# Notable events and crises and how GardaWorld helped create a safe and secure environment at YEG

For 20+ years, we have been there to support YEG's security needs. As YEG's trusted partner, we have been responsible for managing unexpected challenges, special events, and critical situations. Below are examples of noteworthy crises and exceptional events where GardaWorld rose to the occasion, delivering the first-rate expertise we are known for.

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## Fort McMurray wildfire

### How GardaWorld stepped up to facilitate the area's evacuation

In 2016, the Fort McMurray wildfire saw close to 88,000 people forced out of their homes in what was the largest wildfire evacuation in Alberta's history. Once the Edmonton International Airport got notice of the city's evacuation plan, they opened their Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to manage the increased volume of passengers that would be coming through.

**To support this large influx of people, we maintained a close working relationship with the RCMP, the Edmonton Police Service and Alberta Health Services to manage logistics and prepare for uncertainties.**

Due to the hurried nature of the evacuation, there were incoming flights that did not have a Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) screening prior to landing, so upon arrival they had to create a separate screening zone, with GardaWorld managing the flow to ensure proper security measures were conducted prior to departing. Flights were also coming in during the middle of the night, including planes that had hospital and psychiatric patients who required additional assistance and visibility. Teams relied heavily on GardaWorld's expertise to manage the safety and security of the movement of arrivals and departures.

**"It was a strategic partnership," said YEG's Mr. Sangster of GardaWorld's support. "We couldn't do it without GardaWorld."**

Between the large volume of incoming traffic, heightened emotions of passengers, and increased logistical challenges, GardaWorld stepped up and provided the airport with their unparalleled expertise and solution-oriented approach to managing security during a crisis.

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# The pandemic

## How GardaWorld adapted and delivered more efficient security operations with a reduced workforce

When the pandemic hit in early 2020, public health forced air travel to a halt in an effort to combat the spread of the virus, then saw a massive decline due to travel restrictions and an overall decrease in demand. Like all airports, the pandemic slowed down the traffic at YEG. However, with 7,000 acres of land to secure, this area still required active protection.

With the decrease in demand, the airport was forced to reduce manpower, and GardaWorld lost half of its guard force. Critical roles were identified, but we needed to be efficient in how we continued to protect the infrastructure. **With a skeleton staff, our team came up with creative solutions with how best to optimize operations.**

“It was collaborative decision-making on how to do it effectively and efficiently,” said YEG’s Mr. Power. Although it initially proved to be a challenge, the pandemic forced YEG and GardaWorld to look at the efficiencies of the entire operation, resulting in the airport becoming more mobile by reducing some of the posts, increasing monitoring, and utilizing analytics to dispatch the appropriate response.

During the pandemic, GardaWorld also played a major role when the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) was onsite, from getting the public health workers in and out of the building, to supporting travelers returning to Canada who did not know how to navigate the new screening rules.

Despite the cost and manpower challenges that arose because of the pandemic, the new processes and procedures that were put into place carried over post-pandemic, resulting in a better use of technology and overall more efficient security operations.

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# The Pope visit

## How GardaWorld ensured security during the high-profile event

In July 2022, Pope Francis visited Canada for six days, first stopping in Edmonton, Alberta. Although he would only be at YEG for a couple of hours, given his high profile, we needed to create circumstances and an environment that would result in a seamless and secure arrival and welcome.

It took months of planning with all involved parties, including the RCMP, the Swiss Guard, the Edmonton Police Service, the Department of National Defence and GardaWorld, to develop the detailed security plan for what the visit would look like.

In addition to the extensive planning, we played a significant role on the day of, from helping to manage the traffic, to laying the groundwork for the Pope's smooth arrival and departure.

The day prior to the Pope's visit, a convoy was starting in Calgary, and approaching Edmonton, with rumblings that they might try to stop at the airport. The entire security team, which included the parties mentioned above, worked closely together, making it not easy for them to come in, while simultaneously finding a way to lock down the area without preventing protesters from exhibiting their rights. GardaWorld was one of the key players in this sensitive operation.

"Even though we had RCMP presence, GardaWorld still played a significant part," said YEG's Mr. Power, in reference to GardaWorld's fundamental involvement in the complete end-to-end operation. "From a security perspective, it was by far the best-case scenario. There were no threats or anything like that," said Mr. Power.

**The Pope's short but momentous visit "went off without a hitch," said YEG's Mr. Sangster.**

With a highly collaborative approach to both the planning and problem-solving, GardaWorld played a critical role in the success of the day, and continues to be instrumental in any security detail rolled out at the airport.

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# Welcoming refugees at YEG

## How GardaWorld's human approach to security made Ukrainian refugees feel more comfortable

In late March 2022, the Edmonton International Airport received the first of many flights carrying Ukrainian refugees. The aircraft was already en route to Edmonton from Poland as a “deadhead” flight, with the intention of picking up cargo to deliver to Ukraine via Poland. This particular flight brought more than 60 Ukrainians, many with family connections in Alberta. Four more flights followed, with the airport also receiving aircrafts that had been originally planned to land in Saskatoon and Regina, due to the success of the previous arrivals, which GardaWorld played a significant part in executing.

In order to ensure the safe and trouble-free arrival of the refugees, GardaWorld worked closely with the YEG security team to ensure everyone could come together to understand the needs and potential challenges that would accompany the group, many of whom had come directly from refugee camps. **We provided our staff with additional training to ensure they could effectively support the arriving families. Some had never been on an airplane or stepped onto an escalator before, so we adapted our usual approach to make these people feel more at ease.**

From the moment the refugees arrived, we took measures to make sure they were not scared or uncomfortable in their environment and everyone could move safely and securely every step of the way. To prepare for their arrival, the escalators were shut down for safety, and guards were available in the bathrooms to assist those who did not know how to use the automatic faucets. Our guards were positioned in the baggage claim area, making sure people understood how they worked, and children did not think they were something to play on. With language being a potential barrier for many, the guards were instructed on how to communicate using gestures, such as modeling how to use the faucets if they saw someone struggling.

**“We’ll always open the door to countries that want to come for refuge in Canada, and we couldn’t have done that without GardaWorld,” said YEG’s Mr. Power.**

According to Mr. Power, GardaWorld played a key role in the transition right from arrival to departure. After the families deplaned, GardaWorld staff escorted them through Canadian customs, assisted them as they collected their baggage, and then helped them move safely to their next mode of transportation—mainly buses going into the city or to a hotel.

The priority was to keep these individuals and families, who had been through so much, safe and secure. YEG management recognized that GardaWorld staff took their roles to the next level, acting with kindness and extra compassion, making sure everyone felt welcome and comfortable during the emotional transition.

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## Ongoing military deployments

### How GardaWorld expertly manages deployments at YEG

With CFB Edmonton, a Canadian Forces base located just outside of the city, YEG sees ongoing military deployments ranging from training missions to active war. To prepare for these deployments, GardaWorld is involved with all aspects of airport security for the military, to make sure everything is running smoothly when the soldiers or aircrafts are coming and going.

We work closely with the airport to conduct reconnaissance on the area, our guards are strategically positioned, and our cameras are used to monitor the premises. For more complex security issues, we collaborate with the RCMP and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Furthermore, according to YEG's Mr. Sangster, these organizations are appreciative and complimentary about the security work done by the GardaWorld team.

Military deployments are sensitive operations that require safety and efficiency, things that GardaWorld knows how to execute. **“When it comes to deployment, GardaWorld has been playing a significant role for years,”** said YEG's Mr. Power.

From lining everything up on the cargo way to actively monitoring on the ground, GardaWorld handles military deployments with ease and precision.

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**“At GardaWorld, we believe it’s all about building and maintaining a relationship. That comes from strong communication, working with the client, meeting their needs, and offering solutions.”**

*—Mr. Garry Holland, GardaWorld Branch Manager, Protective Services, Edmonton International Airport*

# Working together to secure YEG

## Our collaborations with major organizations are seamless and smooth

Airports are extremely complex, multi-faceted environments that require many different organizations to ensure they are running as they should be, and without incidents escalating. Due to this, GardaWorld regularly collaborates with several entities.

Working closely and in a cohesive manner with the airport RCMP at the Security Operations Control Centre (SOCC) on special events and crisis situations, guards also receive additional training from the RCMP for enhanced competency. Airport Emergency Response Services (ERS), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) are other major organizations that GardaWorld works with on a regular basis, on everything from medical event calls to assisting with special charter flights (such as the Ukrainian refugee flights) and baggage inspection support.

Outside of those major organizations, we also work jointly with airport tenants and stakeholders to manage any security violations that occur, and the Project Management Business Unit for terminal and construction escorts. These organizations rely heavily on the continued collaboration of GardaWorld and our specialized skills and expertise to keep YEG's operations running smoothly.

## Looking back on our shared successes, and looking forward to many more

The case study examples highlighted previously not only showcase GardaWorld's unwavering dedication to safeguarding YEG, but also demonstrate our adeptness in responding to a variety of circumstances and working seamlessly with everyone involved.

Outside of the unexpected and planned events, there are the day-to-day operations, and YEG's Mr. Power said that the renewed 10-year contract is proof of the faith they have that GardaWorld delivers. He continued and said that GardaWorld delivers on security, customer service and simply the presence they have, too. "It's the look and feel of comfort," said Mr. Power.

The relationship between GardaWorld and YEG is built on a foundation of trust and open communication, where we have proven ourselves time after time. YEG continues to look to us for recommendations, strategies and to manage security programs and this will be the case for years to come. "We have a can-do attitude, and we are not afraid to take on more work and provide security solutions that augment and provide best practices," said GardaWorld's Mr. Holland.

**"We're always ready to provide a reference because of what GardaWorld does for us here at the airport."**

*—Mr. Jason Sangster, Director Terminal Operations, Security & Safety at Edmonton International Airport*



More than

**2 decades** **8.2 M**

as YEG's primary  
security services  
provider

passengers  
screened per year

At least

**110**

security personnel  
assigned to  
the site

**1,200**

monitored cameras  
throughout  
the airport

**GARDAWORLD**

GardaWorld is the world's largest privately owned security services company, offering cash services, physical and specialized security solutions and, with the Crisis24 portal, the dissemination of vetted information related to international security. Our operations take us from our head office in Montreal to oil fields in Iraq and to embassies in Africa, as well as through major U.S. financial institutions and Canadian airports.

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