The cruise ship industry is adapting to evolving security demands.

Most cruise ships may seem to passengers like magical islands where the fun never ends. However, the security personnel who protect these floating fantasies and their guests know that the isolation a ship offers can be a mixed blessing, creating both a welcome respite from the world and vulnerability. Though most problems encountered on cruise ships lean toward the mundane, security personnel must be prepared for the worst.

Cruises are the fastest growing segment of the travel industry, according to the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) in New York City, which represents the 25 largest cruise lines--all of which are headquartered in the United States. (Because most ships are manufactured outside the United States, which means they cannot fly the U.S. flag, many ships managed by U.S. companies fly a foreign flag.) CLIA estimates that more than 7 million passengers will take a cruise this year. As the industry expands, more cruise ships sail the seas. In the 1990s, approximately 80 new cruise ships were built, and more than 52 are being planned for release before 2005.

Floating cities.
"Cruise ships are like floating cities," says Robert Beh, director of security for Carnival Cruises. "Any problem you have in a town you have on a ship." And as in any town, "most criminal incidents aboard our craft are minor," says Captain Howard Newhoff, security manager for Royal Caribbean International. "They occur when people drink too much and get in fights, lose small items, or have wallets stolen from common areas."

Occasionally, security encounters a passenger attempting to use a fraudulent or stolen credit card. The more serious incidents, such as sexual assaults and terrorism--discussed in more detail later--are rare.
Jurisdiction. Complicating security's handling of crime aboard cruise lines is jurisdiction, says Newhoff. Issues of jurisdiction can affect how security investigates crimes that occur at sea. "These crimes often fall into a no man's land of law enforcement," he says. "A crime can occur among two people of different nationalities on a ship from a third country that is sailing in the territorial waters of a fourth."

Royal Caribbean reports most crimes to the FBI because it is the only federal agency that has jurisdiction outside the United States. In the waters of a foreign country, the crime is reported to the officials of that nation and to the embassies of the parties involved. (The laws of the country whose flag the ship flies do not come into play with regard to criminal issues unless the ship is actually in that country's waters at the time of the incident.) However, reporting does not mean that anything can be done. International maritime law is not as solidified as U.S. law. Newhoff says that he has reported many misdemeanor cases that should have resulted in convictions but that were not even investigated because of jurisdictional issues.

Similarly, Carnival's Beh makes the captain and the security manager on each ship aware of jurisdictional issues and gives detailed instructions on whom to contact in case of criminal activity. For example, security is instructed to contact the FBI when in international waters and the state or local police when in the waters of a U.S. state. When in the Caribbean, incidents are reported to officials at the next port of call.

However, guests can bring civil suits against the cruise lines for crimes that never face criminal prosecution. To help counter such claims, all cruise lines investigate and track incidents. Security then takes action based on the information collected. For example, passengers that cause trouble are identified and are not allowed to rebook on that line.

Personnel. To help mitigate security problems, all major cruise lines have both security managers and officers on each ship, which also typically has a central station from which security activities, such as CCTV monitoring and access control, are conducted.

No standards govern the training of cruise line security personnel. However, a new program slated to begin this year will establish informal guidelines and offer training. The program is being developed by the Maritime Security Council in Washington, D.C., in association with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, which is overseen by the U.S. Treasury Department. In the meantime, each cruise line sets its own training standards. For example, all Carnival security employees go through a new 40-hour training program that covers standard crime prevention, intelligence gathering, crime scene management, drug smuggling, and stowaways, as well as guidance on dealing with international government agencies.

Royal Caribbean selects security officers with experience in security and seafaring. Most of their security personnel are former British navy or marine officers with ship experience. Security for Renaissance Cruises also selects security employees from the British navy, but further specifies that the employee's background include serving as master of arms aboard a war ship, a position that is equivalent to a director of security.
position. According to Kim Petersen, senior director of security for Renaissance, this stipulation ensures that the officer has specific training and expertise in access control, criminal and narcotics investigations, and maritime-specific skills.

On Renaissance, security officers oversee a team of security watchmen composed of former British Gurkha Regiment soldiers from Nepal. The Gurkhas are world-renowned soldiers and each must have a minimum of 15 years of military experience before being hired by the cruise line. Prior to being hired, they must also receive safety and firefighting training at a merchant marine training facility.

**Policies.** Cruise lines, and the security force that protects them, must meet regulations established in 1986 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). These regulations outline specific security measures that ships must implement, including preparing security plans, restricting access to certain areas of the ship, establishing ID systems, and screening passengers and crew.

The United States issued its own security regulations in 1996 similar to those of the IMO. However, the U.S. regulations stipulate additional security measures in different risk situations. For example, security requirements are reduced when there is a low risk of terrorist activity.

In 1997, Canada issued regulations for all cruise lines visiting ports in that country. The Canadian regulations include security requirements that cover both cruise lines and port authorities.

In addition to these three main regulations, different countries impose additional requirements. For example, United Kingdom regulations require that all cruise lines screen a certain percentage of passengers and baggage at any given time.

Incidents of serious criminal activity remain relatively rare but are an ongoing concern. Among the major issues confronting cruise line security personnel are illegal drug smuggling, sexual assaults, stowaways, piracy, and terrorism.

**Illegal drugs.**
The amount of drugs seized by U.S. Customs from cruise ships is rising, according to Matt Allen, customs investigator. "Though we're not sure why the numbers are up, it is clear that both passengers and crew members are smuggling more drugs via passenger ships," says Allen.

The numbers validate the emphasis cruise security personnel place on such incidents. "Preventing drug smuggling preoccupies much of our time," says Newhoff.

In the United States, Royal Caribbean works with U.S. customs as part of the Sea Carrier Initiative Program. Similar to smuggling prevention programs established for airlines, the Sea Carrier Initiative requires that all ships take reasonable precautions to
stop drug smuggling. Cruise lines have some discretion in defining what "reasonable precautions" are, but most follow similar plans, according to Petersen.

Reasonable precautions for major cruise lines, he says, include close liaison with narcotics officers in countries in which the lines operate and screening of passengers and crew using x-ray and metal detectors. Many cruise lines, like Renaissance, also conduct undercover and sting operations to identify likely sources of narcotics both on and off the ship. Preemployment and random drug screening of all employees is also part of the plan. For those cruise lines that participate in the Sea Carrier Initiative, fines and penalties are limited if Customs discovers drugs aboard ship.

In addition to working with government agencies, cruise lines must also stay on top of trends because perpetrators and drug types change rapidly. For example, according to Allen, heroin is almost exclusively smuggled via airplane, while cocaine smuggling is becoming more frequent on ships. More than 50,000 pounds of cocaine were seized from marine vessels in 1997.

**Sexual assault.**
The cruise line industry has recently seen the public spotlight drawn to allegations of sexual assault aboard cruise ships. For example, Carnival recently faced two lawsuits from alleged victims of sexual assault. The cases, which were settled out of court, focused the attention of cruise security, potential passengers, and the press on the potential for sexual assaults at sea.

Though no centralized database of sexual assault reports exists, according to representatives of the International Council of Cruise Lines in Washington, D.C., individual cruise lines do keep records. For example, over the past five years, in which Carnival carried more than 6.5 million passengers, there were 108 reports of sexual assaults, including 22 rapes, aboard its cruise ships. The cruise liner terminated 49 employees as a result of these incidents.

Because of the allegations leveled against his cruise line, Beh was especially concerned. "We went through the entire fleet and gave a training course to each employee," says Beh. The program, titled "In the Spotlight," was overseen by the company's Miami-based training department and included information on sexual harassment, inappropriate behavior, and investigation of sexual assault allegations.

The emphasis was on how to prevent situations that might lead to allegations of sexual misconduct. For example, part of the training included teaching staff to take into account the cultural differences of passengers and the local customs in ports of call so that what they interpreted as normal behavior wouldn't be misconstrued as a sexual advance.

Even before sexual assault allegations became a public concern, Royal Caribbean's Newhoff was looking into incidents of sexual assault and harassment. "Though the rate of allegations aboard our ships was far below that of a municipality of the same size, we knew that an incident could be even more traumatic when it happens on a cruise ship."
says Newhoff. "Our main concern was to protect the safety of our passengers and crew."

To deal with any potential problems with sexual misconduct, Royal Caribbean formed a sexual awareness task force. The four-member task force included Newhoff, corporate counsel, risk management, and senior management. The cruise line also hired outside experts in psychology and sexual assault investigations to counsel the team. The outside consultants were given tours of ships and were encouraged to question crew members.

The task force analyzed all the sexual assault cases for the previous five years. To find trends, the task force cross referenced data such as which ships the incidents occurred on, where on the ship they occurred, the nationalities of crew members and victims, the jobs of the perpetrators, and the age of victims. Unfortunately, no clear trends emerged. "We learned that we couldn't address the problem with a single fix," says Newhoff.

Security decided that the best response was to conduct more thorough training of crew members, place more responsibility on middle managers, and make some modifications to physical security.

*Training.* The awareness program, which is still in the planning stage, will take the form of seminars given to all the officers, staff, and crew of each ship. Though the exact plan has not been finalized, the training will include awareness exercises and instruction on conducting sexual assault investigations. Details, such as whether training teams will move from ship to ship or occupy quarters in a specific port, have not as of yet been determined.

*Manager responsibility.* Middle managers will be charged more directly with conveying and enforcing the cruise line’s zero tolerance policy. To this end, managers will be given special training on their duties and responsibilities, such as the need to convey information to subordinates and report sexual assault charges. The prompt and thorough reporting of sexual assaults, which is also the responsibility of middle managers, will be enhanced by standardized reporting forms that clarify what information should be provided.

*Physical measures.* Some additional physical security measures have been implemented on Royal Caribbean ships. For example, signage has been improved, making it clear that passengers are not allowed in certain areas of the ship. "This helps further delineate crew from passengers," says Newhoff. Security has also increased the number of CCTV cameras in certain areas of the ship, such as common areas where passengers and crew could meet.

Since the training and other changes have not been fully implemented, complaints have remained stable at about two cases for every 100,000 passengers. However, Newhoff feels confident that the rate will decline over time.
Stowaways.
A typical cruise line will have only a few stowaways each year, according to Newhoff. These stowaways get on board because of a lapse of security on the gangway and usually try to illegally immigrate into the United States, not to cause trouble aboard the ship. But to help eliminate the problem altogether, many cruise lines are installing electronic access control systems. At Royal Caribbean, a new system requires that a photo be taken of each passenger at the embarkation port. The photo ID, complete with bar code, must then be presented each time the person boards the ship. The system can determine whether the passenger is registered, whether the card has been used, and whether the total number of passengers on board tallies with the registry.

Carnival has just completed the installation of a similar electronic access control system. The A-Pass system, designed by SISCO of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, is used to track both passengers and crew. The photo ID is used each time a passenger or crew member enters or leaves the ship. When the user swipes the card, his or her photo appears on the screen and is confirmed by a security officer. The card also serves as a room key and a shipboard credit card for each passenger.

The system tallies the number of passengers on the ship, and if a passenger fails to reboard at a port of call, Carnival security can provide all the necessary information to the port authority and Customs agents. Security can also determine whether crew members were on board the ship at a given time.

Piracy.
Though Hollywood-style piracy--based loosely on the swashbucklers of the 18th century--no longer exists, common thugs still roam the high seas. Most pirates operate in three areas, according to Newhoff: the Far East, the east coast of South America near Brazil, and the west coast of Africa. "Luckily, these are not major cruise ship operating areas," says Newhoff. "We don't find pirates in the major areas [where] we do business."

Also, pirates are more likely to attack a commercial boat with a small crew, rather than a cruise ship. They seek supplies, money, and valuable cargo, with the least amount of resistance. "Cruise ships are well-lit, fast, and hard to board," says Newhoff, making them a harder target.

"But even though we present the wrong environment for pirates," says Newhoff, "we still prepare for them--especially on the few cruise routes that traverse high-risk areas."

At night, for example, security patrols are increased and crew members place fire hoses on the deck to repel anyone using grappling hooks. Royal Caribbean also works closely with the Piracy Center in Kuala Lumpur. The center serves as a clearinghouse for all marine vessels to report suspected piracy. If a suspicious activity is noted, the ship's captain places a report to the Piracy Center on the main frequency so that the potential thieves can hear the report. After receiving a report, the center sends immediate warning notices to all ships in the affected area and to coast guards and law enforcement agencies worldwide.
**Terrorism.**
The hijacking of the Achille Lauro in the Mediterranean in 1985 proved that cruise ships can be vulnerable to acts of terrorism. In that incident, an American passenger was killed by the terrorists who took over the ship. Compared to existing luxury cruise liners, the Achille Lauro was an insignificant ship in a remote area of the world. But its victimization completely changed cruise industry security. Terrorism became a major industry concern overnight.

Royal Caribbean, for example, hires contractors to keep an eye on activities in various ports. The contractors provide intelligence and help devise risk management strategies. Carnival conducts three-day terrorism awareness seminars for new employees and conducts security searches each week on every ship. And all cruise lines get monthly government briefings on terrorist activity.

Though incidents of crime and misconduct are low on most cruise lines, each infraction is important. "What might be satisfactory to a police officer in a small town is not satisfactory to us," says Newhoff. "Because this is a high profile industry, what happens on one cruise ship affects the entire industry." And because the industry is judged as a whole, security practitioners seek the advice and counsel of their peers. "We try to cooperate completely with other cruise lines," says Beh. "We don't share marketing strategies, but we do share security information."

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*Teresa Anderson is senior editor at Security Management.*

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**Seaport Security**

What happens aboard marine vessels is only half the story. Recognizing the other half of the equation—seaports—President Clinton formed the President's Commission on Seaport Security in April 1999. The commission was charged with evaluating incidents such as cargo theft, drug smuggling, illegal aliens, and tainted food in U.S. seaports.

The commission, which comprises representatives of several federal agencies, visited 12 of 361 U.S. seaports during the summer of 1999. Sites visited included New York, New Jersey, Charleston, Miami, San Juan, New Orleans, Long Beach, and Tacoma.

The 12 seaports chosen represent a mix of geography and function. For example, Miami was chosen because it hosts a number of cruise lines, but other ports deal with military vessels and commercial ships. Together, the seaports carry 60 percent of the container cargo shipped into and out of the United States. At each port, the commission conducted security surveys.
The resulting report, due to be completed in April of this year, will determine what security regulations will be imposed on seaports. Though no official recommendations have been released, commission member Jim Kelly gave his observations at a recent meeting of the Maritime Security Council.

Commission members, according to Kelly, determined that the most pressing issues facing seaports are drug and car smuggling, fraud, and cargo theft. In addition, they found that much of the significant cargo theft investigated by the ports proved to be an inside job. The seaport commission also found a general lack of access control, the absence of uniform background screening of employees, and a failure by port authorities to conduct vulnerability assessments.

Security standards varied widely among ports. While some seaports had top-notch security procedures and equipment, others had no security at all. Responsibility for security also varied. For example, according to Kelly, one port had a casino operated by a local Native American tribe, so tribal security had responsibility, while at another, the local union was in charge of the security department.