



December 2021

*Welcome to the December issue of the Year of Security Culture newsletter.*

*For those of you new to receiving the newsletter, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) identified 2021 as the Year of Security Culture – a programme the Civil Aviation Authority are supporting and promoting.*

*If you've missed previous issues, [you can read them on our website.](#)*

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## The value of reporting

Previously in this newsletter series we've discussed the 'See it' and 'Hear it' aspects of airport security: staying vigilant, identifying suspicious behaviour, learning lessons from 9/11 and other terrorist attacks, recognising how to identify insider threats, and learning the 'Big Six' simple security measures.

This month, we're focusing on the 'Report it' aspect of enhancing airport security – one of your most important security responsibilities.

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## The importance of reporting – your role

Think of security issues or concerns you come across during your day-to-day work as pieces of a puzzle. These concerns on their own, like individual puzzle pieces, may not make sense. You may not know where they fit or what the bigger picture is. These pieces, without the rest of the puzzle, might be meaningless. There are, however, other pieces out there.

By reporting your security concerns, you're helping to put the pieces together to form the bigger picture.

It's easy to shrug off something you might have seen or heard as being 'probably nothing'. You might think that it's too minor to report. You might even assume that somebody else has or will report it. These are all potentially costly assumptions to make – aviation security depends on everybody doing their bit, and this includes taking the time to speak up when something isn't right.

Everyone who works at an airport, or in the aviation system, adds value to the security picture. This is because any information, no matter how minor it may seem, is valuable. By reporting your concerns, you are playing a key role in making sure information gets to the right person to keep us safe, and feeling safe.

'Report it' is a vital part of your role in enhancing aviation security and protecting our aviation system. Reporting your concerns makes sure something can be done about the security issues that you detect, keeping us all safe from harm.

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## **Case study: The search for the *Rainbow Warrior* bombers**

Shortly before midnight on 10 July 1985, two bombs exploded leaving gaping holes in the hull of the *Rainbow Warrior* while it was docked in the Port of Auckland. Four minutes later, the ship had sunk, and one crew member had drowned. Within 36 hours, two people linked to the bombing had been identified and were being held by Police.

How were the two highly trained perpetrators apprehended so quickly? Members of the public were alert, aware of suspicious activities, and reported their concerns to the police.

At about 9.30 on the night of the bombing, members of the public at the Auckland Boating Club saw a man in a wetsuit dragging a dinghy ashore under a bridge before being picked up in a rented campervan. Concerned by this, members of the public noted the license plate number of the van and called the police.

Using this information, police quickly contacted the rental company and asked them to be on alert for those returning their campervan. When the van was returned a few days later, the rental company called the police immediately.

The quick capture of these two individuals wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the quick actions of the public – they saw something they weren't sure about, and most importantly, they reported it. The van's license plate and presence in that location were the puzzle pieces needed.

In your role, you might see or hear something concerning that stands out as just a bit strange. You might have seen someone closely examining the perimeter security fence or trying to see the PIN code to a secure door. Maybe you saw the same vehicle observing security patrols at your airport over several days?

What if somebody else reported that same vehicle observing a different airport a week earlier? When you consider it like this, what you saw or heard might just be one piece of a bigger picture. Reporting incidents helps to build a clearer picture that may not be obvious at first glance.

**Consider what information might be useful, and always be ready to report:**

- **What did you see?**
- **Where did you see it?**
- **When did you see it?**
- **Why did this happen?**
- **Who was involved?**
- **What did they look like?**
- **What was their license plate?**
- **Were there any notable features?**

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## **A 'Just Culture' reporting environment**

Reporting is vital to expose threats to aviation. But it is equally important to help strengthen security vulnerabilities, and to protect you, your friends and colleagues, your organisation and the public from harm.

Is a door to a secure area is regularly left open? Do colleagues forget to wear their Airport Identity Cards? Or have you accidentally forgotten to lock a gate before going home for the night? Reporting is essential to help make these things right.

This isn't about dobbing in your mates or getting people in trouble. It's about identifying issues to prevent them from happening again. And it could prevent serious harm.

A Just Culture reporting environment is one in which people feel encouraged to report security issues or incidents that can help the organisation as whole learn from mistakes and improve. Even minor occurrences should be reported in order to prevent these from becoming bigger issues down the road.

In a Just Culture environment, individuals are not blamed for honest mistakes, but the root causes of the error are investigated and corrected. Just Culture is about learning from events through sharing of information – security incidents or breaches aren't hidden but are reported and followed up on to ensure they don't happen again.

Just Culture includes reporting on yourself – it can be scary to admit that you have made a mistake, but in a Just Culture system, an honest mistake is treated as that – a mistake. Additional coaching or training might be needed, but you might have also uncovered a serious gap in security protocols that needs to be fixed before it causes serious harm.

Just Culture doesn't excuse deliberately harmful or negligent behaviour – we all have a responsibility to follow required security behaviours and to learn from our mistakes.

### **'Just Culture' in action**

Consider this example of a Just Culture environment. You observe over the course of a week that your colleagues regularly forget to check that a door to a secure area has closed behind them. You are concerned that someone who intends to cause harm might exploit this and slip into a secure area undetected. You bring your concern to your manager who applies Just Culture principles.

Rather than punishing your colleague for leaving the door open, your manager coaches them on the importance of keeping secure areas locked down, and then reviews the relevant security procedures. It is identified that the door's self-latching mechanism has broken and is repaired so that it functions properly. Your manager also posts notices on the door to remind staff to always check that the door closes behind them, and regularly reminds your team of this during security briefings.

Just Culture makes sure that the root cause of a problem is determined for long-term security benefit. Individuals aren't punished for making honest mistakes, and all staff are encouraged to continue reporting issues into the future.

**Think about how your organisation applies Just Culture reporting principles:**

- **Is reporting encouraged? Is it clear how to report, what needs to be reported and who it should be reported to?**
  - **Are honest mistakes treated as mistakes, and coaching provided to fix issues?**
  - **Do individuals and the organisation learn and make improvements when issues are identified?**
  - **Are the results of security reviews fed back to staff to keep them informed of any actions taken to address security issues they have identified?**
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## Report it

It can be nerve-wracking to report something concerning you have seen or heard. It's human nature to second-guess yourself or to try and find another explanation. However, you have a vital role to play, no matter your role, workplace or level of experience. Security is everyone's responsibility, so never be reluctant to report something that you see or hear.

You may hold the missing piece of the puzzle.

See it. Hear it. **Report it.**

*We all contribute* to airport security

Further reading: [Just Culture - what it means to the CAA](#)

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To reach previous security culture newsletters, visit our [security culture webpage](#).

Get in touch with the team by emailing [security.culture@caa.govt.nz](mailto:security.culture@caa.govt.nz).

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Aviation Security Service

*Kaiwhakamaru Rererangi*