

Strengthening airport security: The imperative role of standards and certifications

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Insight from Peter Jackson, Managing Director, [Jacksons Fencing](#)

In today's interconnected world, the importance of airport security cannot be overstated. Airports are not just for travellers; they're critical hubs facilitating global travel and commerce, making them prime targets for various security threats including trespassing, protests, and terrorism.

Ensuring the safety and security of these facilities is paramount. Appropriate security fencing is essential in the long-term protection of airports. One of the most effective ways to bolster airport security is by implementing robust security standards, such as the LPS 1175 standard or NPSA certification.

Understanding LPS 1175

LPS 1175 (Loss Prevention Standard) is issued by the LPCB (Loss Prevention Certification Board), part of BRE Global. This standard focuses on the physical security of buildings and facilities, particularly in deterring and delaying unauthorised access via forced entry. It sets rigorous criteria for the design, performance, and installation of security products, including doors, windows, barriers, and enclosures.

LPS 1175 certification is divided into various security ratings, with 48 possible combinations ranging from A1 to H20, including the previous SR1 to SR8. Each classification indicates the level of resistance a product provides against different types of forced entry attempts. These ratings are determined through rigorous testing, simulating real-world attack methods and tools. For airports, this means having security measures that can withstand both opportunistic and determined attacks.

The need for enhanced airport security

Airports are attractive targets for a range of threats, from terrorism and smuggling to vandalism and theft. The vast number of people passing through airports daily, combined with high-value assets and critical infrastructure, necessitates a multifaceted approach to security. Traditional security measures, such as surveillance cameras, access control systems, and security personnel, are essential, but not sufficient on their own.

In light of the recent airport breaches, serious concerns have been raised about the robustness of high-security protocols, particularly around the physical security measures in place to protect critical infrastructure. Ensuring that key entry points, perimeters, and critical areas are fortified against forced entry can significantly reduce vulnerabilities. This is where LPS 1175 and NPSA certification become invaluable, providing a benchmark for the effectiveness of physical security solutions.

Benefits of LPS 1175 and NPSA certification for airports

1. Enhanced protection against intrusion:

Tested and certified products offer a proven level of resistance against forced entry. For airports, this means that critical areas such as control rooms, fuel stores, baggage handling areas, and secure perimeters are better protected against unauthorised access. The certification ensures that these areas can withstand attempts to breach them using tools and methods typical of criminal activity.

2. Deterrence factor:

The visible presence of certified security measures can act as a significant deterrent to potential intruders. Knowing that an airport is equipped with high-security barriers, doors, and windows can discourage attempts at forced entry, reducing the likelihood of security incidents.

3. Compliance and assurance:

Certification assures that security products meet rigorous standards. For airport operators, this means compliance with best practices and regulatory requirements. It also facilitates smoother security audits and inspections, as the certification is recognised and respected within the industry.

4. Comprehensive security strategy:

Integrating tested and certified products into an airport's security infrastructure contributes to a holistic security strategy. These products work in tandem with electronic security systems, surveillance, and personnel to create multiple layers of defence. This layered approach enhances overall security and resilience against threats.

5. Adaptability and scalability:

LPS 1175 and NPSA certifications cover a wide range of security products, allowing airports to select solutions that best fit their specific needs and threat profiles. Whether upgrading existing infrastructure or constructing new facilities, approved products can be tailored to provide the necessary level of security without compromising operational efficiency.

Implementation

Given the evolving threat landscape, airports must adopt robust security measures. Integrating LPS 1175 and NPSA-certified solutions can provide a higher level of security, ensuring that perimeter defences are capable of resisting attempts similar to recent protests. This is not just about preventing disruptions but also about safeguarding the safety of passengers, staff, and the broader community.

These are certifications that define the requirements and testing procedures for the resistance of physical security products against unauthorised access. Products that meet the requirements have been rigorously tested to withstand attacks using a wide range of tools, from simple hand tools to sophisticated power tools. Implementing tested and certified barriers and fencing systems at airports can significantly enhance their ability to deter and withstand breaches.

Strengthening airport security is a complex and ongoing process that requires a multifaceted approach. Certifications play a vital role in this effort by providing a benchmark for physical security products that are resistant to forced entry. By incorporating LPS 1175-certified and NPSA-approved solutions, airports can enhance their protection against various threats, deter potential intruders, ensure compliance with security standards, and contribute to a comprehensive security strategy.

While the implementation of these measures requires investment and careful planning, the benefits of enhanced security and resilience make it a worthwhile endeavour. In an age where security threats are ever-evolving, LPS 1175 and NPSA certifications represent a critical component in safeguarding our airports and ensuring the safety of travellers worldwide.