
Keeping the skies safe and secure during the 2010 Winter Games

November 1, 2007 - The BC and national aviation community recently got a close look at the security and public safety planning process for the 2010 Winter Games, as well as the chance to provide feedback.

The responsibility for securing aviation transportation during the 2010 Winter Games falls to the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit (V2010-ISU), which is mandated overall with securing the Games. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police leads the V2010-ISU, whose staff also includes members of the Vancouver Police Department, West Vancouver Police Department and Canadian Forces.

Three other agencies join the V2010-ISU in aviation planning: Transport Canada, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and NAV CANADA. These agencies have formed a steering committee, co-chaired by the RCMP and Transport Canada, and a technical working group chaired by the V2010-ISU.

Federal aviation planners are also working cooperatively with other planning agencies, including the 2010 Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC). Both the steering committee and technical work group are mandated to look only at security and public safety issues.

The two groups are developing an integrated plan for modifications to existing airspace, including safety and security requirements and enhancements that will be implemented over the period of the Games. The plan will outline security enhancements to existing airspace structure, operating rules and procedures and air operator and airport security and screening requirements. All security initiatives will be based on threat-risk assessments.

A third committee, composed of federal planning partners and the aviation community, has also been struck. Dave Nowzek, Co-Chair of the Federal Aviation Steering Committee and Regional Director, Civil Aviation explains, "Early in the planning process, the 2010 Aviation Committee was created to provide a forum for federal planners, provincial and municipal authorities, VANOC and commercial, business and general aviation stakeholders to interact and provide input on the technical planning process. The Committee meets periodically to share concepts, proposals and input into final decisions."

RCMP S/Sgt. Chuck McDonald of the V2010-ISU and co-chair of the steering committee says, "We've been consulting with the aviation stakeholders for 15 months now as our planning moves ahead." The aviation community had a chance to comment on Phase 1 of the planning process at the latest 2010 Aviation Committee meeting in August.

"Our first goal is to provide an increased level of safety and security over designated Olympic and Paralympic sites," McDonald continues, explaining the role of the planners. "We're also attempting to accommodate ongoing commercial, business and general aviation operations where possible, and we're keeping in mind the economic realities of small communities."

"The airspace surrounding YVR and the Lower Mainland is perhaps the most complex in Canada", adds Nowzek. "Designing the modified airspace structure will be complex and special consideration must be given to minimizing disruptions to routine traffic flow to the extent possible, during the Games. This can only be achieved with the combined expertise of the airspace specialists dedicated to the project."

Information on airspace modifications will be made available to all pilots in 2009. In the meantime planners are working to draft the Integrated Air Safety and Security Plan by the end of 2007. It will outline the airspace

design and structure for the 2010 Winter Games, and define which airports are included in these areas. Guidelines about restricted aviation activities in these areas, and security requirements will also be part of this plan.

Rollie Back, CEO of the BC Aviation Council, is encouraged by the momentum built by the planners. He notes there are a number of important decisions still to be made, such as details on requirements for Games-time screening procedures at small remote airports. "I'm very pleased with the level of discussions and the consultations to date," says Back. "The level of dialogue has been of very high quality."

McDonald says the planners will continue to consult with aviation community stakeholders until the security and safety plans are finalized and the Games are finished. "There's no blueprint for a major event of this size," he says of the job of securing the busiest airspace in the country.

Who's who

Five agencies are planning security for aviation transportation:

- The Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit, led by the RCMP
- Transport Canada
- Canadian Forces
- North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)
- NAV CANADA

The aviation technical planning partnership includes:

- The Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit, led by the RCMP
- Transport Canada Safety and Security
- Canadian Forces
- NORAD
- NAV CANADA
- Canadian Border Services Agency
- Canadian Air Transport Security Authority
- US Federal Aviation Administration

The 2010 Aviation Committee Members are:

- Air Transportation Association of Canada (National)
- YVR
- Resort Municipality of Whistler
- Transport Canada
- Canada Border Services Agency
- BC Air Ambulance Service
- NAV Canada
- Lower Mainland Airports Working Group
- Air Transportation Association of Canada (Regional)
- BCAC
- Helicopter Association of Canada
- Canadian Owners & Pilots Association
- Canadian Business Aviation Association
- Department of National Defence
- NORAD

The two federal bodies, in consultation with the 2010 Aviation Committee, will develop an integrated plan for modifications to existing airspace including safety and security requirements and enhancements to be implemented over the period of the 2010 Winter Games.