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TAPA Standards Safeguard Cargo

By Lisa Greenleaf

Cargo theft is a major concern for high-value, high-risk product manufacturers and their logistics service providers. In the third quarter of 2011 alone, 263 cargo thefts of building/industrial, electronics, and consumer care products occurred in the United States, according to logistics security firm FreightWatch International.

One way to help ensure cargo safety in storage facilities and during transit is certification to the Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA) standards. TAPA unites global manufacturers, carriers, insurers, and service providers to reduce the risks of criminal activity against high-value cargo in the transportation supply chain.

TAPA offers two types of certification to manufacturers and logistics companies: Freight Security Requirements (FSR) and Trucking Security Requirements (TSR). The FSR certification includes standards that provide at least the minimum level of security for products during storage and transit. It evaluates specific factors, including:

- Perimeter security such as fencing and gates, closed-circuit TV (CCTV) systems, lighting, alarms, and facility openings.
- Facility dock/warehouse access, including escorted visitors, CCTV resource access, recording and archiving, high-value storage area cages and vaults, and motion detection alarms.
- Security procedures such as background checks and terminated employee handling.

The certification is applied at the facility level, and typically involves a one- or two-day facility inspection, followed by a company's self-assessment, which occurs over a three-year period.

The TSR certification standards provide at least the minimum level of security in trucking and associated operations. TAPA recommends these standards become an essential part of shipper-carrier relationships, because more than 85 percent of cargo theft in North America involves trucks.

The TSR standards address the following factors:

- Security procedures such as load collection and vehicle sealing, delivery operations, route scheduling, incident reporting, vehicle maintenance, and secure parking.
- Security systems, including satellite tracking systems, navigation and route-deviation



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alerting, and home base/third-party alerting systems.

- Driver training, such as security awareness, collection/delivery handover procedure training, and robbery response preparation.

TAPA grants TSR certification to trucking companies that meet the required policy, procedure, and practice standards under the TSR, and to logistics service providers who meet all the requirements and have formal contracts with one or more carriers meeting the practice standards. The TSR certification is valid for three years and requires a company's self-assessment in the interim period.

DISCOVER THE BENEFITS

Security-conscious manufacturers, shippers, and logistics professionals should consider working with TAPA-certified service providers. TAPA certification signifies that the facility or carrier took a number of precautions to minimize the probability of theft, and provide customers a level of assurance. Additionally, the TAPA community features open communications and shares valuable information with its members.

TAPA standards are relatively simple to implement, making the certification cost readily affordable. The standards fit well with other security management systems, and many leading North American shippers have adopted them as best practices.

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