



# PORT OF HOUSTON MANAGING THE CRITICAL FLOW OF PEOPLE USING TWIC™

The Port of Houston consists of the Port of Houston Authority (PHA) and 150+ private industrial companies along the 25-mile long Houston Ship Channel. The Port of Houston is solely responsible for the security of its terminals. The 150+ private owners have their own security plans, however, they closely figure into the security matrix for protection within the Port. Bill Crews, CPP is the Port Security & Emergency Operations Manager and works closely with the owners to maintain a consistent level of security throughout all terminals.

The PHA is split between the Barbour's Cut region and Turning Basin region. Each region manages a portion of the port. G4S Technology's Symmetry™ Global Security Management software operates as two regions, however everyone gets enrolled in the Symmetry Central Card Handler regardless if a person is in Barbour's Cut or Turning Basin. The Symmetry Central Card Handler provides a central place for all basic cardholder information. Once enrolled, the cards are pushed out to the region where they will be used.

Each card holder record that is part of the Port's Symmetry Security Management System is managed by the Central Card Handler. What gives the system so much power and flexibility is that these access rights can be communicated quickly and easily to any card reader location.

"If a person needs access to Barbour's Cut, but has no reason to come to Turning Basin, then the information is pushed to Barbour's Cut," said Texas Technical Services, Inc., Senior Technician, Mike Lee. "If in two or three years from now that same person needs to be at Turning Basin, the information is already in the system so the administrators just have to push his information to Turning Basin, give him access and it's done."

The Symmetry Central Card Handler can also have information on a regional basis. A person can receive card access from any workstation since every system has the same card information. An additional feature of the Symmetry Central Card Handler is that in the event of a disaster all records are saved. The system could be rebuilt and cards pushed right back to the region. All TWIC and non-TWIC workstations can access it.

In 2002 US congress directed the federal government, through the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA), to require a biometric security credential of any individual using unescorted access when entering secure areas of facilities and vessels. This requirement was also requested of all mariners holding Coast Guard-issued credentials or qualification documents.

The final result was the Transportation Worker Identification Credential, commonly referred to as TWIC™. This is an identification credential for all personnel requiring unescorted access to secure areas of MTSA-regulated facilities and vessels, and all mariners holding Coast Guard-issued credentials. Individuals who met TWIC eligibility requirements were then issued a tamper-resistant credential containing the person's fingerprint and an access code which allowed for a positive link between the card and the individual.

To receive a TWIC, a person must pass a security threat assessment conducted by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which looks at criminal background, immigrant status, terrorist watch list screening and mental capacity. It takes approximately 21 days to receive the TWIC.



"It's robust and great to know who is in the facility at all times"

Nearly 300,000 people are required to have a TWIC in the Houston region including certain PHA employees, longshoremen, truckers, steamship lines personnel, stevedores and vendors.

To help streamline the enormous enrollment process that was ahead of them, the PHA took it upon themselves to not only set up five desktop enrollment stations throughout the PHA to make it easy for individuals to enroll, but they went out to the companies involved to proactively register workers. Using their Datastrip DSV2+<sup>Turbo</sup>®, mobile reader with Codebench's PIVCheck Plus software, they made arrangements with the transportation companies and UL Labor Unions to visit and enroll people at their locations.

"When you tell people to come in (to the PHA), you are taking them away from what they should be doing," said Crews. "We worked with some of the larger trucking companies and asked if they would get their guys together. We went to their company with our mobile reader and knocked out 200 people at one time. They didn't have to worry about 200 of their people taking a break and coming down to the credentialing office on company time to do that."

"The PHA security staff enrolled approximately 60-70 percent of the TWIC registrations remotely," said Lee. "In the evenings they would come back to the office and register all the people they captured. It was time consuming due to the amount of people. There were nearly 7,000 hourly people easily, and that's not including the truckers. They did all of this in three to four weeks."

Crews was thrilled he could use the handheld reader to get people enrolled ahead of time. After everyone is enrolled, the reader will become a compliance tool to help maintain a high level of security by spot checking individuals throughout the PHA.

At this point, only electronic verification of the TWIC is being implemented. Ports require people to show their credential and the security staff are trained to recognize false credentials. Security is ensuring the card is legitimate and making sure the person holding the card is the person on the card, but there is no interrogating of the card at this point.

The key to the PHA's TWIC implementation is integration between G4S Technology's Symmetry Global Security Management System and Codebench's PIVCheck Plus software. The integration allowed the PHA to link the brand new TWIC to their legacy Desfire card – the card they were using prior to the TWIC. In some cases, individuals need to use their legacy card, but they also needed to have a TWIC because there are secure areas of the port, and they needed a mechanism- Symmetry - to update the existing cardholder record with the additional TWIC information.

Symmetry Global enables new TWIC holders, such as truckers, to capture the information and import it directly as a new cardholder record. In some cases they are linking the TWIC to a cardholder record that exists, and in other cases they are adding a brand new cardholder record with a TWIC in Symmetry. TWIC information is automatically loaded into Symmetry – no manual data entry is needed.

Crews is happy with the outcome of his security program as a whole, and feels he has a comprehensive system in place.



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