



Passengers, employees at risk due to longstanding security weaknesses at Washington Union Station, Ivy City Yard says Amtrak's OIG

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WASHINGTON – Amtrak's longstanding security weaknesses at Washington Union Station and Ivy City Yard put employees and passengers at risk a new report from Amtrak's Office of Inspector General said.

The report detailed a variety of security concerns at both facilities with perimeter and interior security, poor lighting, nonworking security cameras, and an inefficient incident reporting process that reduced effective response coordination and timeliness. Most of the weaknesses were attributable to the diffusion of accountability across departments which led to unclear roles and responsibilities for prioritizing, addressing, and funding security projects. The OIG found similar issues in 2018 when it reviewed the security at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station.

Exacerbating the weaknesses was the company's lack of oversight of its contracted security personnel, the report said. At both the station and the yard, contracted security guards did not consistently screen individuals and vehicles before granting access. Security guards at the station told the OIG that pedestrian trespassers were their biggest security challenge, yet they were uncertain on the extent of their role in preventing trespassing.

Highlighting the risks to passengers and employees at the station was an incident that occurred March 15, 2019. At that time, a trespasser drove through an entrance into the station, across a passenger platform, and onto the tracks. Video footage of the incident showed that the contracted guard did not effectively screen the driver of the vehicle. Additionally, physical barriers were not in place at the entrance.

After the incident in March, Amtrak took some actions that it had planned to secure the entrance by repairing a hydraulic vehicle barrier, installing an arm gate, and posting new signs. Before the OIG's audit, the company had also used at least \$9 million in federal grants to install bollards; add card readers in the station; install perimeter fencing, guard booths and gates; add contracted security guards; and install video surveillance systems in an effort to secure the station and yard. Additionally, Amtrak has several security improvement projects underway, and it revised its organizational structure and authority for security operations, the report said.

The OIG recommended that Amtrak develop and initiate a plan that establishes clear roles and lines of accountability, resources, timeframes, and performance metrics to assess progress. The company agreed with the OIG's recommendation. More details are available in the full report, located on the OIG's website: <https://go.usa.gov/xyAxE>.

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