

'Procedure was followed' in Taser death

The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER (Nov 27, 2007)

The man in charge of Canada's border guards says he's "very sorry" about the events that led to the death of an agitated Polish immigrant at Vancouver's airport, but says none of his staff will be punished.

Alain Jolicoeur, president of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), was bombarded with questions yesterday, the first time it has discussed the RCMP Taser death of Robert Dziekanski six weeks ago.

The questions came after the agency released a report recommending several improvements at Vancouver International Airport, including better translation services for travellers and help for those waiting for them.

The report tried to answer how Dziekanski, 40, could spend at least six hours loitering in the baggage area of the arrivals terminal, waiting for his mother while she desperately and vainly tried to get information about him from the public area of the airport.

"I'm very, very sorry," said Jolicoeur who insisted that officers did their jobs. "There is no action that in my view requires discipline. The procedure was followed."

The agency has submitted its report to Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day who expects to be questioned on it in the House of Commons today.

The report clarifies the timeline between Dziekanski's arrival at 3:30 p.m. Oct. 13 and his death at 1 a.m. Oct. 14.

But it doesn't answer how Dziekanski -- who spoke only Polish -- could have waited so long in a secure area becoming increasingly desperate and agitated without anyone noticing.

That's partly because security cameras were partially blocked due to construction, said Jolicoeur. Dziekanski can be seen on security videos only twice, once proceeding from one immigration inspection area to another, and a second time walking to the baggage carousel area.

Dziekanski's mother, who had travelled from her Kamloops, B.C., home to pick up her son, has said she told him to wait in the baggage area, unaware she would not be allowed in there because it was a secure area.

The baggage area is as big as two football fields and about 4,000 passengers went through it while Dziekanski was there, the report says.

There are at least eight inquiries under way stemming from what happened to Dziekanski, including a provincial inquiry and a federal inquiry into Taser use by RCMP.



Sam Leung, the Canadian Press

Alain Jolicoeur, head of Canada Border Services, said staff did their jobs.