



Case study



The Minnesota Twins Hits a Home Run in Security Experience as Target Field Implements Evolv

Target Field

LOCATION: Minneapolis, MN

MLB TEAM: Minnesota Twins

OPENED: 2010

CAPACITY: 38,544

WEBSITE: www.mlb.com/twins/ballpark

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Minimize security ingress lines negatively impacting fans
- Enable fans to complete security screening quickly, allowing them more time to purchase concessions and find their seats before the first pitch
- Help avoid intrusive, lengthy secondary security checks
- Recapture entrance footprint consumed by walkthrough metal detectors
- Reduce the high nuisance alarm rate of metal detectors
- Deploy security screening systems able to withstand harsh Minnesota weather conditions
- Deliver smoother security ingress experience for fans and employees
- Leverage security screening analytics to optimize traffic flow and detection accuracy
- Enable fans to spend more time in downtown restaurants and retailers before the start of games

Solution

People

- Delivered onsite training to security guards during onboarding and deployment
- Evolv Customer Success Manager provided onsite support for the first week after deployment to ensure seamless operations
- Evolv Customer Success Manager provided support and training for Evolv Insights®

Process

- Evolv Solutions Engineering oversaw the configuration and deployment of each Evolv Express® system
- Online training for security staff through the Evolv Academy
- Evolv Customer Success Manager oversaw onboarding of Target Field security team

Technology

- 2 Outdoor Evolv Express Dual-lane Systems
- 13 Outdoor Evolv Express Single-lane Systems
- Evolv Cortex AI®
- Evolv Insights®
- Evolv Mobile App

Outcomes



Reduced security screening footprint by 77%—replaced 64 walkthrough metal detectors with 15 Outdoor Evolv Express systems



Improved fan and Target Field staff ingress experience by delivering a smoother security screening



Minimized lines that formed before security screening on opening day and other games where spikes in ingress flow occur



Shrank average time required for secondary security screening over two-thirds—from around two minutes to 30-40 seconds



Experienced a greatly reduced nuisance alarm rate with Evolv over metal detectors



Helped create a seamless, unintrusive security screening experience for fans



Minimized security guard fatigue resulting from a tedious and intrusive screening process



Contributing to local downtown businesses by enabling fans to spend longer in their establishments by reducing waits to get into the stadium



Dave Horsman, VP of Ballpark Operations at Target Field, recalls the first full deployment of Evolv weapons detection screening on Opening Day.

"We were in the security ingress area when the National Anthem played," he remembers. "Normally with the metal detectors, we would still have lines of fans trying to get into the park. But when I looked up after the National Anthem was finished, there were no lines. I knew then that we had made the right decision."

Arrival of Metal Detectors: 2014 Season

Dave Horsman has worked for nearly three decades within the Minnesota Twins organization.

He is now the Vice President of Ballpark Operations, a role he has held for the past five seasons. He recalls a time before holding this position when opening Target Field in 2010: “We didn’t have any gate screening technology. Security guards simply checked bags when fans came into the stadium.”

When Target Field hosted the 2014 All-Star Game, however, the Operations team determined that it was time to add traditional walkthrough metal detectors for security screening. “There was quite a process around their deployment,” Horsman recalls. “We used them for all our events, not just Twins games but also concerts, soccer games, hockey games, and more.”

Metal Detectors Created a Poor Fan Experience

While Horsman and his Operations team evolved the Concept of Operations (ConOps) around the metal detectors over the years, there was only so much that could be done to improve their alarm outcomes.

“Twins fan experience certainly suffered under the metal detectors,” Horsman says. “Lines formed outside our entrances as the metal detectors simply couldn’t handle the amount of flow that came into our building, especially right before the opening pitch. Fans missed the first pitch and didn’t have time to get concessions before the game started.”

Fans also found the secondary screening checks intrusive. The metal detectors that the Twins used have a “high alarm rate—probably around 50% of all people set off an alarm,” Horsman says. “Security staff had no idea where to look and had to ask fans to take everything out of their pockets and search through their belongings for the detected threat. This often took a couple of minutes. Neither the fans nor our security guards enjoyed the experience.”

Plus, as Minnesota weather in the spring and fall can be unpredictable and turn cold, the length of time to conduct secondary security checks elongated during colder months when fans put on more clothing to stay warm. “We’re in Minnesota and the weather has an impact in different ways—including security screening,” Horsman explains. “Our secondary security checks took longer when the weather would turn cold.”



Recruiting and Retaining Security Staff A Challenge

Staffing the metal detectors was a challenge before the pandemic but became an even bigger problem when MLB games restarted in 2021.

“We typically had three security guards per metal detector,” Horsman says. “Recruiting staff was difficult enough, and this was exacerbated by the fact that our security guards didn’t like serving in security ingress roles. Secondary security screening was intrusive and no one—guest nor security guard—liked the process. We needed something easy to learn—in addition to enjoyable to use.”

First-hand Experience with Evolv Validated Its Effectiveness

Horsman initially saw Evolv at an industry event a few years ago.

But at the time, it wasn’t widely used so he and his team selected to wait. “We do a lot of innovation,” Horsman says. “But for something directly impacting guest experience and safety like security screening, we wanted to thoroughly test it and achieve a high level of certainty of success.”

Last summer, Horsman spent a week at another venue that had Evolv Express systems in place. “I was able to see firsthand, in a concert-like environment, how well the system works and was very impressed.” Horsman’s experience was corroborated by several members of his staff who travel with the team and saw Evolv in action at other MLB parks. “They were able to see how it performs in other MLB parks—which provided some really good validation for us.”

But Horsman and his team were not quite ready to proceed with the acquisition of the Evolv Express systems. “We are in the pursuit of Safety Act Certification,” he indicates. “And the Evolv technology plays a big piece in the certification. We did our homework and did extensive testing over the past offseason—testing to see if it would detect objects it should detect and not detect the ones we didn’t want to detect.”



“

I am not always in front of my computer, especially during gameday ingress. Being able to check on traffic flow at each gate at five-minute increments and identify what threats have been detected on the Evolv mobile app is really helpful.”

- Dave Horsman, VP of
Ballpark Operations,
Target Field

Amplifying Security Through Integrations

Whatever solution Horsman's team selected, the technology had to integrate as part of Target Field's larger public safety and event safety plan.

"We have a lot of different technologies for security, such as our CCTV, access control systems, card reader systems, ticketing scanning, among others," he says. "Evolv's open API [application programming interface] capabilities checked off our integration requirements."

When all the factors of consideration were compiled, from experiences at and feedback from other venues to their own robust testing, the Target Field team was convinced Evolv was the right choice. "We were really impressed with the results and decided to move forward," Horsman relays.

“

The Twins' fan experience certainly suffered under the metal detectors. Lines formed outside our entrances as the metal detectors simply couldn't handle the amount of flow that came into our building, especially right before the opening pitch. Fans missed the first pitch and didn't have time to get concessions before the game started.”

- Dave Horsman, VP of Ballpark Operations,
Target Field



The Outdoor Express System Deployment Withstands Minnesota Weather Requirements

For its public entrances, Horsman's team replaced 64 walkthrough metal detectors with two Outdoor Evolv Express® dual-lane systems and 13 Outdoor Evolv Express single-lane systems.

In addition, one Outdoor Express single-lane system was deployed for the employee entrance. "We wanted the Outdoor Express systems because of the adverse weather elements in Minnesota," Horsman relates. "They need to withstand rain, snow, ice, and wind. The portability of Express systems is also a big plus for us. They can be torn down, stored, and set up with relative ease."

For implementation, Evolv's Solutions Engineering team and Customer Success Manager played an important role in getting the Express systems configured for optimal traffic flow and in training the security team on their operation. "Moving from the metal detectors to Evolv was an important initiative for us, and a couple of leaders on the team took a leading role in the project. The Evolv team was very helpful in providing support to our staff as well as the expertise to make the implementation successful. The response from Evolv was pretty staggering, and the urgency Evolv put around making us successful was impressive."

The Installation process at a customer site is highly coordinated by Evolv. "It takes the whole team to ensure a successful deployment, and it starts with making an inventory of everything," says Daniel Breidenbach, a Senior Solutions Engineer at Evolv Technology (and Minnesota Twins fan) who worked with the Target Field team on their deployment. "Then, we set up all the systems and run through our checklists to ensure everything is working properly. This includes connecting the system to the network, pairing each Evolv tablet, and setting passwords. Part of the testing process involves checking and testing the systems to make sure they detect threats—on the shoulder, body, ankle, and so forth."



Feedback and Recommendations from Other MLB Teams Crucial

Getting feedback from other MLB teams that use Evolv was an important part of the process of preparing for the Evolv deployment.

“When a Customer Success Manager is assigned to an account, the customer gets more than just a subject-matter expert in the Evolv Express,” conveys Ryan Medley, who serves as one of Evolv’s Customer Success Managers for Target Field. “They also provide a connective tissue with other Evolv customers with whom you can interact and learn from.”

On that front, Horsman indicates this was a resource his team tapped. “We spent a lot of time talking to other MLB teams and were able to build their experience and recommendations into their implementation processes,” he says. One of the resources Horsman used was The Bridge, Evolv’s customer community that provides Evolv customers with an online customer forum. “Going into opening day, we were a little concerned about the Express systems handling all the traffic flow,” Horsman relates. “But every MLB team we spoke to about their Evolv experience told us not to worry about their ability to scale and to simply deploy them. They were right.”

“

We wanted the Outdoor Express systems because of the adverse weather elements in Minnesota. They need to withstand rain, snow, ice, and wind. The portability of Express systems is also a big plus for us. They can be torn down, stored, and set up with relative ease.”

- Dave Horsman, VP of Ballpark Operations, Target Field



Training the Security Staff Through the Evolv Academy and Onsite

In addition to guiding the Target Field team through the configuration and deployment of the Express systems, the Evolv team ensured security staff were trained on their setup and operation.

“We have a learning management system that is immediately configured and sent to a customer as soon as the contract is signed,” Medley notes. “The Target Field team was able to begin assigning training flows for their entire team out of the gate. Training included onsite as well as virtual training through the Evolv Virtual Academy.”

“One of the things that we do better than any other company that I’ve seen in the security space is ensuring the customer is happy with their experience,” Breidenbach adds. “We don’t walk away until the customer knows how to use the Express system—how to set it up, how to restart it, how to troubleshoot errors, and how to fix them. We also have systems and processes in place to ensure there is someone to help a customer whenever they run into a problem—on the weekend or at ten o’clock at night.”

“ We don’t walk away until the customer knows how to use the Express system—how to set it up, how to restart it, how to troubleshoot errors, and how to fix them. We also have systems and processes in place to ensure there is someone to help a customer whenever they run into a problem—on the weekend or at ten o’clock at night.”

- Daniel Breidenbach, Sr. Solutions Engineer,
Evolv Technology



Multiple Use Cases for Evolv Insights® Analytics

One of the areas Evolv's Customer Success Manager focused on during the onboarding process with the Target Field team was the use of Evolv Insights analytics.

"Our security team relies on the analytics in the Insights portal," Horsman observes. "We can identify instances where the systems may not be placed in the best location because of congestion flow. We can determine where we might need additional staff to facilitate a more seamless traffic flow. And when alarms occur, we can pinpoint the cause and train our staff to know the cause so they can become more efficient in secondary security screening."

Medley explains that with Insights, Target Field security managers can even look at live data broken down to individual gates and Express systems. "They can see how many individuals came through gate six versus gate 14 in the first 15 minutes after gates opened versus the last 15 minutes before the actual start of the game," he explains.

Analytics from Insights also come in handy with Target Field executives. "They've had questions about what security ingress looks like this year, and I've been able to show them traffic flow, threat detection, and threat resolution analytics from Insights," Horsman says. "With metal detectors, we could have never provided them with this level of detail."

In addition to these real-time analytics, Medley adds that he worked with the Target Field team to configure Evolv Insights to email a post-game report to specified managers on Horsman's team.

Another aspect of the Evolv solution that Horsman likes is real-time access to Evolv Insights via the Evolv mobile app. "I am not always in front of my computer, especially during gameday ingress," Horsman says. "Being able to check on traffic flow at each gate at five-minute increments and identify what threats have been detected on the Evolv mobile app is really helpful."

“Back-of-the-House” Deployment for Employees

Target Field not only uses Evolv at public entrances but at their back-of-the-house entrance for employees.

“Our back-of-the-house entrance for employees has a different dynamic because of the many things that our staff bring with them for work such as bags with laptops and other items that fans don’t bring with them to the games,” Horsman relates. “Insights analytics have enabled us to gain a better understanding of how to minimize the alarms that they set off when employees walk through the Express lane. Additionally, the Cortex AI® technology has enabled us to train the Express systems on the cause behind those nuisance alarms to improve screening accuracy.”

Reliving the Minnesota Twins 2023 Opening Day

When he reflects on the first few months of their Evolv deployment, the moment that stands out the most in Horsman’s mind is the Twins’ Opening Day.

“We were in the security ingress area when the National Anthem played,” he recalls. “Normally, with the metal detectors, we would still have lines of fans trying to get into the park. But when I looked up after the National Anthem was finished, there were no lines. I knew then that we had made the right decision.”

Horsman notes that since the metal detectors were deployed in 2014, there has always been some form of line outside the entrances. “No matter what we did, we always had security queues,” he says. “These are now a thing of the past with Evolv.”



Benefits of a Much Smaller Security Screening Footprint

Going from walkthrough metal detectors to Evolv enabled Target Field to shrink its security screening footprint.

The prior 64 metal detectors were slashed to 15 Evolv Express systems—a 77% reduction. The recaptured building footprint provides entering fans with more room while enhancing Target Field's security. "Our entrances are much cleaner and clear of equipment with Evolv in place," Horsman says.

Horsman also notes that the Express systems have made it much easier to recruit and retain security staff. "We are able to retain high-quality staff for security ingress to achieve optimal outcomes," Horsman says. "At the same time, we've been able to reallocate some of the remaining security staff to other areas to deliver the very best fan experiences possible."

“ There are so many things that go into making each MLB game a special experience. It's so much more than wins and losses. If one piece of that experience isn't positive, [it] bleeds over into the rest of the experience. Having a positive experience is what's going to bring fans back for more games and events at the venue.”

- Dave Horsman, VP of Ballpark Operations,
Target Field





Security Staff Thankful for Reduction in Secondary Screening

Horsman notes that at first, security staff were reticent to embrace the change from metal detectors to Evolv.

“Not everyone on the staff was excited about the move,” Horsman admits. “But when they went through the training and got a chance to operate the Express system, they all began to get excited. Then, on opening day, the full conversion took place. They were the ones processing fans through the Express lanes, and they suddenly understood how easy they are to operate and how much better the experience is for both them and the guests.”

Secondary security screening is now streamlined and smooth. Before, with metal detectors, secondary screening checks could take a couple of minutes. Now, with Evolv, secondary security checks take 30 to 40 seconds. “The security guard knows where the potential threat is located using the red box on the Evolv tablet,” Horsman says

“

Normally, with the metal detectors, we would still have lines of fans trying to get into the park. But when I looked up after the National Anthem was finished, there were no lines. I knew then that we had made the right decision.”

- Dave Horsman, VP of Ballpark Operations, Target Field

Positive Response from Fans and Stadium Staff

Horsman indicates that Twins games with big crowds tend to have the most late-arriving crowds.

“With the metal detectors, we would see a big rush on concessions after the first pitch,” he relates. “They simply wouldn’t scale to support the volume of fans trying to get through security screening before the start of the game.”

But with Evolv, Horsman reports fans are able to get through security screening in time to get a hot dog and beer before the first pitch. “Fans can walk right into the stadium and visit concessions without missing the first pitch—or needing to get up and get concessions after the start of a game,” he says. “Rather than needing to stop around half of the fans for secondary security checks, the majority pass through the Express lanes without setting off any alarms. They just walk through and we get reactions like, ‘That was cool’ or ‘That was really easy.’”

The response from the Twins’ fans has been overwhelmingly positive. “On Opening Day and the first few games of the season, fans were curious and wondering if we really had done security screening,” Horsman says. “It was transformative enough that they wanted to know how these new systems work.”

Feedback from employees going through the back-of-house Evolv system has been similar to that of fans. “The process is much easier, faster, and less invasive than the process using the metal detectors,” Horsman says.

“The Evolv team was very helpful in providing supporting staff as well as the expertise to make the implementation successful. The response from Evolv was pretty staggering, and the urgency Evolv put around making us successful was impressive.”

- Dave Horsman, VP of Ballpark Operations, Target Field

A True Partnership with Evolv

The relationship with Evolv has been a key driver behind the success of the deployment.

“We are very much a relationship-driven organization,” Horsman explains. “We believe in having good relationships with our customers, vendors, employees, and guests. Relationships are really important for projects like the Evolv deployment. There are a lot of things that can go wrong in the process. You need a vendor on which you can rely. You need a true partner. The responsiveness of the Evolv team has been outstanding.”

Horsman's satisfaction with Evolv's initial deployment extends to the ongoing support Evolv provides. “When we run into issues, Evolv has been very responsive and focused on helping us to solve them,” he adds.



Supporting Downtown Vitality

For downtown areas, MLB stadiums are critical to the vitality of area businesses.

“Like most downtown areas in the country, our downtown has struggled since the pandemic,” Horsman observes. “Having the Evolv systems in the stadium provides people with a better reason for coming downtown knowing that we are creating a safer environment for them. We want our downtown businesses to be successful. And because fans no longer need to build an additional 20 or 30 minutes into their plan to get through the metal detectors and can spend that time at local area businesses eating and shopping.”

Evangelizing the Success of Evolv

Horsman reflects on the importance of a positive security ingress experience for an MLB team like the Twins.

“An MLB team can draw up to three million fans every year,” Horsman notes. “In addition to upwards of 40,000 fans in the park, you have another couple thousand working. There are so many things that go into making each MLB game a special experience. It’s so much more than wins and losses. If one piece of that experience isn’t positive, that experience bleeds over into the rest of the experience. Having a positive experience is what’s going to bring fans back for more games and events at the venue. On that front, security screening was a problem for us. But that is no longer the case with Evolv in place.”



When a Customer Success Manager is assigned to an account, the customer gets more than just a subject-matter expert in Evolv Express. They also provide a connective tissue with other Evolv customers with whom you can interact and learn from.”

- Ryan Medley, Customer Success Manager, Evolv Technology

Contact us to learn more about helping to create
safer zones where you live, learn, work or play.

info@evolvtechnology.com +1 781.374.8100

