



Case study



Citi Field Delivers Transformative Ingress Experience for New York Mets Fans with the Help of Evolv

Citi Field

LOCATION: Flushing, New York

MLB TEAM: New York Mets

OPENED: 2009

CAPACITY: 41,800

WEBSITE: www.mlb.com/mets/ballpark

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Reduce security ingress lines that took 30 or 40 minutes to traverse and wrapped around multiple blocks outside the stadium
- Enable fans to walk through security screening and get concessions and find their seats before first pitch
- Avoid intrusive, lengthy secondary security checks
- Reduce high nuisance alarm rate of metal detectors
- Quickly and easily tear down, store, and set up security screening systems
- Leverage security screening analytics to optimize traffic flow and detection accuracy

Solution

People

- Delivered onsite training to security guards during onboarding and deployment
- Evolv Customer Success Manager provided support and training for Evolv Insights®

Process

- Evolv Solutions Engineering helped update ConOps Playbook
- Evolv Customer Success Manager facilitated sequential rollout of Evolv Express systems over three-year period

Technology

- 11 Ruggedized Evolv Express® Dual-lane Systems
- Evolv Cortex AI®
- Evolv Insights®
- Evolv Mobile App
- Wicket Facial Authentication Ticketing
- Genetec Security Operations, VMS

Outcomes



Reduced security screening footprint by 75%—from 40 walkthrough metal detectors to 11 Ruggedized Evolv Express dual-lane systems



Improved fan experience by making security screening enhanced and fast



Experienced a dramatically lower nuisance alarm rate with Evolv over metal detectors



Turned security screening process—including secondary security checks—into a positive experience for security guards and fans



Planned real-time verified threat alarm notification through Genetec Security Operations, VMS integration



Created seamless traffic flow between security screening and ticketing

Evolv is the Official Fan Screening Provider of the NY Mets

Fan-first Culture Drives Creation of New Position

The importance of fans to the Mets cannot be understated. Fans first is a critical part of Mets' culture.

Part of this involves security screening and ticketing. "We wanted the ingress experience for fans to be smooth and for them to have a great time," says Oscar Fernandez, VP of Technology Solutions for the Mets and Citi Field. He continues, "They should come to a game and not worry about the ingress process at all. We want them to enjoy everything; it's not simply the ballgame but the entire experience."



Games, Events, and Concerts Held Year Round

Beyond MLB games, Citi Field is host to numerous other events during the year.

Citi Field has about half a dozen soccer games, a half dozen concerts, as well as around 70 different events like weddings, bar mitzvahs, among others 365 days a year. The destination even has a tour business that includes international tourists where guests can come and tour the park.

Seeking to ensure the safety of the myriad guests who come to Citi Field, the Operations team implemented walkthrough metal detectors at the park's entrances a number of years ago. However, while this increased fan safety, it negatively impacted fan experience. Fans had to wait up to 30 or 40 minutes in line, and even over an hour in some cases. The lines wrapped around numerous blocks. It was a terrible first impression for fans, and the Citi Field team wanted to deliver a better experience.

A Deliberative Evaluation Process

In response, Citi Field went on a mission to find a better solution.

Research involved conversations with other MLB teams and even went across industries. Citi Field even spoke to teams in the NFL. The Citi Field team wanted to see who was innovating and to gather those ideas from them—and the conversations kept coming back to Evolv.

The Citi Field team went through a normal RFI (request for information) and RFP (request for proposal) process. The team was very deliberative about the decision-making process. At the forefront was an emphasis on keeping fans safe.





A Multistep, Multiyear Evaluation Process

As a starting point, Citi Field launched a proof of concept (POC) three years ago, deploying Evolv Express® systems at VIP gates.

The objective was to understand security ingress from a fan perspective.

After seeing the Express systems in action for a year, Citi Field elected to scale and bring them to their highest-volume gates. The team picked return gates through which 70% of guests pass. Part of the process included observing how many staff would be needed to manage them. The Citi Field team instituted checkpoints, metrics, KPIs, and met regularly as a team—including with the Evolv team.

After another season observing the Express systems, the Citi Field team elected to replace their remaining metal detectors with Evolv Express systems. Over the past two seasons, the Citi Field team observed the Evolv technology and witnessed its evolution. The technology adapts to our high-capacity venue very well. Among other improvements, the Citi Field team indicated Evolv has become better at tracking and reporting.

The Citi Field team notes that the Express system has also become much easier and faster to set up. Three years ago, it took them around 15 minutes to set up an Express system. The team rolled up their sleeves and listened to feedback from Citi Field and, with the changes that were made, ingress was reduced to less than five minutes.

The Citi Field team has also seen the scalability of the Evolv technology improve from three years ago, noting that “the throughput of the Express system is higher now than before in terms of scanning, alarms, and tracking.” Even on a day with a double-header, the Express systems handle the traffic volume seamlessly and without any problems.

The Citi Field team sums up the reasons for the success of Evolv technology in two ways: execution and performance. The team looked at several other technologies and they didn’t catch certain things. They also had scalability challenges.

Full Implementation of Evolv for the Start of the 2023 MLB Season

Before Citi Field started down the path of implementing Evolv Express systems at its entrances, they maintained approximately 40 walkthrough metal detectors at them.

This security screening footprint was reduced to 11 Evolv Express dual-lane systems. This recaptured space can be used for other purposes.

Citi Field did hands-on training before the deployment of the Evolv technology. Most of the Citi Field security staff had not seen Evolv Express systems. Summer supervisors were the first group that was trained, and they helped with the training of the larger team. When Citi Field started the training process, the security team learned very quickly.

In addition to implementation support, Evolv's Solution Engineering team worked with the Citi Field team to modify their ConOps Playbook to reflect operational changes as related to the Evolv Express systems.

Evolv and the Citi Field team collaborated closely over the past several years. Evolv spent a lot of time with the Citi Field team during the summer of 2021, working to understand their requirements to improve fan experience without sacrificing safety.



Getting a One-Two Punch with Ticketing and Security

At about the same time, the Citi Field team began evaluating Evolv as a replacement to its metal detectors, the team also begin to rethink their ticketing process.

Previously, fans had to flip through their smartphones to locate their tickets and then scan each of them. After evaluating various options, the team settled on Wicket Facial Authentication. Known to fans as the Mets Entry Express program, facial ticketing using Wicket is a 100% voluntary opt-in program.

The combination of Evolv and Wicket is transformative for ingress. With Evolv, fans can walk through security screening in an efficient manner. With Wicket, fans have the same experience. The combination produces an expedited ticketing experience. Fans get into the stadium much faster due to Evolv and Wicket and are able to get concessions and get to their seats before the first pitch.

Amplifying Results Using Integrations with Other Security Technologies

Always looking for ways to innovate and enhance the fan experience further, Fernandez is excited about tapping into the possibilities of the pre-built application programming interface (API integrations) offered by Evolv.

One of the areas on the roadmap is the integration of Genetec Security Operations, VMS (Video Management System) platform with Evolv. The integration will allow Citi Field to automatically notify its security operations center of verified alarms in real time.

Ensuring Evolv integrated into the Citi Field's broader security ecosystem was actually an important consideration for the Citi Field team. Evolv is part of their larger security process, and they went through many iterations of design sessions as part of their pre-deployment and configuration processes.



Measuring Performance with Evolv Insights®

As would be expected with an organization as focused on technology as Citi Field, Evolv Insights® analytics play an important role in the ongoing management of the Evolv deployment.

One of the things the Citi Field team values is their ability to measure security ingress against ticket scans. With Evolv Insights analytics, we're able to design our entryways and our Wicket and Evolv deployments using Insights analytics to ensure we're getting full optimization.

Everything flows into the MyEvolv portal and the Evolv mobile app gives Citi Field the ability to access those analytics when the team is not at their desks. This enables the team to see everything remotely and to ensure everything is working properly.

In addition to using insights for operational optimization, the Citi Field team also uses it to analyze threat alarm rates and see how rates are affected at different gates. For example, the team can drill down to see VIP areas versus the main rotunda area. The team reports that this has been a big help, enabling them to look at data in real time and see how traffic flow and threat alarms on a Friday night event compare to those on a Sunday afternoon.

Evolution of Relationship is Key to Success

Citi Field really appreciates how the Evolv relationship has evolved over the past several years.

They are able to brainstorm with Evolv. And when they need help, Evolv sends the right experts from their team to help them overcome the challenge.

Since the initial deployment of the Express systems at the VIP gates, Evolv has worked with Citi Field to enhance the technology, taking feedback on how the team wanted to deploy them. For example, the design of Evolv's Ruggedized Evolv Express system came out of the conversations between the two teams.

Getting Fans into Citi Field Quickly and Safely

Early on, when analyzing the traffic flow at one of the stadium gates, the Citi Field team used Evolv Insights to analyze the traffic flow with the metal detectors compared to the Evolv system.

The long lines that formed outside of Citi Field of fans waiting to get into the stadium when the metal detectors were in place evaporated with Evolv. This means fans have time to go to concessions and the retail shops before going to their seat. Rather than worrying about getting to their seats on time for the first pitch, fans have time to check out the stadium and visit retail and restaurant areas. This has translated into higher sales. Citi Field representatives indicate they have seen an uptick in sales. And because fans get in faster, they are able to enjoy their time at the park by going to restaurants, food and beverage stands, as well as the merchandise and retail areas.



Making the Job of Security Staff Easier and More Enjoyable

With the metal detectors, Citi Field security staff dreaded secondary checks.

Evolv makes their jobs much easier; they no longer need to come to work every day knowing that they must go through a slow and arduous process where both fans and security staff are unhappy. This translates into a better fan experience.

Before, with the metal detectors, Citi Field's security staff had to ask every person to empty their pockets and conduct a secondary security check

for upwards of half of everyone who went through security screening. The Express system transforms the security ingress experience. Fans no longer need to empty their pockets and then if they set off an alarm. Now, security staff can focus on fans coming through who set off alarms rather than stopping every single person.



Making Ingress Non-intrusive

Fans come in groups but must pass through the metal detectors one person at a time.

With Evolv, they can pass through together and keep on walking to ticketing unless they set off an alarm. In those instances, the red box on the Evolv tablet shows the security guard exactly where the potential threat is located. The security guard can focus on that area rather than what everyone described as an intrusive search process.

Seeing Fans Leave Security Screening with a Big Smile on Their Faces

Citi Field has always been known for being a fan-friendly stadium—and Evolv enables them to ensure security screening is a positive experience.

For fans who haven't been to Citi Field before, they cannot believe they went through security screening and typically ask, "That's it?" They leave the security ingress area with a big smile on their faces and proceed to get their ticket.

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

