



Multilateral e-AWB Agreement

FAQ

Freight Forwarder joining process

1. Who can sign the Agreement and Submission Form?

It can be signed by the freight forwarder's current signatory for bilateral e-AWB agreements, or any person with signatory authority to bind the freight forwarder and affiliate(s), if applicable.

2. Why do we need to complete the Submission Form?

The Submission Form is used to specify the designated contact(s) and to add affiliates (if applicable).

3. Will IATA counter-sign and return the Submission Form?

No. The IATA counter-signature is required only for the Agreement.

4. What is the definition of an Affiliate?

Affiliate is any company whom the freight Forwarder is authorized to enter into the multilateral e-AWB agreement on their behalf and to bind them to the obligations set forth therein.

5. Is it mandatory to have two signatories for the Agreement?

No.

6. For Affiliates, is the IATA Cargo Agent Code(s) and Airport Code(s) mandatory?

No.

7. Is it mandatory to provide designated contact for each Affiliate?

No.

8. Can we change the designated contact later?

Yes, by using the Freight Forwarder Submission Form (Section B)



9. Can we add or remove Affiliates to the Agreement later?

Yes, by using the Freight Forwarder Submission Form (Section A).

Airline joining process

1. How can airline join the multilateral e-AWB agreement?

By completing the Airline Submission Form.

2. Who can sign the Airline Submission Form?

It can be signed by the airline's current signatory for bilateral e-AWB agreements, or any person with signatory authority to bind the airline.

3. Why do we need to provide the list of Airport locations?

This is to inform the freight forwarders where the airline will accept e-AWB shipments.

4. In case of a holding company for a group of Airlines, can we use one Form?

No. A separate Airline Submission Form needs to be provided for each Airline.

5. Can we add or remove Airport locations later?

Yes, by using the Airline Submission Form (Section B).

6. Can we change the designated contact later?

Yes, by using the Airline Submission Form (Section C).

About the multilateral agreement

1. Is there a fee charged by IATA for freight forwarders to join or participate to the multilateral e-AWB agreement?

No.

2. Is there a fee charged by IATA for airlines to join or participate the multilateral e-AWB agreement?

No.



3. Is it mandatory for IATA Member Airlines to participate to the multilateral e-AWB agreement?

No.

4. Will the multilateral e-AWB agreement apply to domestic shipments also?

The IATA air waybill is meant to be used for international transportation only. Similarly, the multilateral e-AWB agreement is meant to be used for international shipments only.

5. In the bilateral e-AWB agreement (RP1670), there was a second alternative for dispute resolution by specifying an applicable Jurisdiction. Why is it missing in the multilateral agreement?

RP1670 is a bilateral agreement, where parties could mutually agree on a jurisdiction for dispute resolution. It is not possible however to specify such a specific location in a "standard" multilateral agreement.

6. If all disputes are solved by an arbitration or a mediation, how does a governing law relate to this Agreement?

Governing law assists arbitrators in interpreting contract and deciding the rights and obligations of the parties in the event of a dispute.

7. The Warsaw concept was defined in Annex D of RP1670 with clear handling procedures. Why it is missing in the multilateral agreement?

Article 1.2 of the Multilateral Agreement covers Warsaw shipments, although not in the same detail as in RP1670. This is because a recommended practice allows parties to deviate from its terms on a bilateral basis depending on the capabilities of the parties entering into the agreement.

However as a resolution, the multilateral agreement cannot be deviated from its terms and it was decided that participants should be provided the flexibility i.e. in situations that require issuance of a paper air waybill, airline would be authorized (but not obliged) to make out and sign the paper air waybill on behalf of freight forwarder. The airline and freight forwarder can decide bilaterally that the forwarder would bring paper air waybills in such cases, or they are free to adopt the procedures outlined in Annex D of RP1670 as an IATA best practice.

8. Are we obliged to do e-AWB after joining the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement?

No. The Agreement enables, but does not oblige parties to do e-AWB.



9. Do we have the flexibility to decide with whom we will do e-AWB?

Yes, through the Activation process.

Activation Notice

1. I am a freight forwarder and I have joined the multilateral e-AWB agreement. My airline partner has also joined the agreement. Can we now start doing e-AWB right away?

No. Do not start e-AWB until you receive the Activation Notice from your airline partner.

2. Why is the Activation Notice required before starting e-AWB?

This is because pursuant to Resolution 672, Attachment A, Article 3.1, freight forwarder shall only commence tendering cargo shipments under the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement to airline on the date after that airline sends Activation Notice to freight forwarder.

3. What is the Activation Notice, what does it contain and why is it needed?

Before starting to do e-AWB, airline and freight forwarder need to:

- Discuss and decide the locations where they will start e-AWB
- Together validate and ensure e-AWB operational readiness of both parties (business processes, electronic communication, data quality, etc) at the location(s)

The Activation Notice is a formal means for an airline to confirm to freight forwarder, after the validation process, about the location(s) and date(s) where they mutually decide to start e-AWB.

4. Do freight forwarders need to also send Activation Notice to airline?

No.

5. I am a freight forwarder and I received an Activation Notice from an airline. I do not agree with the details mentioned (partly or completely). What should I do?

Freight forwarder should immediately notify airline that the Activation Notice is not accepted.

6. I am an airline and I have sent an Activation Notice to my freight forwarder partner. Do I need a formal confirmation before I can accept e-AWB shipments?

There is no requirement for a formal confirmation from freight forwarder. For example, freight forwarder is not required to counter-sign the Activation Notice and return to airline. However, as with usual good business practice, airline is recommended to obtain an acknowledgement of receipt of the Activation Notice from the freight forwarder.



7. I am an airline. Do I need to send the original signed Activation Notice to freight forwarder or can I send a scanned copy by e-mail?

The Activation Notice could be sent by email, certified mail, or by express courier, as mutually acceptable for both parties.

8. I am an airline. Who is authorized to sign the Activation Notice in my company?

The Activation Notice can be signed by any person with authority to bind the airline. It is recommended that airlines define an internal policy on who will issue/sign the Activation Notices and how the records will be maintained.

9. I am an airline. Can I activate multiple locations with a freight forwarder using a single Activation Notice?

Yes.

10. Is the activation done on an origin-destination basis or is it for all destinations from an airport location?

The activation is usually for all destinations from a location. But parties have the option to indicate specificities (applicable routes, or types of cargo) by using the comments column in the Activation Notice.

11. Do we need to send copy of the Activation Notice to IATA?

No.

12. Do we need to inform IATA on the activations?

No. The activation process is strictly managed between the airline and freight forwarder only. There is no requirement to notify IATA on the activations.

13. What happens if Activation Notice is sent by Airline without confirmation from Freight Forwarder?

The Agreement states that the Activation Notice must be sent only upon both airline and freight forwarder mutually confirming locations and start dates. Any Activation Notice sent which is not in accordance with the Agreement would not be considered valid.

14. As a freight forwarder, after joining the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement can I right away start e-AWB with my airline partner?

After joining, a freight forwarder should first engage with its airline partner(s) to discuss and mutually confirm operational and technical readiness, including ability to send/receive electronic communications



(by using EDI messages, web portal, or other means) and ensure the reliability of such electronic communication.

Also, they should agree on the locations and start dates for e-AWB. The airline will then send an Activation Notice to freight forwarder confirming what was mutually decided. Upon receipt of Activation Notice, the freight forwarder can start tendering e-AWB shipments to the airline.

15. If Freight forwarder office in a given country is registered under the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement, are all the Branch offices of the forwarder in the given country also covered?

Yes, provided the Branch offices belong to the same Legal entity as the registered office.

Paperless process using e-signatures

1. Can the paperless process be used in countries where e-signatures are not recognized?

The governing law for the Multilateral e-AWB Agreement is Swiss Law (which provides same legal validity for e-signatures as for hand written signatures). Therefore, regardless of the location of the Freight Forwarder, the Agreement can be executed using e-signature.

2. Is the paper process still available?

Parties have the option to use the [paper process](#). However IATA recommends to adopt the new process in order to avoid having to print, sign and mail paper documents and to enable a quicker processing of the submission. [More information on e-signatures](#)