



# Restart of Ground operations

Position paper – September 01, 2020

## The issue

The COVID-19 crisis has shaken the aviation industry, putting it into an extremely vulnerable position as airlines and stakeholders strive to remain afloat. Having never faced a crisis of this nature before, the greatest challenges within the ground handling community in the context of the COVID-19 crisis are:

- Rapidly changing and varying local and regional regulations
- Maintaining personnel readiness and staff training/retraining
- Maintaining equipment and facility readiness
- Maintaining / preparing for operational readiness for return to service
- Varying and unpredictable flight schedules making it difficult for Ground Handlers to plan appropriate numbers of resources, supplies, and equipment
- Safety of passenger and employees, including compliance to new biosafety measures

## Industry response to COVID-19 crisis

In response to the crisis and to support the industry, IATA has developed COVID / pandemic related guidance material for Ground Operations, including [Aircraft cleaning and disinfection](#), [Ground handling return to service](#), [Guidance for ground operations during COVID-19](#), and [Transport of Cargo in Passenger Cabin](#).

The guidance materials above will support the return of passenger and employee confidence by ensuring simple, common and consistent procedures that are designed to be implemented globally.

## IATA Ground Operations Position

### Ground Handling common standards

The current crisis offers a unique opportunity for the industry to adopt **common ground handling standards**, enabling standardisation, simplification and a high level of safety to be achieved alongside the opportunity to reduce costs. and improve efficiency.

IATA Ground Operations strongly recommends that the industry take this opportunity to:

- Adopt IGOM standards in lieu of operator specific requirements
- Operators provide the Ground Service Providers (GSP's) with clear instructions whenever there is a variation from the IGOM standards.
- Adopt AHM Chapter 11 training recommendations.
- GSPs utilize ISAGO to support a reduction in station audits.

The key point is that the above will lead to:

- A common set of standards reducing complexity and operator differences.
- Simplify the return to service process.
- Deliver an improvement in safety and security performance.



- Provide more effective oversight of safe operations
- Deliver a reduction in costs

## Biosafety measures

While biosafety measures related to COVID were introduced to all ground operations processes, most of the ground operational **procedures remain unchanged** and IGOM procedures apply. All biosafety measures shall be considered as temporary, progressive measures and only introduced based on the risk assessment, data driven decisions and local regulatory requirements. All these measures need to be periodically assessed taking into consideration their operating and economic impact (e.g. impact on turnaround times). The primary aim of these assessments is to guide the scaling down of the measures as the risk levels decline and eventually their withdrawal once the crisis subsides.

IATA advocates for a multi-layered approach (combination of various biosafety measures) to be implemented to mitigate the risk as far as practical, implying the following measures:

- (a) Enhanced hygiene routines
- (b) Physical distancing
- (c) Personal protection equipment (PPE) e.g. medical masks, face covers, shields, goggles, gloves, gowns, aprons, etc. appropriate for the job to be performed by the wearer
- (d) Health monitoring, screening and testing such as temperature measuring of personnel, symptom recognition, health declaration etc.
- (e) Maintaining crew rotations for 14-day periods to minimize cross team infection (based on CART)
- (f) Limitation of person to person documentation handover, including the implementation of digital document systems and data exchange wherever possible.
- (g) Maintaining awareness of human factors pertaining to additional safety measures. Companies need to pay attention to and offer employees all necessary support to help them to maintain their wellbeing and mental health.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us at [groundops@iata.org](mailto:groundops@iata.org)