



ICAO

The Fourth Meeting of the Aerodromes Operations and Planning Sub-Group (AOP/SG/4)

Video Teleconference, 10 to 13 November 2020

Agenda Item 4: Certification and Operations of Aerodromes

CHALLENGES ARISING FROM COVID-19 IN AERODROME OPERATIONS

(Presented by Airports Council International)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the challenges in aerodrome operations caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, how aerodrome operators have been coping with them, and seeks comments and guidance from AOP-SG with a view to improving resilience of the industry in the face of similar public health crises in the future.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Worldwide passenger traffic dropped by -58.4% in the first half of 2020 compared to the period in 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in early 2020. International traffic was worse hit compared to domestic travels, dropping by 64.5% in the same period because of closure of international borders and entry restrictions.

1.2 The most direct consequence of this precipitous drop in traffic for aerodrome operators was the surge in demand for parking of idle aircraft on taxiways and even runways not designed for such purpose. The closure of workplaces and furloughing of airport staff also caused other issues in aerodrome operations and maintenance. These issues are discussed in the following.

2. DISCUSSION

Challenges in Aerodrome Operations due to COVID 19

2.1 Issues arising from Parking of Idle Aircraft. The drastic reduction in air traffic due to COVID-19 created an unprecedented demand for parking of idle aircraft on airport taxiways and runways. Prolonged parking of aircraft on pavements not intended for such purpose may cause pavement damage, and because these are often parked close to each other for the lack of space, engenders the risk of collision during parking manoeuvring or during typhoon season if these are not securely tied down. It is recommended that airports in such a situation should conduct a proper risk assessment, mitigate the risks by regularly monitoring pavements and, if necessary, have the pavement recertified before the resumption of operations. An ACI advisory bulletin on the subject can be downloaded [here](#).

2.2 Issues arising from Lockdowns, Social Distancing and Closure of Workplaces. Lockdowns and suspension of public transport imposed during the pandemic and the need for social distancing caused partial or complete closure of workplaces with consequences for aerodrome operations ranging from suspension of personnel training, maintenance of aerodrome facilities and aerodrome certification or recertification processes. For training and other purposes, airports have been coping with the use increased of online training and meeting facilities.

2.3 Medium- to Long-Term Impact of COVID-19 on Aerodrome Operations. Because of the pandemic, this year globally airports are expected to lose 97.4 billion USD in revenues and in the Asia Pacific region alone 29.4 billion USD. Such significant financial losses for airports will have inevitable repercussions on personnel training, operations and maintenance, and capital expenditure for infrastructure development in the medium- and long-term.

2.4 Guidelines on Aerodrome Operations Recovery and Restart. Issues caused by the pandemic apart, airports as other partners in the industry are looking forward to the resumption to normalcy. A set of ACI guidelines on the recovery and restart of airport operations can be downloaded [here](#). The document covers various areas of airport operations and maintenance but the attention of AOP-SG is drawn to Chapter 4 on the resumption of aerodrome operations with due regard for safety. The chapter gives recommendations on the parking of idle aircraft during the pandemic, and upon recovery from it, the recommissioning of parked aircraft, the resumption of operations, RFF services and wildlife hazard management etc.

Preparedness for Public Health Emergency in Aerodrome Emergency Plan

2.5 It should be noted that Note 1 to Standard 9.1.2 of Annex 14 gives public health emergency as an example of emergency situation that should be included in the Aerodrome Emergency Plan, a requirement for aerodrome certification. ACI guidelines on establishing procedures to ensure preparedness for handling public health emergencies can be downloaded [here](#). The guidelines describe the key elements of such preparedness, namely: communication, health screening, logistics, equipment, entry/exit controls, and coordination with public health authorities.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the issues and information contained in this paper; and
- b) share lessons learnt in the area of aerodrome operations and maintenance during the pandemic in view of improving resilience of the industry in the face of possible resurgences of similar pandemics in the future.

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