




**APEX** AIRPORT  
EXCELLENCE  
IN SAFETY

WORKING TOGETHER TO ENHANCE  
AIRPORT OPERATIONAL SAFETY

A blue-tinted photograph of an airport runway at night, viewed from an elevated perspective. The runway lights are illuminated, creating a strong perspective that leads the eye towards the horizon. The lights include a central line of lights, side lights, and crossrunway lights.

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## Overview

- Currently GHSPs are the only major stakeholder involved in the aviation system that is not regulated by international legislation or certified by State regulatory bodies. Yet every year a significant number of incidents and accidents related to ground handling activities are caused on airports around the world.
- Additionally, there is currently a lack of standardisation in the approach taken by airport operators regarding the licensing and safety oversight of ground handling activities on airports

Help is on the way:

- ACI ground handling policy
- ACI airport ground handling agreement template (draft)
- ICAO Manual on ground handling (draft)



Ground handling activities on airports, in particular their safety and regularity, are of a particular importance to airport operators for a number of reasons, including the following points:

- There are significant numbers of aircraft damage and personal injury accidents, with consequent costs and delays to aircraft which may, in some cases, involve the airport's reputation;
- Airport operators generally have oversight responsibility over the safety of activities on the apron areas
- The responsibilities and liabilities, between ground handling service providers, airport operators and airlines, are not always clearly established; and
- The performance, regularity and efficiency of ground handling operations have a direct impact on the overall performance of the airport operations and an airport's capacity.

Should ground handling service providers implement a Safety Management System?



## ACI World Policy on Ground Handling



Ground handling service providers operating at an airport should develop and maintain a safety management system.

Airport operators should provide a license or concession to any third party ground handler that operates on the airport.

Standards and recommendations for ground handling service providers should be developed and monitored by industry regulatory bodies.

## Safety Oversight

- The airport operator's SMS should **monitor and provide safety oversight** of activities and services conducted as defined in the ground handling license provided to the ground handling service provider.
- Ground handling service providers should **develop and maintain a Safety Management System** that is commensurate to their operations on the airport and with the airport operator's SMS.
- The ground handling service provider's SMS should contain as a minimum:
  - A formal mechanism establishing the ground handler's obligations in relation with the Airport Authority's SMS.
  - Safety reporting and data collecting/sharing
  - Safety risk management (risk identification and mitigation).
  - Safety assurance (safety performance indicators, monitoring and improving mechanism).
  - Mandatory SMS related training.



## Licensing

- Airport operators should provide a license or concession to any third party ground handler that has been granted access to operate on the airport.
- This license should detail and govern the relationship between the airport operator and the ground handling service provider.
- The license should as a minimum cover:
  - Safety, security and environmental oversight and responsibilities
  - Liability and responsibility
  - Insurance requirements
  - Services provided
  - Performance standards and service levels
  - Cost recovery
  - Penalties
  - Compliance with airport regulation
  - Equipment

A standardized list of items included in an airport license is included in the white paper.

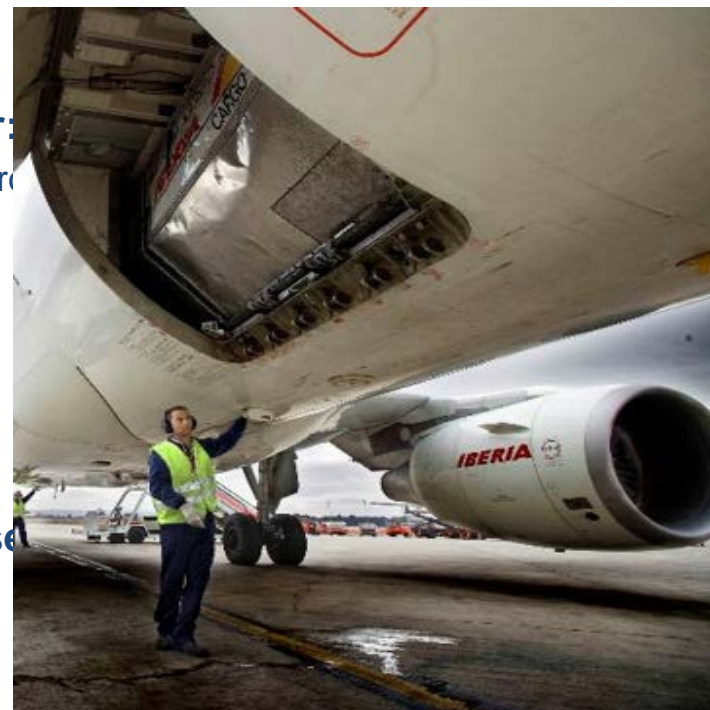
A standard template will be developed in a second phase.





## Certification

- *Standards and recommendations for ground handling service providers should be developed and monitored by industry regulatory bodies.*
- Ground handling service providers **should be certified** against these standards.
- **Oversight should be conducted by national authorities to ensure compliance with the established standards and recommendations.**
- **As a minimum, SARPS should contain requirements for:**
  - Availability of means necessary to ensure safe provision of ground handling services at the aerodrome
  - Development of standard operational procedures
  - Coordination of arrangements with other stakeholders
  - Implementation of training programs
  - Implementation of a Safety Management System
  - Establishment of an operations manual
- **Existing industry best practice should be used as a base for regulatory developments**







## Tendering Process

Possible adjudication criteria for the tendering process could include:

- Years of experience on a similar airport
- Financial strength
- Insurance liability cover
- Commitment to comply with safety, security and environmental rules and regulations
- Commitment to meet service standards
- Equipment resourcing plan
- Staff allocation plan
- Training plan
- References from existing clients
- Commitments from perspective clients
- Establishment of Safety Management System (SMS)
- Business development plan
- ISAGO or other certification
- Incident / accident record

## Challenges





## Challenges

### Regulatory

- Multiple stakeholders are involved in the development of regulatory material for ground handling activities, often with different stakes in the business.
- A common harmonized approach is necessary to ensure the safety and efficiency of operations

### Operational

- Ground handling is a complex activity with multiple actors involved.
- The “triangular” relationship between airlines, GHSPs and airports tends to lead to “silos” that create barriers to safety improvements.
- The pressures put on GHSPs can have a negative impact on safety and operational performance resulting in incidents or lost airport capacity.





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