

Subject: Provision of Groundhandling Services at Aerodromes**Ref. Publications:**

Regulation (EU) No 2018/1139

Regulation (EU) No 965/2012

Regulation (EU) No 139/2014

Applicability:

Competent authorities, aerodrome operators.

Description:

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the majority of the flights have been suspended. This had a severe impact in groundhandling business due to the fact that the absence of clients forced many groundhandling services providers to scale down or cease operations completely. This resulted in a large number of personnel being unemployed and groundhandling equipment being abandoned at the aerodromes.

As aviation is recovering slowly and flights are resuming, the groundhandling sector is playing a vital role in the safe and efficient conduct of flight operations.

EASA has initiated the work on the development of rules in regard to the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 2018/1139 (EASA Basic Regulation) for the provision of groundhandling services under the EU Regulatory framework. However, such rules have not yet been published. Currently, Council Directive 96/67/EC, as transposed in the national regulatory framework of each Member State, regulates the access to the market and Article 17 of this Directive does not affect the rights and obligations of Member States with respect to safety at aerodromes. Nevertheless, since groundhandling services are provided to air operators and at aerodromes, which fall under the scope of Regulation (EU) No 2018/1139, it is considered important that the services are provided in a manner that ensures the safety and regularity of operations and in accordance with the essential requirements included in Annex VII of Regulation (EU) No 2018/1139.

At this time, the safety concern described in this SIB is not considered to be an unsafe condition that would warrant Safety Directive (SD) action under Regulation (EU) [139/2014](#), Annex II, ADR.AR.A.040.

This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.



Recommendation(s):

An aerodrome operator, in order to ensure that the provision of groundhandling services at the aerodrome is available and does not affect the safety of aerodrome operations, is recommended to:

1. In case that a groundhandling service provider has ceased/ceases operation or specific services are not provided, make this information available to aircraft operators by using all the available means of communication, including the possibility of issuing NOTAM.
2. Depending on the State and in accordance with the National Regulatory framework in regard to the access to the groundhandling market, liaise with the National Aviation Authority to ensure continuity of the provision of groundhandling services taking into consideration the expected traffic demand.
3. Ensure that unused or inoperative ground support equipment (GSE) is removed from areas that affect flight operations and aircraft servicing, and stored in a manner that it does not pose a risk to persons or aircraft in the vicinity (e.g. collision, FOD, fire, etc.). Designation of specific areas may be required.
4. Coordinate and ensure the ground handling service provider has developed a return-to-operations plan.
5. Require that the groundhandling service providers have appropriately checked the GSE before it is returned to service by maintenance staff.
6. Ensure that persons who are allowed unescorted access to the apron have received the required refresher training in regard to the safety and operational procedures on the apron in accordance with ADR.OR.D.017. Personnel should be briefed on any new or amended procedures.
7. Not allow the operation of vehicles or equipment by any person who does not hold a valid apron driving authorisation or an equivalent in accordance with ADR.OPS.B.025.
8. Ensure that newly hired personnel who are operating centralized aerodrome infrastructure facilities, such as boarding bridges, visual docking guidance systems, etc. are trained to perform the assigned tasks.
9. Provide groundhandling service providers details of any operational limitations at the apron and the use of centralized aerodrome infrastructure.
10. Liaise with all groundhandling service providers to ensure the establishment and implementation of local staff wellbeing programme.

Contact(s):

For further information contact the EASA Programming and Continued Airworthiness Information Section, Certification Directorate, E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu.

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