

# United Kingdom Overseas Territories Aviation Circular

**OTAC 139-32**  
**91-15**  
**121-25**  
**125-21**  
**135-24**

## Ground Handling Operations

**Issue 1.00**  
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**Effective: on issue**

### GENERAL

Overseas Territories Aviation Circulars (OTACs) are issued to provide advice, guidance and information on standards, practices and procedures necessary to support Overseas Territory Aviation Requirements. They are not in themselves law but may amplify a provision of the Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Order or provide practical guidance on meeting a requirement contained in the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements.

### PURPOSE

This Overseas Territories Aviation Circular provides guidance to aerodrome operators on establishing criteria to regulate Ground Handling Operations.

### RELATED REQUIREMENTS

This Circular relates to OTAR Parts 139, 91, 121, 125 and 135.

### CHANGE INFORMATION

First issue.

### ENQUIRIES

Enquiries regarding the content of this Circular should be addressed to Air Safety Support International at the address on the ASSI website [www.airsafety.aero](http://www.airsafety.aero) or to the appropriate Overseas Territory Aviation Authority.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 ICAO Doc 10121 provides guidance for ground handling services to ensure all operations are provided to an acceptable level of safety. It also contains detailed information on the oversight of ground handling operations for both aerodromes and airline operators. This should be included in the SMS of all those stakeholders who are involved in ground handling operations.
- 1.2 This OTAC is intended to provide information which may be used to establish and monitor ground handling operations at an acceptable level of safety.

## 2 Oversight

- 2.1 Aircraft turnaround is a key element of ground handling operations. To ensure that all activities are carried out in a safe manner, both aerodrome and airline operators should incorporate the following aircraft turnaround procedures into their SMS:
  - i. regular audit checks and turnaround inspections;
  - ii. review of reported occurrences and investigations;
  - iii. joint safety promotion activities, and
  - iv. communication, cooperation and coordination between all parties.
- 2.2 Ground Handling Service Providers should be included in joint aerodrome safety committees to ensure all safety issues are addressed and mitigated in a timely manner (if necessary).
- 2.3 The aerodrome operator should establish and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for apron operations. As a minimum, SOPs should cover:
  - a) aircraft stand allocations;
  - b) marshalling services;
  - c) follow-me operations;
  - d) blast precautions;
  - e) apron cleaning;
  - f) aircraft apron movements (ie pushback, towing, power-back, self-manoeuving, etc);
  - g) operation of fixed apron facilities (ie fixed electric ground power, passenger boarding bridges, fuel hydrant systems etc);
  - h) vehicle movements;
  - i) passenger movements on the apron;
  - j) personnel movements on the apron;
  - k) FOD management;
  - l) fuelling activities;
  - m) operations in adverse weather conditions, and
  - n) dissemination of information.

- 2.4 Both aerodrome and airline operators should ensure that all Ground Handling Service providers are included in the aerodrome Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and are included in all ERP exercises.

### 3 Training

- 3.1 Ground Handling Service Providers should ensure that all personnel are trained according to their responsibilities. All employees should be given both initial and recurrent training.
- 3.2 Ground Handling Service Providers should establish training programmes that include theoretical training, on-the-job training and regular competency checks. Training programmes should include (if applicable) but are not limited to, the following areas:
- a) general safety awareness;
  - b) walking and working on the apron;
  - c) vehicle and equipment operations;
  - d) FOD;
  - e) equipment approaching the aircraft;
  - f) general safety during fuelling operations;
  - g) operations in adverse weather conditions;
  - h) dangerous goods general awareness;
  - i) turnaround coordination;
  - j) load planning;
  - k) aircraft arrival and departure;
  - l) passenger boarding bridges and passenger stairs;
  - m) operating Ground Service Equipment;
  - n) baggage handling, and
  - o) aircraft apron movements (ie pushback, towing, power-back, self-manoeuving, etc).

### 4 Summary

The information contained in this document should be used as a basis for aerodrome and airline operators to establish their own systems for the control of Ground Handling Service Providers in order to ensure that all ground operations are conducted in a safe and efficient manner.

### 5 References

ICAO Doc 10121 – Manual on Ground Handling, First Edition – 2019.