

Self-monitoring checklist: ramp/aircraft loading activities

Guidance document

Whether for regulatory or company requirements, almost every organisation in business should monitor its own operation to ensure standards continue to be met. In that respect, aviation is no different.

This overview and the checklist give some basic guidance to any aviation organisation involved in ground handling on how to monitor activities effectively, not only to ensure compliance but also to identify potential safety improvements.

Background

Whether it is the responsibility of the airline, the ground handling agent or the airport authority, self-monitoring of any activity in and around the operation of an aircraft is vital to ensure the safety and compliance standards are met. This will highlight any issues before they become regular or even result in errors or incidents.

GHOST supports the importance of self-monitoring and has produced a definitive checklist covering aircraft turnaround activities, procedures and documents. It encompasses passenger and cargo operations, both bulk-loaded and containerised.

The checklist is aimed at the underwing operation, but other related topics such as documented procedures, ground support equipment maintenance, safety management, training

records and flight file checks should also form part of any oversight programme.

Standards

The requirements the checklist refers to can be found on the appendix reference page. They have been aligned with the following current standards:

- EU-OPS / EASA Implementing Rules
- IATA Ground Operations Manual (IGOM), Airport Handling Manual (AHM) and Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR)
- International Civil Aviation Organization Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods By Air
- CAP 642
- established industry good practice

Local regulations or company specific requirements may also apply, so anyone conducting checks should refer to these beforehand.

Application

This document could be used in a variety of ways:

- in its entirety, either for initial implementation or to replace an existing self-monitoring program
- use certain sections to focus on specific areas of operational activity that need extra attention
- as a reference document to ensure current checklists cover all relevant/applicable activities

To achieve meaningful self-monitoring, there a number of recommendations that should be considered:

Who conducts checks?

It is essential that the person carrying out the observation has the necessary skills, training, knowledge and experience to allow them to perform the task effectively. (A copy of the relevant turnaround plans, procedures and any local instructions should be available to help the person conducting the check.)

Honesty is vital in this activity. If the individual is conducting a check of an airport they are responsible for or work at, they could end up dealing with the issue rather than formally recording it. This will not benefit any organisation because if not reported issues may well become more serious and any lessons learned are not shared.

What is recorded?

The purpose of the exercise is to judge whether something meets a certain standard or not and record it.

So, when completing the checklists, people should record deviations from the required standards. However, any activity that may not be easily measured against a requirement and causes reason for question or concern, should be raised as an 'observation'. This will identify potential for improvement.

Ideally, any issues or comments should be entered into a system that will provide a way to analyse trends, so that the organisation can identify where and why these issues occur.

When to observe?

When scheduling these checks, incorporate a variety of different types of flights and times of the season, day and night. The number of planned checks should be dependent on the frequency of turnarounds, or to check any identified issues.

To decide which particular activity or location to check, use the risk analysis of previously recorded issues, together with any incident data, which will ensure that attention is focussed on the correct topics.

Behaviours

The process of monitoring an activity has the potential to alter the results, i.e. a person standing over a worker with a clip board making notes changes the way the worker performs – that's human nature. It is worth remembering this when deciding whether to conduct a check openly (overt) or in secret (covert).

Immediate Actions

If during an observation an activity is deemed to be unsafe in any way, it is the observer's responsibility to step in and take immediate corrective actions to prevent the likelihood of an incident or accident. This is why it is vital that they are experienced in the activity they are observing and understand the associated risks. If intervention is required at the time of the observation, this, along with details of the issue, must be recorded as a finding.

This checklist will be amended as necessary, based on feedback from those who use it, those who have access to it and any changes to industry standards. If you have any suggestions, please contact **ghost@caa.co.uk**