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IATA Safety Audit of Ground Operations (ISAGO)

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1. Foreword

With the rapid growth of air traffic, airport operations have become increasingly complex. More and larger aircraft, an increase in ground support equipment and faster turnaround times all contribute to the challenge. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has developed and implemented the IATA Safety Audit of Ground Operations (ISAGO) program with the main aims of improving operational safety in the airport ground operations environment, reducing ground handling incidents and accidents, and improving efficiency by reducing the number of audits on ground handling companies.

ISAGO aims to bring improvements, similar to IOSA, in safety and efficiency for airports, airlines and ground handling companies. It is an internationally recognized and accepted system for assessing the operational management and control systems of a company that provides ground handling services for airlines. ISAGO is based on industry-proven quality audit principles and structured to ensure a standardized audit with consistent results.

The ISAGO program is intended to create an audit pooling arrangement whereby registration of the company itself, and of each ground station, will be accepted by IATA as demonstrating an acceptable standard of safety performance to any operator, without that operator having to conduct its own audit.

2. IATA Safety Audit of Ground Operations (ISAGO)

ISAGO is an audit program for ground handling companies serving airlines at airports. The audit is built around a set of recognized standards tailored to the nature and extent of operations of each company audited. Upon completion of the audit and correction of any findings, the ground handling company is placed on an IATA-managed registry for a defined period, at which time a renewal audit is required. Airlines may accept the ISAGO audit registration in lieu of conducting their own audit. Airport Operators may accept the ISAGO as the external audit required by JCAR Part 140.

ISAGO is the first global safety audit program for ground service providers that aims at improving operational safety and reducing the number of audits. It is modeled on the successful IOSA framework and is based on internationally recognized standards. It can serve as an effective model for operational risk and safety management for ground operations.

3. ISAGO Standards

IATA has developed a comprehensive set of Standards and Recommended Practices (ISARPs) against which ground handling companies applying for registration under the program will be audited. The ISAGO Standards Manual (GOSM) has been published in order to provide the operational standards, recommended practices and associated guidance material necessary for the Audit of a ground operations service provider. The GOSM may also be used as a guide by any provider desiring to structure its management and operational control systems to be in conformity with the latest industry operational practices. The GOSM is the sole source of assessment criteria utilized by ISAGO auditors when conducting an Audit.

4. Operators' responsibilities

Airport operators are required to ensure that ground handling companies or self-handlers' airside operations are in compliance with the safety measures prescribed in the Airport Certification Manual required by JCAR Part 139.

Furthermore, ground handlers are required to meet certain criteria relating to the competence of operations personnel as well as arranging for external audits for their established Safety Management System and as prescribed in JCAR Part 140.

ISAGO audits address compliance with the ISARPs, but even when fully implemented, the ISAGO program is not intended to eliminate additional audits of ground handling companies required by operator.

5. Benefits of the ISAGO Program

Trend data flowing from ISAGO audits can be used together with data from other safety programs to enable the industry to identify specific areas of ground handling in need of safety improvement and apply measures to reduce damage, address root causes, and measure improvement. Furthermore, ISAGO examines the complete spectrum of a ground handling company and assesses continuity of operational management and practices between headquarters and stations.

Benefits to airlines that are required to audit ground handling companies include:

- Reduction in number of audits
- Lower risk of ground damage
- Cost savings
- More efficient processes
- Improved quality standards
- Better understanding of high-risk areas within ground operations

As for Ground service providers, the benefits include:

- Reduction of incidents and accidents
- Fewer injuries to personnel
- Reduction of redundant audits from customer airlines
- Opportunity to refocus resources on operations
- Improvement of operational safety capability
- Enhanced company image and reputation

Regulatory Authorities will benefit from:

- Enhanced regulatory safety oversight
- Uniform audit process and recognized standards
- Improvement of oversight by airport operators

Ground handling companies that model their operations on the ISAGO standards are viewed as companies committed to operate to globally accepted industry best practices.

6. CARC Policy on the ISAGO program

CARC believes that ISARPs represent a good measure in ensuring enhanced safety at airports, and compliance with the ISARPs should improve the level of safety performance. Ground Handling Companies and Operators are recommended to note the information contained in this Publication.

7. Further Information

Further information can be found on the IATA website (www.iata.org).