

Safety and Security in UK Airports and Airlines

We all enjoy a good holiday with safe flights yet flying to an unknown location or one of our favourite destinations involves more personnel than the ground operational staff at check in and the on-board flight operations of air crew and cabin crew. Understanding the structural arrangement for ensuring safety and security regulations is essential to budding aviators. The fundamentals are understanding health and safety measures to identify risks and hazards, which include potential dangers in the environment and unsecured equipment that could lead to an injury. This article will explain the procedures and responsibility of all personnel involved.

Airport and Airline Safety and Security

The airline authorities study risk to prevent incidents and any type of accident that may result in injury and costly to the airline. In order to mitigate risk, they provide comprehensive training to their staff, all aviation personnel whether their role is ground staff or air crew. Managing risk includes all aviation roles such as Air Traffic Control who manage external factors like weather conditions. The airport and airline security staff are a major part of the matrix operation to enable safe flights. They are trained to look out for bomb threats, cyber-attacks and anything that looks suspicious that can disrupt the flight operations. The responsibility of airport and aviation security in the United Kingdom, UK lies with the Civil Aviation Authority CAA. The CAA regulates and oversees all aspects of civil aviation, the objectives include enforcing national security regulations, to certify security personnel, and through audit reporting to monitor airports and airlines are following security standards. The CAA'S qualified aviation operators implement effective security measures that protect passengers, staff and aircraft within the UK

Reducing risks is how passengers, staff and aircraft are protected, by understanding what is considered a breach of security in a UK airport. The breaches are categorised into physical breaches, cyber-attacks and suspicious items. A physical breach is where someone enters a restricted area, this should be reported if noticed. The restricted areas are airside, security screening and staff offices. Cyber-attacks are where someone has access to IT databases in the airport and suspicious items consist of unattended belongings, luggage or potential detonators. All these breaches should be reported to airport security. If one does see something suspicious, they should avoid touching the package, clear the area and report to bomb disposal.

In summary airport and airline security is the responsibility of ground staff and trained security but airline operational staff are key in ensuring safe and security compliant flights during travel.

Airside Safety

To ensure safety at airside the rules and obligations include enabling only authorised personnel with valid ID passes to the airside area, to protect against security threats. In addition to wearing their ID at airside the rule on clothing is for all personnel to wear high visibility Personal Protective Equipment, (PPE) clothing to enhance visibility. PPE items include safety boots- steel toe boots, safety gloves and protective hearing wears from aircraft noise. The speed limit in airside space is normally 20 mph for designated routes this helps prevent accidents, and collisions in busy areas.

Another safety concern is when there is a fire in the airside area, the first action to take is to assess the situation is safe, ensuring your own safety first. Only trained personnel should attempt to fight the fire, and it is essential to raise the alarm at the nearest fire alarm point. When reporting on the phone or the airport operation control centre you must give your name and contact details and provide the exact location, the gate number or stand number, and report if anyone is injured or at risk. As with all fire drills your own safety is paramount so close any doors to prevent fire spreading and evacuate the area, assisting others if possible.

Other emergencies that could occur include accidents and your responsibility would be to ensure safety to the injured and securing the area to prevent any other accidents, while reporting to the emergency services and operation control. All accidents must be reported by completing an incident form, inputting details of injuries, damage along with witness names and contact details.

In this chain of security operations from airport ground workers to the highest authority we see how valuable and how connected all the staff are who play a role in airport and aviation safety and security enabling smooth passenger travel and safety in airports.

We see through this article that teamwork for aviation safety and security is from airside to airports all personnel contribution to flight safety.

Now think of a trip to an airport, what were your experiences whether positive or negative?

What other key aviation profession can you think of that is vital to aviation safety by checking aircraft?

Amanda Epe