

CHARLESTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

IRREGULAR OPERATIONS (IROP)/AIRPORT TARMAC DELAY CONTINGENCY PLAN

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IRREGULAR OPERATIONS (IROP)/AIRPORT TARMAC DELAY CONTINGENCY PLAN

Charleston County Aviation Authority

Charleston International Airport

Charleston, South Carolina

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommended that the Secretary of Transportation establish a national task force of airlines, airports and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to coordinate and develop contingency plans to deal with lengthy ground delays, such as working with airlines and airports to share facilities and make gates available during emergencies. To implement this recommendation, on January 3, 2008, the Secretary of Transportation, consistent with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, established the *National Task Force to Develop Model Contingency Plans to Deal with Lengthy On-Board Ground Delays (Task Force)*.

The Task Force, comprised of representatives from airlines, airports, consumer groups, and the Government, was responsible for the following:

- Reviewing incidents involving long, onboard ground delays and their causes;
- Identifying trends and patterns of such events;
- Recommending workable solutions for mitigating the onboard consumer impact of such events; and
- Drafting model contingency plans.

The Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the DOT Office of the Secretary were nonmember participants in the Task Force. The Charleston International Airport Irregular Operations (IROP) Contingency Plan is designed and written in accordance with the established guidelines. The goal of this document is to assist in the mitigation of the effect of lengthy onboard ground delays and to provide successful customer service during such delays through communication, collaboration, and coordination.

1.2 General

The Charleston International Airport (KCHS) is owned and operated by The Charleston County Aviation Authority (CCAA). Charleston International Airport is a *small hub* shared-use facility with the United States Air Force (USAF) and the Authority maintains operational status of the Charleston International Airport 24-hours a day, 365-days a year.

Charleston International Airport has a long history of being a diversion point for international and domestic airlines because of its geographic location, longer than average runways and access to USAF ARFF and EMS assistance. Following events in the United States that created uncomfortable situations for airline patrons and adverse publicity for airports subjected to diversions, the Charleston International Airport Operations Department formalized a plan in writing to ensure the proper and timely care of passengers subjected to diversions. See Airport Operations Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) No. 5 – Appendix 1.

1.3 Copies of the Irregular Operations (IROP)/Airport Tarmac Delay Contingency Plan are provided to the following agencies:

- US Department of Transportation
- CCAA Airport Operations Department
- CCAA Administration

The *IRREGULAR OPERATIONS (IROP)/LENGTHLY TARMAC DELAY CONTINGENCY PLAN* is hereby submitted on *May 14, 2012* by the *Director of Airports* for the *Charleston County Aviation Authority* for and on behalf of *Charleston International Airport*, a *small hub airport* in the State of South Carolina. *The Director of Airports may be reached at telephone number 843.767.7000 or via email at pcampbell@chs-airport.com.* In the event of diversion or other irregular operations events, *aircraft operators should contact the Airport Communications Center at 843.767.1100 for assistance.* Upon approval of the Plan, *signage will be posted in the terminal notifying the public of the availability of the Plan.*

1.4 Definitions

ATC – Air Traffic Control provided by the FAA.

CBP – U. S. Customs and Border Protection.

Charleston County Aviation Authority – Owner/operator of Charleston International Airport.

CCAA – See Charleston County Aviation Authority.

Customers – Includes both passengers and other non-aviation service personnel such as meeters and greeters who are in the terminal area.

FAA – Federal Aviation Administration

Irregular Operations- Exceptional events that require actions and/or capabilities beyond those considered usual by local aviation service providers. Generally speaking, the impact of these events is the occurrence of passengers experiencing delays, often in unexpected locations for an undetermined amount of time. Examples include extreme weather events (such as snowstorms, hurricanes, tornados), geological events (such as earthquakes, volcanoes), and other events (such as power outages, security breaches or equipment failures).

IROP – See Irregular Operations.

Passengers – People traveling, service animals in the cabin and live cargo onboard aircraft and in the terminal area.

Service Providers – All entities at an airport that provide services for customers and passengers including but not limited to: airports, airlines, concessionaires, ground transportation providers, government agencies, overnight accommodations, emergency response, military and diversion airports.

TSA – Transportation Security Administration.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 IROP Committee

Managers or designated representatives of the organizations noted below form the CCAA IROP Committee. Emergency contacts and telephone numbers for all Charleston International Airport agencies prone to IROP involvement may be found in Appendix 2.

The IROP Committee shall meet monthly for the following purposes:

1. Provide a synopsis of IROP/Diversion events encountered during the previous thirty (30) days
2. Discussion of any challenges associated with each event
3. Discussion of lessons learned from each event
4. Discussion of recommended improvements to IROP Contingency Plan
5. Discussion of passenger needs and the processes to meet those needs
6. Discussion of special needs and accommodations

Minutes of the meetings are maintained by the CCAA Airport Operations Department for inspection by the U.S. Department of Transportation – See Appendix 3.

IROP Events History is maintained by the CCAA Airport Operations Department and is available for inspection by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

AGENCY	COORDINATION
1. U.S. Secretary of Transportation	Oversight
2. CCAA Airport Operations Department (Master Copy)	Oversight
3. USAF Airfield Operations	Airfield Operations
4. Atlas Air	Ground Handling
5. Allied Aviation	Aircraft Fueling
6. America Eagle Airlines	Airline
7. Avis/Budget	Car Rental
8. Delta Air Lines	Airline
9. Delta Air Lines / Delta Global Services	Ground Handling
10. Enterprise	Car Rental
11. FAA Air Traffic Control Tower	Air Traffic Control
12. Federal Express	Cargo/Ground Equipment
13. Flight Services & Systems (FSS)	Landside Baggage Handling
14. G2 Secure Staff	Landside Baggage Handling
15. Hertz	Car Rental
16. Hudson News	Concessions

17. IH Services, Inc.	Custodial
18. National	Car Rental
19. Southwest Airlines	Airline
20. SSP America	Concessions
21. USAirways	Airline
22. United Airlines	Airline
23. U.S. Customs and Border Protection	International Passengers
24. Transportation Security Administration	Passenger Screening

2.2 Trigger Points

The Committee members maintain vigilance regarding the following trigger points to determine pending or possible IROP/diversions events:

- Adverse or anticipated adverse weather in Atlanta, Georgia (Delta Air Lines hub) or Charlotte, North Carolina (US Airways hub)
- Crewmember resource planning
- Surge
- Extended stays
- Airfield situations both local and at surrounding commercial airports
- Eastwardly headwinds
- Passenger disposition

2.3 Notification

Historically, Charleston International Airport has received less than 45 minutes notification to prepare for inbound IROP/diversion aircraft; therefore, vigilance is maintained to assess:

- Resources
- Notifications of inoperative equipment
- Availability of gates
- Availability of hardstands

The Charleston County Aviation Authority *does not* own or operate any of the equipment needed to safely deplane passengers from air carrier aircraft and is, therefore, unable on its own to provide for the deplanement of passengers. Airport personnel are not trained to assist in the deplanement of passengers using equipment owned and/or operated by air carriers or contract ground support providers. The Authority *does* maintain a list of the equipment and resources available for deplaning passengers (See Appendix 7) along with contact information for the deployment of that equipment and the personnel to operate the equipment.

CCAA provides this inventory and contact information to airlines affected by irregular operations after receiving requests from airlines experiencing tarmac delays and as soon as practicable. Contact numbers for airline station managers and ground support operators are listed in Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Gate Management

The gates at Charleston International Airport are under preferential lease to air carriers and are not fully controlled by the airport during those time periods when the tenant's usage of that gate meets the usage specified in the preferential use lease. We may be able to direct a tenant airline to accommodate another air carrier aircraft at its preferentially leased gate during those time periods when the tenant airline is not using, or not scheduled to use, the gates. We will direct our tenant air carriers to make gates and other facilities available to an air carrier seeking to deplane at a gate during those time periods the gates are not in use or not scheduled to be in use, to the maximum extent practicable.

Gate management for IROPs and diversions shall be provided by the CCAA Airport Operations Department. International flights are limited to Gates B-4 and B-5 because of their access to the Federal Inspection Station (FIS). The Authority has coordinated with local United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials to develop procedures that will allow international passengers who have not yet cleared CBP to be deplaned into these sterile areas to the extent practicable.

The Charleston County Aviation Authority has allotted all available gates to operating airlines on a preferred usage basis; however, the Authority can work with the airlines to find an available gate for the purpose of deplaning passengers. All gates can be used during emergency situations, regardless of preferential usage agreements. All efforts will be made to work with all companies involved in providing adequate gates and facilities for IROP passengers while not disrupting normal operations for other airlines and passengers.

The responsibility for finding gates for IROP passengers to use and coordination with other airlines falls first on the airline if the airline provides scheduled flights to Charleston, SC. The Charleston County Aviation Authority Airport Operations Department is responsible for securing gates/jet bridges for airlines diverted to Charleston International Airport who do not provide scheduled service to Charleston, SC and for those times when the airlines with scheduled service to Charleston, SC may have difficulty locating an available gate for IROP use. The Charleston County Aviation Authority Airport Operations Department can aid in contacting other airlines, reviewing flight schedules to determine gate/jet bridge availability, and determining alternative deplaning methods to deplane passengers from IROP aircraft.

Deplanement of passengers for anticipated tarmac delays

Several options may be used to deplane IROPS passengers.

- a. The use of an open (unused) jet bridge/gate to deplane passengers.
- b. The use of another airline's jet bridge/gate to deplane passengers.

It is sometimes possible in emergency situations to deboard an aircraft at the gate and then hardstand the IROP aircraft to regain regularly scheduled use of the gate. Remote aircraft parking options exist on a Cargo Ramp to the West of the Terminal and on the Remain Overnight Ramp to the East of the Terminal.

- c. Remote Parking/Mobile Stairwell to Building Stairwell

It is possible to remotely park aircraft and use mobile stairs to deplane passengers. The CCAA Airport Operations Department maintains a list of mobile stair sets available in the Airport Emergency Plan (this list is updated annually). Passengers may then be escorted by Charleston County Aviation Authority personnel, airline, or ground handling employees with proper SIDA badges to a building stairwell or elevator to access the concourses and public areas.

The Charleston County Aviation Authority owns and maintains a Lift-A-Loft device used to assist in removing passengers unable to utilize stairs in exiting the aircraft. Several airlines operating at Charleston International Airport maintain equipment (such as ramps or lifting devices) to aid in removing passengers with mobility concerns from aircraft, or have verbal agreements to use such equipment when needed. A list of airlines with such equipment is maintained in the KCHS Airport Emergency Plan.

3.2 Ground Handling

The Charleston Aviation Authority has no equipment or trained personnel for the use of deplaning passengers.

Informal agreements exist between the Charleston County Aviation Authority and Delta Global Services (DGS) to provide emergency ground handling services to air carriers not operating at Charleston International Airport.

Charleston County Aviation Authority Maintenance Department personnel are trained in maneuvering jet bridges if an airline attendant cannot be located to assist in this action.

Fuel is provided by Allied Aviation. Fueling services remain available from 5:00 AM until midnight or later, depending upon arrival times for regularly scheduled flights.

Aircraft catering may be provided by SSP.

3.3 Concessions

Concessions operators have agreed to extend operating hours to provide restaurant services, snacks and other concession items when called upon to provide such service. For after-hours events, the Charleston County Aviation Authority Public Affairs Department shall maintain a store of snacks, water, coffee, soft drinks, diapers, baby formula and other products for the convenience of passengers encountering an IROP/diversion at Charleston International Airport. Off-airport food vendors may be utilized to provide catering for IROP/diversion operations.

3.4 Ground Transportation

Rental car agencies historically remain in operation until the last flight of the day has arrived at Charleston International Airport and rental cars may be made available to IROP/diverted passengers during normal operating hours and according to availability. Other ground transportation options, i.e. taxis, limousines, buses are managed by the CCAA Ground Transportation Department, a department of the CCAA Airport Operations Division. The Ground Transportation Department shall work to assist IROP/diverted passengers obtain appropriate ground transportation.

3.5 Re-boarding

Passengers remaining in the sterile areas may re-board without screening. Passengers exiting the sterile area shall be screened by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) prior to entering the sterile areas for re-boarding aircraft.

3.6 Reimbursement

Financial reimbursement for ground handling, fuel and other airline-related expenses shall remain between the airlines and vendors involved with the IROP/diversion. The Charleston County Aviation Authority does not currently levy any fees for any services associated with IROP/diversion flights.

3.7 Passenger Feedback

Passenger feedback is available on the Charleston County Aviation Authority website at address www.chs-airport.com.

3.8 Capacity

Charleston International Airport has in the past reached capacity during weather-related diversions and in such cases, the Airport Operations Department contacts respective airline dispatchers through the local airline station managers to divert company aircraft to alternate airports.

3.9 Tracking

IROPs/Diversions are tracked by the Charleston County Aviation Authority Communications Center (dispatch) using *Federal Signal Code Spear* software. Hard copies are maintained by the Charleston County Aviation Authority Airport Operations Department.

3.10 International Arrivals

Charleston International Airport is a full-service international airport with Customs and Border Protection personnel available 24-hours a day, a Federal Inspection Station and appropriate passenger amenities provided by the local vendors and/or the Charleston County Aviation Authority.

3.11 Overnight Accommodations

There are over 2,200 hotel rooms within a 5-mile radius of Charleston International Airport. Passengers may communicate with the hotel reservations offices via a reservation board in the lobby of the airport

terminal. Passengers requiring language assistance may obtain such assistance at the Charleston County Aviation Authority Public Affairs Information Desk in the main lobby of the airport terminal.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Cleanliness of Facilities

The Charleston County Aviation Authority maintains a contract with IH Services, Incorporated to provide custodial services for the airport terminal complex. The contract ensures custodial personnel will be available in the event of an IROP/diversion 24-hours a day/7-days a week in order to provide a clean environment for the passengers and crews of the IROP/diversion event.

4.2 Police Protection

The Charleston County Aviation Authority provides Police protection through the Charleston County Aviation Authority Police Department, a CALEA Accredited Police Department. Emergency plans exist to manage and respond to all types of emergencies (medical, fire, hazmat, etc.) 24-hours a day/ 7-days a week.

4.3 Recall of CCAA Personnel

The Charleston County Aviation Authority uses the *Federal Systems Code Spear* notification system to notify CCAA personnel to return to work for IROP/diversion events as needed.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Airlines Serving Charleston International Airport

All airlines and subsidiaries serving Charleston International Airport are noted in Appendix 4.

5.2 International Air Carriers

No international air carriers provide scheduled or public charter air service to Charleston International Airport; however, a passenger on an international air carrier diverted to Charleston International Airport shall have the option to deplane the aircraft within four (4) hours after landing unless Air Traffic Control determines airport operations will be disrupted by the deplaning, or the pilot in command of the aircraft determines the deplaning would jeopardize passenger safety or security.

5.3 Domestic Air Carriers

Domestic air carriers providing scheduled or public charter air service to Charleston International Airport and domestic air carriers who have declared Charleston International Airport as a diversion airport are listed in Appendix 5 along with their accompanying Airline Tarmac Delay Plans. A passenger on a domestic air carrier diverted to Charleston International Airport shall have the option to deplane the aircraft within three (3) hours after landing unless Air Traffic Control determines airport operations will be disrupted by the deplaning, or the pilot in command of the aircraft determines the deplaning would jeopardize passenger safety or security.

Chapter 6

6.1 Airline Tarmac Delay Contingency Plans

All airlines serving Charleston International Airport have been requested to provide the Charleston County Aviation Authority with copies of individual Airline Tarmac Delay Plans.

Airline Tarmac Delay Plans are located in Appendix 5. Appendix 5 consists of the airlines currently operating at Charleston International Airport and those that have designated Charleston International Airport a diversion point.