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Facilitation and airport services

(cf. ICAO Annex 9 - Facilitation, 12th Edition (2005); ICAO/IMO Doc.9636 (1995) – International signs to provide guidance to persons at airports and marine terminals; and ICAO Annex 18, 2nd edition (1989))

General and passenger facilitation

ACI's objective in the area of facilitation is to develop policies and positions aimed at continuously improving service quality at airports, simplifying and speeding the flow and processing of passengers, baggage, cargo and mail through airports, while bearing in mind the different requirements of various authorities with particular regard to security, drug interdiction and dangerous goods.

3.1 Quality of service

ACI POLICY

3.1.1 Service quality should be a key component in an airport's business strategy and operations management.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.1.1a Airport operators should monitor a wide range of factors related to quality, according to the needs of users and the characteristics of the airport.

3.1.1b Where airports have no direct control, they should strengthen their existing cooperation with all other organizations and agencies which have a guardian role for service delivery at the airport, in order to develop a "seamless airport service" with agreed minimum service standards.

3.1.1c They should also develop airport business continuity plans which are comprehensive and coordinated with all parties.

3.2 Traffic peaks and capacity constraints

ACI POLICY

3.2.1 Airport capacity limitations should be resisted by airport operators, in consultation with other involved agencies and airlines.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Despite the best efforts of airport operators to expand airport capacity to meet demand and remove artificial capacity restrictions, the phenomenon of traffic peaking may reduce the effects of such efforts, and has been the subject of increasing concern by airport operators around the world. Traffic peaking at airports generates severe economic penalties, such as under-utilization of costly airport facilities and services, opportunity costs from direct and indirect impact of lost services, and delays to aircraft and passengers.

Significant improvements can be obtained by attempting to redistribute traffic through effective consultation between the interested parties, i.e. in particular airlines, airports and government authorities. ACI and IATA have jointly produced a booklet entitled "Guidelines for Airport Capacity/Demand Management" to assist both airports and airlines to combat the problem of traffic peaking and resulting adverse effects, and to maximize the utilization of airport facilities and other resources for the benefit of all parties concerned.

3.3 Code-sharing

ACI POLICY

3.3.1 Code-sharing and alliance airlines should use the same terminal facilities whenever the airport operator considers this arrangement feasible and it does not jeopardize overall operation of the terminals.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Collaborative and code-sharing arrangements should be fully transparent to passengers, many of whom choose an airline on the basis of its level of service, frequent flyer programme and reputation for effective safety and security measures.

It is the responsibility of airlines to provide passengers with full written information, firstly at the time of booking/reservation, and secondly when tickets are issued, regarding the operational flight numbers, operating carrier(s), intermediate stops, changes of aircraft, airport terminal designators, etc., involved in the planned journey. Similar recommendations were adopted by ECAC in 1996 and by the ICAO Air Transport Regulation Panel in 1997, and are becoming a regulatory requirement in an increasing number of countries.

Airlines should inform airport operators well in advance of all the logistical details involved in a particular collaborative or code-share arrangement, including changes of aircraft at an intermediate airport or changes from an international to a domestic terminal (or vice versa) required on the same flight number.

With regard to the display of different code share airline identifiers and flight numbers on the FIDS, it is recommended that, where required, these be shown on a rotating basis in an additional column (e.g., 'Remarks') on the same line.

3.4 Simplifying Passenger Travel

ACI POLICY

3.4.1 Airports should note the principles of the Simplified Passenger Travel (SPT) initiative and incorporate these in their facility and process planning, where appropriate.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI is a member of an industry consortium called Simplifying Passenger Travel, whose objectives are to simplify and streamline the passenger process; help improve aviation security; increase customer satisfaction; make better use of existing airport space and resources; and make the transport system more efficient and reduce costs.

Strategies of the SPT project are to re-engineer the entire passenger journey, using and updating ongoing programmes such as e-ticketing and self-service check-in; catalyse industry change through promotion of these concepts and explanations of the benefit of their implementation; consider the entire passenger journey; promote benefits of cooperation, both internationally and between government and industry, to find collective solutions; implement new technologies for identification and communication; ensure international standards are established, where necessary; learn from experience by fostering pilot projects; partner with other groups engaged in related areas; and respond to threats to the aviation industry.

Compatibility must exist between the requirements of the relevant government inspection agencies at the origin and destination of a journey. Procedures related to the facilitation of passengers must be developed on an international level to allow for the standardization of documentation and handling methods. These procedures should recognize the desirability of the eventual replacement of processes now in existence in favour of automation and a paperless environment. Governments should also encourage the development of international communications networks allowing for the transmission of data between governmental agencies within a country and between countries.

Further information can be found at www.spt.aero.

3.5 Schedule coordination and slot allocation

Airports slots are important for access to the infrastructure resources of an airport, and the airport operator must play a leading role in the efficient allocation of slots to airlines. The airport operator is best placed to define and declare airport for runways (aircraft movements), terminals (passenger movements) and aprons (number of aircraft parking stands), in consultation with ATC and other appropriate authorities as necessary.

ACI POLICY

3.5.1 Airports' slots are important for access to the infrastructure resources of the airport operator. Airlines use this access to add value through their development of routes. Airlines should therefore be granted usage rights to slots but not property rights.

3.5.2 At airports where airline schedules are coordinated (allocation of slots) or facilitated, a coordination committee should be established, with full airport participation in the establishment of slot allocation rules, permitting periodic consultation and communication between airlines and the airports concerned. Interested airports should also be able to attend an IATA Schedule Coordination Conference at least as observers.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Over a long period of time, IATA has developed and refined a process for schedule co-ordination and allocation of airport slots (defined as the scheduled time of arrival or departure allocated or available for an aircraft movement on a specific date) which has, to a large extent, maintained a degree of coherence and stability in international air transport. However, with a few exceptions, the procedures and processes of slot allocation are still dominated by the interests of airlines, which may be contrary to the interests of airport operators and their local communities. It is possible that the direct control of slot allocation by the airlines could lead to anti-competitive behaviour. This has been recognized in many places where, as a consequence, both schedule coordination and slot allocation need government permission (e.g. competition rules or designation by a government of an airport as coordinated).

If studies should show that it would be advantageous, on condition of effective regulation and safeguards, to allow airlines to carry out secondary trading (buying and selling) of usage rights for slots and if, as a consequence, trading of slots should become government policy, then airlines should not be allowed to trade slots as if they were their own property. Any trading must reflect the allocation principles established at the affected airports, must not breach the airport's capacity limits, must not be anti-competitive, and should improve the efficient use of airport capacity. "Use-it-or-lose-it" rules must continue to apply, and must depend on respect of terms and conditions of use including those set out by the airports. The airport operator, because of its direct financial interest as provider of the infrastructure, should approve rules and procedures for slot trading. The airport operator also would have an interest to manage or oversee the trading process. Where this function is carried out by an independent airport coordinator, the airport must be closely associated.

At congested airports, where demand may exceed available slots, more stringent scheduling procedures should be developed with the aim of achieving the most efficient usage of capacity, including allocation of slots, under the responsibility of an independent coordinator. These procedures, to a suitable extent, should take into account historical precedence, new entrants, frequency of service on certain routes and aircraft size, aircraft noise or other environmental restrictions and underutilization of allocated slots. The procedures should be both transparent and fair. It is also important that provisions on sanctions are included to counteract abusive use of slots, i.e. repeated and deliberate operation significantly outside the allocated slot time.

The direct involvement of airports in slot allocation is essential for the efficient movement of persons and goods and to ensure that airports play a leading role in the economic development of the communities and regions they serve. Airport characteristics vary and it is therefore important that the allocation rules allow for the establishment, with active participation of the airport operator, of local rules that can take such characteristics into account.

In order to enhance competition, at the request of the airport concerned, some percentage of available slots throughout the day could be made available for re-allocation to new entrants, either on the basis of objective criteria or other means that reflect the economic value of the slots. It should also be recognized that at some airports, new entrants might not be the best way to enhance competition and that alternative local rules should be developed. Provisions might also be included, for example for new entrants, so that slots may be granted for certain types of flights, such as by small aircraft, noisier aircraft, or flights of a specific stage length, on condition that such special permissions are granted for a limited period only.

3.6

Maximum clearance times at international airports

ACI POLICY

3.6.1 Airports, cooperating closely with government agencies and airlines, should aim towards a passenger processing time of 45 minutes for normal arriving passengers.

3.6.2 Airports, cooperating closely with government agencies and airlines, should aim towards a passenger processing time of 60 minutes for normal departing passengers.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.6.1a ACI supports Recommended Practice 3.39 in ICAO Annex 9, which calls for a goal for clearance within 45 minutes from disembarkation, for all arriving passengers requiring not more than normal inspection, regardless of aircraft size and scheduled arrival time. This goal is so important to the efficiency of international air transport that ACI will continue to press for it to be upgraded to a Standard.

3.6.1b Passengers should be provided with information concerning the entry requirements of customs, immigration and other authorities, so that clearance procedures are not unnecessarily delayed. Airport operators, airlines and control authorities should take every opportunity to ensure that this information is readily available and brought to the attention of passengers

3.6.2a ACI supports Recommended Practice 3.36 in ICAO Annex 9, which calls for the setting of a goal 60 minutes for completion of departure formalities for departing international passengers, including airline check-in. The total time should be calculated from the passenger's arrival at the first processing point at the airport (airline check-in, security control or other control) to the scheduled time of flight departure.

3.7

Drug interdiction

ACI POLICY

3.7.1 Airports should cooperate with customs administrations to interdict the transportation of illegal drugs and other contraband.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Customs administrations have a vitally important role to play in the field of drug interdiction. Airport operators can assist them, provided that there is a reasonable level of understanding between customs and airport management.

Airports have to fulfil many obligations in relation to various authorities, and there is a possibility that some of these obligations may conflict with each other. A good relationship, reinforced by a memorandum of understanding, guidelines or other instruments agreed at the local level may help in the resolution of any problems.

ACI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Customs Organization and agreed the contents of the associated guidelines. These can form the basis of local MoUs and agreements.

3.8 Baggage delivery

ACI POLICY

3.8.1 Passenger's reasonable expectation of baggage delivery times must be taken into account in designing the arrivals process.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.8.1a In order to improve baggage delivery, ACI recommends that: the baggage delivery system feed points be located as close as possible to the aircraft; wide, fast and reliable baggage belts, conveyors and baggage transporters be employed; and the design of baggage delivery areas should allow for flexibility and expansion.

3.8.1b ACI also recommends that the appropriate authority should establish and monitor compliance with delivery standards for baggage at each terminal and that performance records should be exchanged between airlines and airports.

3.8.1c Computer systems should be employed to monitor and control baggage delivery and to guide passengers.

3.9 Dual channel system of inspecting inbound baggage

ACI POLICY

3.9.1 The dual channel system should be introduced wherever possible and justifiable.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.9.1a The merits of the dual channel or red/green system of customs clearance have been well proven at many airports around the world and the system should be implemented in all countries in order to speed up passenger flow.

Guidelines should be drawn up for the most appropriate design of dual channel facilities which offer customs administrations the maximum surveillance possibilities of passengers awaiting their checked baggage.

3.9.1b Moreover, additional guidance should be given to passengers on the functioning of the system, including the description and quantities of duty-free goods which are allowed through the green channel. This information should be presented in various languages. Emphasis should be placed on the passenger's legal responsibility when selecting the green channel.

3.10

Simplification of procedures for inbound passengers on international flights

ACI POLICY

3.10.1 The inspection of arriving passengers on international flights should be limited to passport examination, a sufficient number of immigration officers should be available and visa waiver arrangements should be extended to the maximum number of countries possible.

3.10.2 Where there is a requirement to undertake routine quarantine and health inspections on arriving passengers, these should be designed and implemented efficiently.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

States should not require any information in writing (such as a disembarkation card) supplementary to or in repetition of that presented in their identity documents, from temporary visitors travelling by air, or from operators on their behalf. Where identity documents are machine readable, document readers should be used to capture relevant information. If such information is captured before flight departure, it can be sent to the destination airport in advance of the flight, in the form of Advance Passenger Information (see Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9 concerning machine readable travel documents and advance passenger information).

At the local level, airport and airline consultative bodies, such as facilitation or airline operators committees, should collect statistical data on delays at immigration and customs check-points for use when negotiating facilitation improvements with governments.

Irrespective of national rules, regulations and procedures, States should provide necessary government inspection services (personnel and/or automated systems) free of charge at all international terminals, at any time in response to reasonable commercial demand, not just during pre-established working hours (as stated in ICAO Annex 9, Standard 6.60). ACI will continue to press for this change.

3.10.1a Where appropriate, separate immigration channels should be established for nationals and aliens in order to speed the flow of passengers through controls and minimize congestion. States should offer visa waiver arrangements to cover the maximum number of countries possible.

ACI supports ICAO Annex 9, Standard 3.42, which states that the public authorities "shall expeditiously accept passengers and crew for examination as to their admissibility into the State". However, ACI believes that a clarification should be added to the Standard stating that the provision is intended to ensure that arriving passengers are not held on aircraft due to a lack of clearance capacity on the part of public authorities.

ACI supports ICAO Annex 9, Standard 6.26, which states that "Contracting States shall make arrangements for a sufficient number of control channels so that clearance of inbound passengers and crew may be obtained with the least possible delay. Additional channel(s) shall be available if possible to which complicated cases may be directed without delaying the main flow of passengers". However, the wording "in operation" should be added after "control channels" in the first sentence, with the intention of ensuring that all installed channels are used when needed to meet the clearance time goal of 45 minutes.

3.10.2a These checks should be integrated into a seamless arrivals process, not cause undue delay to inbound passengers and, where possible, be temporary procedures (particularly regarding response to health emergencies such as SARS or Foot and Mouth outbreaks).

3.11

Elimination of outbound passport and customs controls

ACI POLICY

3.11.1 States should critically review the need to conduct outbound passport and customs controls; and should where possible eliminate them.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

At some airports, queues at inspection points prior to departure lead to apron (ramp) and terminal congestion and aircraft departure delays, with consequential heavy financial losses to the airlines and disadvantages for passengers, especially those making interline connections. Elimination of departure controls, with due regard to security considerations, would not only facilitate the movement of passengers and their baggage, but would also permit the simplification of layout and routings within airport terminals.

If departing passengers have to present their travel documents, their movement can be facilitated if there are separate channels for nationals and aliens. In accordance with ICAO Annex 9, Recommended Practice 3.21, no supplementary identification information to that contained in the identity document should be required. ACI further believes that embarkation cards should be eliminated.

When outbound passport and customs controls are dispensed with, some authority must assume responsibility for ensuring that only persons who have been screened are allowed to proceed "airside" beyond the security checkpoint, or any other checkpoint established by the authority.

ACI supports ICAO Annex 9, Standard 3.38, which stipulates that "Contracting States shall not normally require the presentation, for border control inspection, of baggage of passengers departing from their territory."

3.12

Passenger service charges

ACI POLICY

3.12.1 For reasons of facilitation, passenger service charges should preferably be included in air fares.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Passenger service charges are either collected directly from the passenger, or incorporated in fares. It is always preferable for charges to be included in air fares (indirect collection), because direct collection from passengers slows down passenger flow and creates a need for bigger and more costly installations. There are two methods of indirect collection: either the airport bills the airline for the total number of passengers on each flight, or the airline charges the passengers directly and remits the proceeds to the airport operator.

3.12.1a Where it is unavoidable to collect passenger service charges directly from the passenger, payment of such charges should be possible either in local currency or in foreign currencies which are acceptable in the region, or by credit card.

3.12.1b For customer convenience and to minimize facilitation problems at the airport, advance notice of these charges should be given to passengers, for example in booking offices, travel agencies and hotels. (see also chapter 1, section 1.4)

3.13 Sign systems at airports

ACI POLICY

3.13.1 Directional signage for passengers should be easy to understand and clearly visible.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Experience shows that continued development of new pictographic systems is not the most effective or economical way of improving the information provided to passengers at airports. When airports contemplate introducing pictographs, they should consider existing sign systems, such as the ICAO system described in ICAO document 9636, rather than develop new ones. Airports should also enhance the value of pictographic information by restricting its use to items of major importance to the passenger.

3.14 Placement of retail outlets

ACI POLICY

3.14.1 Retail outlets, while being easily accessible, should not obstruct the flow of passengers within the terminal.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Whenever practicable, airport retail outlets should be readily accessible to all airport users but should not be located where they might obstruct the flow of passengers. In every case, a balance should be struck between the income generated by these visitors and the goals of improving facilitation and security measures.

3.15 Control of shoppers, well-wishers, meeters and greeters

ACI POLICY

3.15.1 The arrival facilities should be designed and managed in such a way to ensure that shoppers, well-wishers, meeters and greeters do not impede the flow of passengers.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

At many airport terminals, congestion problems occur when well-wishers, meeters and greeters greatly outnumber passengers. This should be kept in mind when designing terminals and planning the allocation of terminal space.

3.16

Airport facilities for persons with disabilities and those with special needs

ACI POLICY

3.16. Airport facilities should include arrangements to meet the general needs of persons with disabilities and those with special needs.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Persons with disabilities, including the blind, the partially sighted and the deaf, as well as the physically challenged and the elderly, should as far as practicable be able to use passenger terminals in common with others.

3.16.1a The needs of persons with disabilities, determined in accordance with national requirements and international recommendations, should be borne in mind by architects and engineers responsible for designing new structures or modifying existing ones, and by those responsible for operating the airport in question, with a view to the provision of suitable means to ensure easy and comfortable access to all facilities by passengers with disabilities, at a suitable level of quality of service.

3.16.1b Persons with disabilities should be able to find out in advance the special problems which they may encounter, and the special aids or facilities which are available at airports of departure or arrival. More detailed recommendations are contained in ACI's handbook "*Airports and Persons with disabilities*".

3.16.1c Personnel whose work involves the handling of persons with disabilities should take into account their specific requirements and, where appropriate, the special characteristics of their treatment. Such personnel should be provided with adequate training in order to improve the handling of persons with disabilities.

3.16.1d Where necessary, in order to facilitate the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers with disabilities, including wheelchair users, alternative circuits should be established. These could even include circuits which do not pass through airport terminal buildings, provided that security and control regulations are complied with.

States should ensure that the necessary funding is provided to implement any modifications or adaptations to facilities which are required in order to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the level of special treatment which is generally recognized as being appropriate.

Many people without disabilities also need special facilities and/or assistance. Examples include young children and those responsible for them.

EC Regulation No. 1107/2006

EC Regulation No.1107/2006 concerning the rights of disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility when travelling by air took effect on 26 July 2008. This new regulation transfers the overall responsibility for providing assistance services from an airline to the airport operator. The regulation seeks to establish uniform service levels at all European airports.

The assistance service shall be provided without additional charge to the passengers with reduced mobility. The airport may, on a non-discriminatory basis, levy a specific charge on airport users for the purpose of funding this assistance.

Quality standards for assistance should be set in accordance with ECAC Document 30, Annex J: Code of Conduct in Ground Handling for Persons with Reduced Mobility. Persons who deal directly with passengers requiring such assistance should also be trained in accordance with ECAC Document 30.

The regulation requires the provision of information in advance to the airport. The passenger requiring assistance is required to notify the airline at least 48 hours prior to their departure, transfer or arrival at the airport. The airline is required to forward the necessary information to the airport operator at least 36 hours before the service is needed by the passenger.

3.17 Airport facilities for tour operators

ACI POLICY

3.17.1 Airports should take into account the needs of tour groups in the design and operation of terminal facilities, when appropriate, while also ensuring that they do not obstruct other passenger flows.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.17.1a Tour operator facilities should, as far as practicable, be situated in a separate area where they do not obstruct the main passenger flows.

If this is not done, tour operators assemble their clients at the normal meeting points, which cannot usually accommodate large tour groups. When a new airport is constructed or an existing airport remodelled, an area should be reserved for tour operators. Wherever possible, tour groups should be allocated separate facilities for both arrival and departure. If possible, and subject to security considerations, tour group check-in may be conducted off the airport.

3.18 Inadmissible passengers

ACI POLICY

3.18.1 Inadmissible passengers are the responsibility of the state authority and the airline that transported them. Procedures should be implemented by them to ensure that inadmissible passengers are identified and processed in an efficient and expeditious manner, so as not to impede the facilitation of other passengers or the operation of the airport.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Travel documents should be simplified and standardized so that airlines can provide more effective assistance to these authorities. Passports and visas should be fraud proof and machine readable. The necessary automatic readers should be installed by the appropriate authorities. Advance Passenger Information (API) systems can also assist in the early identification of inadmissible passengers.

If passengers arrive in a State with fraudulent or forged travel documents, are no longer in possession of their documents, or are otherwise declared persona non grata on arrival, immigration authorities in that State should arrange for their deportation or detention. Costs arising from detention or deportation should be borne by the State authorities requiring such measures. Selective screening at the point of embarkation could be used to minimize the flow of potentially inadmissible passengers.

3.18.1a Good security in boarding and transit areas is needed to ensure that non-travellers have no access to areas where they could switch, remove or destroy the travel documents of passengers who have already been screened by airlines. When necessary, a document check can be made immediately prior to aircraft boarding.

3.19 Space and facilities for government inspection agencies at airports

ACI POLICY

3.19.1 Space and facilities for the authorities in charge of clearance controls should be provided at government expense

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Government inspection and control requirements relating to passengers, baggage and cargo generate a need for space allocation, as well as certain specific facilities and services. ACI concurs with ICAO's view that "space and facilities for the authorities in charge of clearance controls should, as far as possible, be provided at public expense" (Annex 9, Recommended Practice 6.58). However, ACI continues to press for this provision to be raised to the status of a Standard, with the substitution of the word "government" for the term "public", to make quite clear that the cost burden should not fall on the airport or its users.

3.20

Banks and foreign exchange facilities at airports

ACI POLICY

3.20.1 Currency exchange facilities should be provided at international airports and in service at those times when passenger flights are operating.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Such facilities should be easily accessible to both arriving and departing passengers. If the volume of traffic at certain times does not justify the opening of banks, other currency exchange facilities such as vending machines should be made available. It is important that ICAO-recommended signs for currency exchange facilities be used universally.

3.21

Vehicle parking facilities at airports

ACI POLICY

3.21.1 Adequate parking facilities should be provided to meet the needs of passengers, crew, staff and members of the public using the airport facilities, when feasible.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

The distance between vehicle parking areas and terminal buildings is not as important as the speed and convenience of access to the terminals from the parking areas.

3.22

Duty-free shops on arrival

ACI POLICY

3.22.1 Duty-free shops for arriving passengers should not replace those for departing passengers.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

An increasing number of airports have established duty-free shops for arriving passengers. These should be in addition to the duty-free shops for departing passengers.

3.23

Transfer of downtown duty-free purchases

ACI POLICY

3.23.1 The general principles governing airport duty-free shops should apply to downtown duty-free shops.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.23.1a The conveyance and delivery procedures involved should be simple and should place no obligation upon airline or airport personnel. The operator of the downtown shop should assume the costs of the facilities that are provided.

3.23.1b The delivery process should meet the security requirements in force at the airport and should not create congestion or interfere with the flow of passengers.

3.23.1c The goods should be delivered in sufficient time prior to boarding.

3.24 Facilities for general aviation

ACI POLICY

3.24.1 Where general aviation operations are permitted at an airport, adequate facilities and procedures should be in place for their facilitation.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.24.1a Owing to the constraints imposed by air transport movements, some airports may need to impose restrictions on general aviation, both in terms of access and the services provided.

As general aviation may require more airport infrastructure (on a per passenger basis), an airport may consider it necessary to adopt different charges for general aviation, in order to recover its costs.

3.25 Airport handling arrangements

ACI POLICY

3.25.1 Airport operators should retain the right to approve ground handling services at their facilities.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI supports ICAO Annex 9 Recommended Practice 6.6 on airport traffic flow arrangements, which says that airlines should have the choice of providing their own ground handling services, "subject to reasonable limitations which may be imposed by the airport authorities". While agreeing with this RP, ACI wishes to point out that airport operators must retain the right to set limits on the number of Ground Handling Services Providers (GHSPs) and self-handling airlines at their facilities. The uncontrolled proliferation of handling agents and equipment could create check-in area and ramp congestion, and safety and security hazards.

If an airline is not allowed, or does not wish to provide its own services, it should ideally have more than one choice of GHSPs available.

3.25.1a ACI supports free and fair competition between GHSPs, so as to give a choice to airlines, provided that space at the airport allows, and the GHSPs meet minimum standards relating to safety and security etc.

3.25.1b If the airport operator itself provides handling services, it should also compete on a free and fair basis.

To take account of the different situations at airports, and in line with ICAO Council Statements on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services (Doc. 9082), ACI maintains that equal treatment for all user airlines implies that a concession fee should be charged on all providers of ground handling services, including the local carrier when it provides such services to other carriers.

3.26 Landside transportation

ACI POLICY

3.26.1 Ground transportation arrangements to, from, between and within airports are vital to all users and should be planned and operated in a coordinated manner involving the various bodies involved in the provision of transportation services.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

As airports grow and develop to meet the increasing demand for air transport, it is essential for surface access facilities and services to respond to this rise in demand. Airports should be linked in an efficient and user-friendly manner to the markets which they serve. Such facilities and services may include public transport access by road, rail and any other applicable modes, as well as private transport, including private vehicles, rental cars, taxis, courtesy buses and commercial vehicles. Employees have different needs, and non-vehicular modes of transport, as well as vehicle-sharing should not be overlooked. A balance should be struck between the needs of all airport users, bearing in mind the local pattern of traffic needs, resources and priorities.

3.26.1a Information on public transport services, including fares and schedules, should be readily available to arriving and departing travellers. Where fares are charged, in order to expedite the service, arrangements should be made enabling travellers to purchase tickets before boarding.

Transportation within airports is as important as transport to and from airports. Where the distance between airport terminals, car parks, car rental facilities and public transport services is significant, transport connections should be considered, including the possibility of installing people-mover systems. Because of the need to maintain frequent and regular transport schedules within airports (between terminals), and because international connecting passengers often do not possess local currency, such transport should preferably be provided without direct charge to travellers.

3.26.1b There should be full consultation at the earliest possible stage between the airport operator and all agencies and operators involved in surface access to the airport, such as local transport authorities, municipalities and licensing authorities, to encourage increased coordination in the planning of surface access and the provision of relevant information to passengers.

3.27 Off-airport check-in facilities

ACI POLICY

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI concurs with ICAO Recommended Practice 6.20 that governments should study the possibility of allowing the provision of off-airport check-in facilities, with due regard to the necessary security precautions and (border) control requirements. Furthermore, ACI believes that governments, airlines, airport operators and other relevant organizations should actively consider how such facilities can be developed, taking into account the facilitation of baggage transportation to and from the airport. Some of the most likely off-airport locations are railway stations, hotels and airline city-centre terminals.

3.28

Consultations between agencies on new procedures

ACI POLICY

3.28.1 Governments should consult with airport operators, control authorities and groups representing airport users at the earliest possible stage, whenever new government-mandated procedures require changes in facilities, including changes of layout within existing facilities.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.29

National and airport facilitation committees

ACI POLICY

3.29.1 States authorities should establish a national air transport facilitation committee in accordance with Annex 9, Standard 8.19.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Appendix 12 to Annex 9 sets out guidelines for the establishment and operation of these committees. Airport operators should take the leading role in convening and conducting meetings of airport facilitation committees.

3.30

Courier shipments

ACI POLICY

3.30.1 Courier shipments should not impede normal passenger baggage operations at airports.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.30.1a Courier shipments should, where practicable, be handled separately from passenger baggage in facilities specifically designed for the purpose.

3.30.1b ACI also believes that, where no such dedicated courier facility is available and where courier shipments are handled through passenger terminals, they should if possible be handled in a separate area allocated for this purpose.

However, if a separate area cannot be allocated and there is resulting congestion, it may be necessary to limit the courier shipments handled in the passenger terminal in terms of size or weight. Above such limits, courier shipments may need to be directed to a cargo terminal.

At airports where problems are encountered with the handling and clearance of courier shipments in passenger terminals, airport operators, airlines and other agencies concerned with courier shipments should consider jointly how to resolve such problems.

Cargo facilitation

3.31

Government inspection services for cargo

ACI POLICY

3.31.1 Government inspection services for cargo should be available and adequate to facilitate the expeditious clearance of cargo consignments.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

International air cargo hub operations have evolved into a 24 hour per day, 7 day per week business, and the air cargo industry is catering for increasingly time-sensitive shipments. The "just-in-time" concept has given rise to the need for fast, cost-effective and seamless transport chains. Moreover, the rapid growth of traffic in perishable cargo creates a requirement for the streamlining of procedures, not only for the physical handling of goods, but also for the timely inspection and release of cargo. Governments should move to enhance the speed advantage of air cargo by making available government inspection services whenever they are needed.

ACI believes that compatibility must exist between the requirements of the relevant government inspection agencies at the origin and destination of a consignment. Procedures related to the movement of air cargo, as well as those related to intermodal transportation (air, sea, rail and road), must be developed on an international level to allow for the standardization of documentation and handling methods. These procedures should recognize the desirability of the eventual replacement of processes now in existence in favour of automation and a paperless environment.

Governments should also encourage the development of international communications networks allowing for the transmission of data between governmental agencies within a country and between countries. At airports where there is a lack of capacity for expansion, the airport operator may wish to develop off-airport facilities for initial acceptance, storage, distribution, consolidation, de-consolidation and final receipt and clearance of goods. In these cases, the cooperation of control authorities is sought to facilitate the establishment of off-airport clearance and storage facilities for bonded goods.

3.32

Maximum clearance time for arriving cargo

ACI POLICY

3.32.1 Maximum clearance times for different categories of cargo should be established by the customs authorities, in consultation with airports and airlines, and should meet or better the recommended performance standards in Annex 9.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI supports ICAO Annex 9 Recommended Practice 4.29 establishing a target Customs clearance time of three hours for arriving general cargo not requiring examination, from the time proper documentation or a legally acceptable electronic equivalent is presented. In line with ICAO Annex 9, Standards 4.25 to 4.27, shipments such as perishable goods, live animals, personal effects and low-value goods should be cleared promptly on arrival. As provided under ICAO Annex 9, Recommended Practice 4.28, goods imported by authorised importers who have demonstrated compliance with Customs regulations and who supply advance information, should be released immediately on arrival.

ACI recommends that physical examination of cargo by Customs should always be based on targeting and risk assessment criteria.

3.33

Elimination of the paper cargo manifest and of paper air waybill, and use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

ACI POLICY

3.33.1 State authorities should reduce or eliminate the requirements for hard copy manifests or air waybills and leverage EDI and new technologies to facilitate the more expeditious processing and clearance of cargo.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Cargo manifests are unnecessary, since the same information can readily be obtained from air waybills in either paper or electronic form. The use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) for the submission of waybill information has significant cost and facilitation benefits for all parties involved in the cargo process. A further benefit is that information on incoming goods can be obtained by Customs in advance of the arrival of the aircraft. Existing UN/EDIFACT standards for EDI messages should be used (see ICAO Annex 9, Standard 4.15).

Whether information appears in the cargo manifest or in air waybills, it is essential to limit the description of the nature of goods to the 15 characters set aside for this purpose. The use of more than one line of information per shipment is contrary to the goal of facilitation.

ACI supports Montreal Protocol no. 4, which entered into force in 1998, and provides a statutory basis for electronic submission of air waybills. It would be helpful if the number of signatory States would increase.

3.34

Release of documented partial shipments

ACI POLICY

3.34.1 Part-shipments of cargo should be released when the complete documentation for any such part-shipment has been presented.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI supports ICAO Recommended Practice 4.30, that part-shipments should be released when the complete documentation for any such part-shipment has been presented. This is expected to end the practice previously followed by some Customs authorities of holding part-shipments in bond until all the missing parts of the shipment have arrived, even though the part-shipment is documented.

3.35

Release of operators of cargo facilities from liability

ACI POLICY

3.35.1 Governments should absolve both airlines and airport operators or cargo warehouse operators from liability for customs duties, taxes and other charges at such time as goods are transferred, with the approval of the authorities, into the possession of a third party.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI believes that this release from liability should apply regardless of whether the third party has a security or guarantee on file with the customs authorities.

3.36

Storage facilities in cargo terminals (including special cargo)

ACI POLICY

3.36.1 Cargo terminals should be designed to facilitate the safe, efficient and secure processing and storage of cargo, including clearance by customs authorities.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

3.36.1a All goods stored in cargo terminals should be protected against unauthorized access at all times, by means of video surveillance and access-card activated doors.

3.36.1b Whenever practicable, airports should be equipped with appropriate storage facilities for special cargo, including valuable goods, perishable shipments, live animals, human remains and dangerous goods, including radioactive materials.

3.37

Cargo handling times and other indicators of performance and quality of service

ACI POLICY

3.37.1 Airports should monitor the performance of the cargo operations on its ramp areas.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Airports attach great importance to minimizing ground handling and dwell times for air cargo. In order to monitor an airport's performance and gain knowledge of where corrective action may be necessary, spot checks or periodical surveys should be carried out by recording the times of: on-block-time of inbound aircraft; shipment check-in completed (time when goods and documents are available for action by consignee or his agent); entry procedure initiated (application for clearance filed with the customs and other control authorities); customs clearance completed; and collection of goods.

ACI recommends more extensive use of INTACT ULD to reduce handling time, prevent damage, eliminate the incidence of missing cargo and contribute to airport capacity.

Airports should take a leading role in measuring and monitoring the performance of airport cargo facilities and services. The methodology for assessing performance and service quality is not well defined or developed, and no generally accepted standards exist, but fast processing (average dwell time), high space utilization (e.g. tonnes of cargo handled per year per square meter of warehouse space) and low manpower requirements (e.g. tonnes of cargo handled per year per employee) should be among the criteria used for assessing economic and efficient cargo handling. The applicable standards for each criterion will vary, depending on the type of operation and cargo. Research is also needed to establish cargo status monitoring systems, using information technology.

3.38 Cargo facility planning

ACI POLICY

3.38.1 Airports should ensure that the future needs of air cargo are adequately covered in facility development plans.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

Airport operators should review the present and future demand for facilities and the space available at their airport prior to deciding how to accommodate operators' needs within their facility planning, possibly including cargo operations with new large aircraft.

Airport operators may find it advantageous to develop common use facilities for joint use by several airlines or through one neutral handling agent, in view of the diminishing space available at many airports for the construction of exclusive-use facilities. Common use facilities permit greater building, ramp and handling area utilization, and may provide better economic justification for the construction of advanced handling systems, etc. However, existing principles of competition must be adhered to.

3.39 Mail handling

ACI POLICY

3.39.1 Airports should facilitate, where warranted and as far is practicable, the safe, efficient and secure processing and storage of mail consignments.

ACI RECOMMENDED PRACTICE / COMMENT

ACI recommends that airport operators should be flexible with regard to the needs of postal authorities, other mail operators and airlines for warehouse space and systems, and controlled access to apron areas for the handling of mail.