

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012

OSI/12/12

Subject: AIRBRIDGES – OPERATORS PERMIT, OPERATION & USE.

**It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OSIs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their Supervisor or Manager.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this Instruction is to outline the Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) policy on the training of staff to operate an airbridge, the issue of an Airbridge Operators Permit and general information on the correct operation and use of airbridges.
- 1.2 Detailed training material and operating instructions are provided by HAL. This is available from the HAL Airside Safety Practices Team (0208 757 3075/6).
- 1.3 OSI/09/09 is hereby cancelled.

## 2. AIRBRIDGE OPERATOR PERMIT

- 2.1 Airbridges may only be operated by appropriately trained personnel who hold an Airbridge Permit. The Permit is valid subject to refresher training every 2 years. The holder must only operate airbridges of the specific model for which they have received training.
- 2.2 Permits will be restricted to those persons who regularly operate airbridges as an essential part of their job function. Permits will not be issued to employees of airlines who have nominated a handling agent to perform duties that included the operation of airbridges.

## 3. TRAINING AND TESTING

- 3.1 Training and testing of airbridge operators will be carried out by an airline/handling agent representative authorised by the HAL Airside Safety Practices Team.
- 3.2 The Trainer must use the syllabus and training material provided by HAL. The training must be specific to the airbridge type that is to be used by the operator.
- 3.3 Authorised trainers may add material to the HAL training documentation (subject to approval by the HAL Airside Safety Practices Team), but it is not permissible to remove any of the content.

- 3.4 An application to HAL Airside Operations for the issue of the Airbridge Permit is subject to the applicant's successful completion of a theoretical and practical assessment, including a written examination and an airbridge driving test.

Candidates must be able to demonstrate a high standard of proficiency in the operation of the airbridge and have a good working knowledge of apron safety.

#### **4. ISSUE OF AN AIRBRIDGE PERMIT**

- 4.1 The issue of an Airbridge Permit will be approved by HAL subject to the completion of the appropriate Airbridge Permit form, which includes the date of the test and the name of the trainer.
- 4.2 Airbridge Permits remain the property of HAL. In circumstances where, in the opinion of HAL, the operator has acted negligently or recklessly in the operation of the airbridge, HAL reserves the right to suspend the licence for a specified period pending retraining and assessment, or to withdraw the licence altogether.
- 4.3 Airlines/Handling Agents must advise HAL when a member of staff moves to a job no longer requiring an Airbridge Permit or leaves the Company. In such circumstances the Airbridge Permit must be destroyed and HAL advised so that records can be amended.

#### **5. OPERATION AND USE OF AIRBRIDGES – GENERAL**

##### **5.1 Airbridge Type & Designation**

There are two types of airbridges in use at Heathrow, referred to as either rail drive or apron drive.

On stands equipped with two airbridges, the bridge furthest from the terminal is known as the 'A' bridge and that nearer the building as the 'B' bridge. (Where three airbridges are fitted, the 'A' is furthest from the Terminal, with the 'C' nearest the Terminal. The 'B' is the middle airbridge).

##### **5.2 Airbridge Serviceability**

Details relating to the serviceability of all airbridges can be found on the relevant page of the HAL Staff Information System (UltraSIS).

In the event of an airbridge being unserviceable or cannot be fully retracted into the parking box, the airbridge status must be reported immediately to the HAL Stand Allocation Unit on 0208 745 6033 (internal 656033).

##### **5.3 Stand / Apron Inspections**

Prior to the operation of the airbridge, it is essential that the stand is inspected at the stand / apron level to ensure there is no possibility of a collision between the airbridge(s) and any parked vehicles / equipment that may have parked within the movement guidelines of the airbridge (starburst) or hatched areas around the airbridge.

#### 5.4 **Emergency Stop Buttons**

All airbridges are fitted with an emergency stop button, which is situated on or near to the control panel inside the bridge cab. It is to be used in an emergency only, for example, if movement of the airbridge cannot be controlled by the operator. When the button is pressed, it will cut all power to the airbridge and stop all movement. This button can only be reset, and have power restored, by HAL engineering staff.

#### 5.5 **Adverse Weather – Strong Winds**

Airfield operators are notified of adverse weather via the Staff Information System (UltraSIS), weather page. Airlines and handling agents are responsible for necessary action where airbridges are docked on aircraft. The Airside Safety Department (ASD) is responsible for airbridges on unoccupied stands.

Winds up to 100 kph/60 mph. Aircraft may be served by the passenger airbridge with due care being taken to dock safely onto the aircraft fuselage.

Winds above 100 kph/60 mph. Airbridges must be withdrawn from the aircraft and closed down. Additionally, they should be lowered to their limit.

#### 5.6 **Use of Engineering Maintenance Steps**

A number of airbridges have engineering maintenance steps attached to them. The steps are only to be used by members of staff that have an authorised operational need to use them.

Staff who are authorised to use the engineering maintenance service steps should refer to their own company's risk assessment. Awareness training and the use of correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be included as part of their company's induction training.

Under no circumstances should unauthorised staff be allowed access to these steps. It should be noted that these steps articulate at various angles and therefore have specific hazards associated with their use.

All staff are reminded that only those who are able to maintain three points of contact with the stair treads and handrails should use steps during the course of their duties. It is recommended that the carrying of bulky/heavy loads, cleaning equipment and crew bags etc should be discouraged.

The door at the top of the steps is protected by a swipe card reader to restrict access. It should be noted that the door can be heavy to handle due to their nature and design. Extra care should be given when using these doors in periods of high winds.

No items, bags or refuse are to be left on, or anywhere around the engineering maintenance service steps. No items are permitted to be thrown from the top of the steps. This is not restricted to just engineering maintenance steps but also refers to all variations of aircraft steps. All staff need to take extra care when using steps in adverse weather conditions.

## **5.7 Parking of Vehicles and Equipment**

In order to avoid the risk of a collision ramp staff are reminded that vehicles and ground handling equipment should only be parked in authorised parking areas provided at the head of stand. No vehicles or equipment should be parked within the airbridge movement guidelines (starburst) or within hatched areas around the base of the airbridge.

## **6. GENERAL**

- 6.1 Use of the loading bridge by an aircraft operator, owner or handling agent, shall constitute prior acceptance of the conditions set out in this Instruction.
- 6.2 HAL, its employees or agents shall not be liable for loss or damage to property arising directly or indirectly from any act or omission of HAL in connection with the provision, use, or availability of a passenger airbridge, other than loss/damage due solely to negligence or wilful default on the part of HAL.
- 6.3 The aircraft operator, owner or handling agent shall indemnify HAL, its employees and agents against all actions, claims, proceedings and demands (including those of employees of HAL or of the aircraft operators, owners or handling agent) in respect of loss/damage to property or for personal injury (including injury resulting in death) which may be made against HAL, its employees or agent arising out of or in connection with the provision or use of an airbridge other than loss, damage or injury due solely to negligence or wilful default on the part of HAL.

## **7. QUESTIONS**

- 7.1 Any questions concerning this Instruction should be addressed to the HAL Airside Safety Practice Team, Telephone Number 020-8757 3075/6.

**Issued on behalf of the  
Airside Operations Director**