



Survey of medical assistance at European airports

28 January 2004

Executive Summary

ACI EUROPE survey of medical assistance at European airports

1. With the establishment of an ECAC Working Group on Air Passenger Health Issues and the recent social health risk caused by the SARS¹ epidemic, ACI EUROPE undertook to analyse the way in which medical assistance is organised at airports in Europe. A sample of airport operators was contacted and results from airports in 14 European countries were collected.

Who is responsible for organising medical assistance?

2. On the whole, the provision of medical assistance is organised by the health authorities at either the local, regional or national level. All responding airports have in place arrangements for first aid to be administered to air passengers on site by trained staff.

3. The obligations on the airport operator vary from country to country. At all airports, the underlying requirement is to abide by the Standards and Recommended Practices laid down in Annex 9 on Facilitation of the Chicago Convention. Airport operators in ICAO Contracting States are required to co-operate with the relevant public authorities to safeguard public health. Furthermore, ICAO Recommended Practices state that international airports should maintain staff and first aid on site and have in place arrangements for transfer of air passengers to appropriate medical assistance.

4. In some cases, the ICAO Recommended Practices are reinforced by national law which places legal obligations upon the airport operator to provide appropriate facilities for the provision of medical assistance which is administered by the health authorities and/or airport staff trained in first aid.

Procedure for organising medical assistance for incoming passengers

5. The procedure prevalent at most airports for receiving passengers on an incoming aircraft requiring medical attention is for the pilot of the aircraft to contact Air Traffic Control which in turn alerts the airport operator. The airport operator is then responsible for co-ordinating the provision of the appropriate medical assistance. In some cases, however, this co-ordination is undertaken by the airline's ground handling agent.

¹ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. From the discovery of SARS in November 2002 in the Guangdong Province, China, the subsequent epidemic resulted in a cumulative total of 1804 reported cases and 62 deaths in 15 countries by 1 April 2003. By 21 May 2003, 7,956 SARS cases had been reported worldwide with a cumulative total of 666 fatalities. 4,085 recoveries were reported.

Medical resources at the airport

6. The medical assistance on site at the disposal of air passengers in immediate need consists principally of first aid equipment and staff trained in first aid. At all airports, medical staff (e.g. doctor or paramedic) is present on site at the airport either 24 hours or during the operating hours of the airport. All airports have in place arrangements for summoning emergency medical assistance and the health authorities' ambulance service for transfer of serious cases to the local hospital. In some cases, the airport operator has arranged with the health authorities to have an ambulance available on site or the airport has its own ambulance.

7. In the case of a social health risk, the airport operators have in place procedures for receiving incoming aircraft with air passengers on board who are suspected of carrying a communicable disease. The airport operator organises for the health authorities to be on site at the time of the arrival of the aircraft, or isolates the aircraft or passengers in a dedicated area until the appropriate medical response has been decided by the health authorities.

Conclusion

8. From the airports sampled, which represent major airports in Europe, it is clear that airport operators collaborate with the relevant health authorities to ensure that appropriate medical assistance is available for air passengers. These airports welcome a significant number of passengers (in most cases more than 10 million passengers per annum), so the need for medical assistance to be at the disposal of air passengers (and staff at the airport) is well understood by the airport operator. The attached survey provides a detailed analysis of the situation characterising individual airports in Europe.

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Austria</p> <p>Vienna International Airport</p>	<p>Medical assistance is organised by the medical centre under the federal health authority of Lower Austria.</p>	<p>A medical centre staffed with a minimum of one physician specialised in emergency medical aid, one nurse and one paramedic equipped with medical equipment and drugs are available. These facilities are deployed on a rotation basis to provide around the clock medical assistance, as required by law.</p>	<p>Emergency call by airline pilot or airport operations control officer or police (for asylum seekers) alerts the medical centre which, if necessary, organises transport with external emergency services (e.g. Red Cross, City of Vienna) to hospital</p>	<p>The airport has a detailed plan regarding suspected infectious diseases.</p>
<p>Belgium</p> <p>Brussels International Airport Company (BIAC)</p>	<p>Pursuant to an agreement with the Belgian State, and approved by Royal Decree, the airport operator – BIAC - has to guarantee the presence of a doctor and nursing staff.</p>	<p>An agreement has been concluded with MEDA (Brussels National Airport Medical Service) whereby a doctor has to be present at the airport 24 hours a day. In case the doctor requests transport to a hospital, the ambulance of the airport's 'Fire & Emergency Service' is available.</p>	<p>A telephone service has been set up for calls for urgent medical assistance at the airport. There is also 24- hour access to the Airport Inspection Duty Management's office.</p> <p>For the terminal, ground handling company personnel are normally responsible for the first aid arrangements.</p> <p>For passengers on incoming flights: Pilot → Air Traffic Controller → Airport Inspection → MEDA</p>	<p>The airport operator has a 'gentlemen's agreement' with the military hospital close to the airport for the purpose of isolating passengers.</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Finland</p> <p>Helsinki</p>	<p>The municipal health services are responsible for providing the transport for transferring passengers to the hospital. A doctor is on call 24 hours a day at the airport.</p> <p>The airport operator has established rules of procedure and set up agreements with the Airport Fire and Rescue Services.</p> <p>First aid and paramedic services are available at the airport under the responsibility of the Airport Fire and Rescue Services.</p> <p>For large scale medical incidents, a voluntary agreement has been concluded with the Search & Rescue Red Cross Service.</p> <p>The municipal hospitals have agreed to treat the passengers requiring medical assistance.</p>	<p>All front line customer service staff are trained in first aid on an annual basis. This includes both airport personnel and other service provider employees, such as security and ground handling personnel.</p> <p>The airport's first aid rooms are equipped with doctors' emergency kits and the Airport Fire Service ambulance is fully equipped for first response treatment and has a defibrillator. An ambulance service is available within a couple of minutes of the call. Hospitals in Helsinki City are regularly consulted and included e.g. in the emergency procedures.</p> <p>There is also a MediHeli helicopter base at the airport. This comprises a doctor and paramedic pilot, plus a medical unit on the ground.</p>	<p>The aircraft crew contacts either the ground handling agent or ATC who contact the emergency services (Finnish 'area alarm centre') and the Airport Fire Services simultaneously by telephone. The first response by the Airport Fire Services is available within a few minutes both airside and landside.</p>	<p>The airport operator has worked with local health authorities on general instructions in case of epidemics. In the case of social health risk, ATC is the coordinator in accordance with appropriate plans and instructions.</p> <p>In the case of SARS, the National Public Health Institute issued notifications to airline staff, to travellers and to the media. Internal instructions were defined by the airport and the ATC for dealing with an inbound aircraft reporting a suspected case of SARS onboard.</p> <p>The aircraft is parked in a specially designated place for isolation. The passengers are transported by bus to an isolated place for examination, further instructions, transfer to hospital or treatment. The health authorities are in charge of the operation as soon as they are present at the airport and give the necessary instructions for disinfecting the aircraft or a bus and safety instructions for staff etc.</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
Germany Fraport	Medical assistance and rescue services are provided by an Airport Clinic which is run under the responsibility of the Health Authority.	<p>Medical services (clinic and rescue) are available 24 hours a day.</p> <p>The director of medical services and the physician on duty are responsible for providing medical assistance.</p> <p>Seven ambulance cars and specialised paramedics are on site for ensuring transit to extensive medical care.</p>	Pilot → ATC → Airport Clinic which then co-ordinates the appropriate medical response.	Passengers are taken to the quarantine department and then rapid transfer to hospitals in Frankfurt is organised.
Germany Hamburg	<p>Health Authority of the City of Hamburg</p> <p>The Red Cross (on site at the airport) and the airport's fire fighting and rescue services are responsible for providing the medical assistance.</p>	Apron Control is available 24 hours a day. There is a manager on duty from 05h30 to 23h30 to alert the municipal fire fighting and rescue services in order to arrange for a doctor and/or an ambulance to be available.	Pilot → ATC → Airport Authority (Manager on duty) → Health Authority (Doctor on duty) who decides on further action to be taken	Passengers are kept on board the aircraft. The municipal fire fighting and rescue service are alerted for the provision of the adequate number and size of rescue/transport vehicles
Greece Athens Spata	National Emergency Medical Care (EKAV) has a contract with the airport operator for providing airport medical services in compliance with ICAO standards, i.e. the provision of first aid medical care.	The Airport Services Operations Centre (ASOC) coordinates with EKAV in order to assist passengers in need. Two doctors, three paramedics, and an ambulance are available on a 24 hour basis. EKAV is required to make one doctor and two paramedics available on site.	<p>If required by the passenger, it is EKAV's obligation to make the arrangements for the passenger to be transferred to a city hospital by ambulance.</p> <p>The passenger also has access to building B11, where the medical station is located, (subject to receiving a special pass from the Security Duty Supervisor, as this building is in a restricted area).</p>	The airport operator has prepared a special quarantine area (approximately 900 m from the main terminal building) equipped with basic medical supplies and infrastructure. The airport operator has provided this space to assist medical organisations (EKAV & the Health Control Station - both under the Ministry of Health) in the event that a suspected case of a social health risk is reported on an incoming flight.

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Ireland</p> <p>Dublin</p> <p>Aer Rianta</p>	<p>The local health authority is responsible for organising medical assistance.</p> <p>Under Irish airport licensing regulations and ICAO recommendations, the airport is required to maintain medical equipment only for the treatment of passengers involved in an aircraft accident. There is no other legal requirement to provide medical assistance. The airport does however provide trained staff, emergency medical equipment and an ambulance, which is used to provide medical assistance to passengers.</p>	<p>The Airport Authority Police and Fire Service personnel are all trained to a very high standard of first aid. Many members are trained to paramedical standard.</p> <p>The person under observation is generally removed to hospital for treatment. The ambulance used to remove the person is usually provided by the local health authority, or the airport authority ambulance may be used in order to affect a more speedy response.</p> <p>The airport authority maintains an ambulance and emergency medical equipment including defibrillators. Full paramedic service is provided by the local health authority and can respond to the airport in less than fifteen minutes.</p>	<p>Pilot → ATC → airport authority.</p> <p>The airport authority takes the responsibility for coordinating medical services to passengers on the ground once they are informed.</p>	<p>The airport medical officer, or an appointed representative, will assess the suspected case in order to establish the nature of the illness and the potential for further transmission. Once the medical officer has made an assessment, if he/she confirms or suspects that a person is suffering from an infectious disease, or is of the opinion that further investigation or quarantine is required, he/she will contact the local health authority and arrange for the suspect to be taken to a quarantine hospital.</p> <p>It is estimated that requests for assistance relating to passengers suspected of suffering from serious infectious disease is less than five per year.</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Italy</p> <p>Milan airports</p>	<p>Health services provided at Milan airports are regulated by the Convention signed by ENAC (Italian State) and SEA according to a government decree which requires all airports in Italy to provide and organise first aid. Italian law also establishes specific provisions for occupational medicine addressed to employees. These latter services are performed by the same medical structures in place at Milan airports for air passengers.</p>	<p>SEA, the managing body of Milan airports, has set up three first aid centres: one at Linate and two at Malpensa (one for each airport terminal).</p> <p>A first aid service (offered by each of the three health centres set up at Milan airports) is operative 24 hours a day. This service includes at least one doctor and one trained nurse, a special medical car and an internal ambulance service. Both these internal transport means are equipped with first aid devices and medical supplies. These resources allow the medical staff to stabilise the health conditions of the patient. If necessary, transfer to the nearest hospital is possible in a public ambulance beyond the airport premises.</p>	<p>In the case of incoming passengers requiring medical assistance, SEA organises, coordinates, and is responsible, for a first aid service. A preferential communication channel through the control tower permits the necessary measures on the ground to be alerted.</p> <p>A doctor with a trained nurse and a special medical car waits for the arriving passenger on the apron in order to immediately attend to his/her medical needs and if necessary to provide a rapid transfer of the patient to the nearest hospital.</p>	<p>The responsibility for cases of social health risk falls exclusively on the Air Health office, which is a State office present at every airport and is the competent authority responsible for intervening in such cases. It reports to the Health Minister of the Italian Government.</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Latvia</p> <p>Riga</p>	<p>The airport operator provides medical assistance as a requirement of its own quality standards.</p>	<p>The airport's medical centre is open 24 hours a day. Services of a doctor and assistant are available. A medical vehicle is supplied by the airport.</p> <p>A first aid team can be summoned from off-site to respond rapidly to a call for medical attention. The airport has concluded an agreement on providing medical services with Republican Crises medicine centre.</p>	<p>A request for medical assistance for an incoming passenger is communicated to the ATC tower. The tower then communicates the request to the airport's ground traffic controller who informs the medical centre.</p> <p>In case of incoming flights medical team comes directly to the aircraft stand and takes care of the passenger.</p> <p>In case a passenger needs medical assistance in the terminal, a call is made to the ground traffic controller who arranges for a doctor to arrive at the place indicated</p>	<p>SARS has not exposed any problems in the organisation of medical assistance.</p>
<p>Poland</p> <p>Warsaw</p>	<p>The airport operator ('Polish Airports' State Enterprise) ensures qualified medical assistance to all persons within the area of the airport and co-ordinates medical rescue actions in case of a crisis situation.</p>	<p>A medical aid team comprising a doctor, a nurse, a medical assistant/ambulance driver is available 24 hours a day. The physician on duty makes decisions on the manner of transportation of a passenger requiring assistance to hospital. Two first-aid rooms are available for passengers and a special wheelchair/stretchers can be used to move passengers inside the terminal building.</p>	<p>Crews inform ATC of any incoming passengers requiring assistance. ATC then informs the medical aid unit, either directly or via the airport duty officers or the handling agent.</p> <p>Airport ground personnel are the first point of contact for passengers requiring assistance.</p>	<p>No SARS-related problems have been exposed at the airport. Two isolation rooms are available at the airport.</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Portugal Lisbon</p>	<p>In terms of public health, the Regional Health Authority is responsible.</p> <p>The airport operator (ANA) has an agreement with the Red Cross to provide a Nursing Service at the airport for administering first aid.</p>	<p>Medical assistance is available 24hours a day - a nurse and two paramedics are on site. A doctor – from the Health Emergency Service is available on call via radio, as is an ambulance.</p>	<p>ATC, or the airline staff, contacts the Airport Operational Division.</p> <p>The Airport Duty Manager (or on his behalf the operational staff) is responsible for the coordination of medical assistance.</p>	<p>Passengers are taken to an isolated room and then transported to the hospital under special procedures. The Health Emergency Service provides transport and personnel.</p>
<p>Portugal Porto</p>	<p>In terms of public health, the Regional Health Authority is responsible.</p> <p>A Nursing Service, arranged by the airport operator, coordinates the medical care and, if necessary, the National Emergency Services (INEM) is responsible for transfer to the hospital.</p>	<p>The Airport Nursing Service is provided seven days a week from 08h00 to 23h00. Out of these hours, the Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (RFFS) takes care of medical care, in both cases in coordination with INEM.</p>	<p>Having received information from ATC, the airport coordinates the medical response with the Airport Nursing Service and the National Emergency Services (INEM) for transfer to hospital if necessary.</p> <p>All emergency calls are addressed to the Airport RFFS and then directed to the Nursing Service if it is available.</p>	<p>If the social health risk is declared before departure, an ambulance (specifically prepared to deal with these cases) is available to evacuate the passenger to the hospital designated for taking care of the social health risk in the area (Hospital S. João). If the situation is declared in the passenger terminal, the passenger is isolated in a dedicated room located in the arrival baggage claim area and then evacuated to hospital.</p>
<p>Portugal Faro</p>	<p>In terms of public health, the Regional Health Authority is responsible.</p> <p>An Airport Nursing Service coordinates the medical care and the National Emergency Services (INEM) are responsible for transfer to the hospital.</p>	<p>The Airport Nursing Service is provided seven days a week from 06h00 to 00h00, i.e. the operating hours of the airport.</p>	<p>All emergency calls are addressed to the Airport Supervisor and then directed to the Nursing Service.</p> <p>For receiving incoming flights, having received the information from ATC, the Airport Supervisor informs the Airport Medical team on duty (First Aid).</p>	<p>If a social health risk is declared before disembarking the aircraft, an ambulance is made available to evacuate the passenger to the hospital designated to take care of the social health risk. If the emergency occurs in passenger terminal, the passenger is isolated in a dedicated room, and then evacuated to hospital.</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
Madeira	<p>The airport operator guarantees only First Aid treatment.</p> <p>The "Serviço Regional de Protecção Civil" ensures the transfer to the hospital.</p>	<p>At the airport, first aid treatment is available daily between 08h00 and 24h00. Other hours: Funchal Hospital 24h, Machico Medical Centre 24h.</p>	<p>The coordination between the ground handling agent and the "Serviço Regional de Protecção Civil" is facilitated through the airport operator.</p>	<p>The "Serviço Regional de Protecção Civil" sends an ambulance in order to evacuate the passengers.</p>
Spain Aena	<p>The airport operator (for first aid and transfer to hospital)</p>	<p>At major airports, an airport first aid medical centre is operative over the entire duration of the operations at the airport. An airport service which ensures transit to extensive medical care is available.</p>	<p>The coordination system is different from airport to airport. Broadly speaking, however, Aircraft → ATC → airport authority</p>	<p>Special procedure applied in compliance with special manuals on medical emergencies.</p>
Sweden Stockholm Arlanda	<p>Airport Duty Officer (ADO) ensures arrangements are in place for access to medical attention.</p>	<p>A doctor/paramedic is available on call. Medical supplies and defibrillators stored at the airport. Airport Duty Officers are trained in first aid.</p>	<p>Ground handling agent and SOS Alarm</p>	<p>According to Airport Regulation (AR T-09-200)</p>

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>Switzerland</p> <p>Zurich</p>	<p>Medical Services of Unique Zurich Airport.</p>	<p>First contact made to the Airport Authority which will then inform the alarm post of the Fire Brigade and the Medical Services (both bodies are on duty 24 hours).</p>	<p>From any airport telephone the number 144 can be dialled and the caller is connected to the common alarm post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Any airport employee can dial 144 to request medical assistance b. The paramedics of the Airport Medical Services are available immediately c. A doctor of the Airport Medical Centre is on site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - daily from 08h to 20h within 10 minutes - daily from 20h to 08h within 30 minutes <p>The first point of contact can be any airport employee, mainly supervisors in the passenger service area</p>	<p>The representative of the Federal Office of Health, the medical services of Unique Zurich Airport and the fire brigade are alerted.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isolate the aircraft - Isolate and provide medical assistance to the person suspected of having a communicable disease. - Transport the suspected case to hospital (Universitätsspital Zürich) - Other passengers will fill in a questionnaire (personal data, address, phone number) and will receive an information leaflet (with phone number of Federal Office of Health).

Airport	Responsible body for organising medical assistance at the airport	Medical services available	Emergency service coordination for air passengers	Isolation procedure (when necessary)
<p>UK</p> <p>BAA London Heathrow</p>	<p>London Ambulance Service (LAS) in conjunction with Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL). LAS is required to provide the same service at the airport as is required nationally.</p>	<p>The airline is responsible for alerting the airport of an incoming medical emergency. The airline dispatcher or operations are responsible for organising a high lift to meet the incoming flight. The airline will make an emergency call to the Heathrow Control Room (Star Centre) which communicates a message to LAS who will dispatch an ambulance.</p>	<p>The airport has a dedicated ambulance (Medic 5) which carries HAL radios as well as LAS radios. HAL direct the ambulance to the required destination and log times. A non-emergency ambulance can be pre-booked by the airline.</p> <p>There is a medical facility located in the Queens building of the airport.</p> <p>The airline is responsible for immediate arrangements. First point of contact is Star Centre which filters and patches through calls to LAS. LAS are responsible for ensuring that ambulance and paramedics are available.</p>	<p>Passengers cannot disembark until LAS crew have made an assessment.</p>