



**AERODROME WINTER WASH UP MEETING
5 May 2010, CAA, Aviation House, Gatwick Airport**

Attendees:

Kirsten Riensema	CAA – Aerodrome Standards (Chair)
Sarah Doherty	CAA – Aerodrome Standards (Secretary)
John Hamshare	BAA
Peter Cox	BALPA
Bob Donnelly	Birmingham Airport
Vinod Patel	British Airways
John Conlon	British Airways
Chris Farnaby	CAA – Aerodrome Standards
Paul Fraser-Bennison	CAA – Aerodrome Standards
Owen Healey	CAA – Aerodrome Standards
John Muir	CAA – Aerodrome Standards
Graeme Ritchie	CAA – Aerodrome Standards
Justin Rothwell	CAA – Aerodrome Standards
Rob Lewis	CAA – Air Traffic Standards
Chris Gash	CAA – Flight Operations
Garth Gray	CAA – Flight Operations
Michelle Cakebread	Department for Transport
Ron Hopkins	Douglas
Ken Balkwill	Douglas
Jim Pegram	easyJet
Kevin Wilkins	Gatwick Airport
Myles Francis	Health and Safety Executive
Phil Robinson	NATS
Steve Enright	Servisair
Rhodri Manley	Thomas Cook Airlines
Tony Wride	UK Flight Safety Committee
Stephen Walker	Virgin Atlantic

Apologies:

Tim Hardy	BAA
Rod Young	British Airways
David Leask	Findlay Irvine
David Wilson	Gatwick Airport
Colin Wood	Heathrow Airport
Alan Shaw	Highlands and Islands
Simon Butterworth	Manchester Airport
Andy Taylor	NATS
Iain Cochrane	Prestwick Airport
Fiona Longford	Prestwick / Manston Airport
Steve Solomon	Thomas Cook Airlines
Rob Holliday	Virgin Atlantic

1. Welcome and Introductions

The CAA welcomed everyone to the meeting and there were introductions round the table. It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate discussion amongst industry stakeholders and between industry and the CAA with the aim of sharing lessons learned and suggesting improvements for future winter operations.

2. Discussion on De-icing Issues

Servisair opened the discussion by explaining that they had encountered major problems with de-icing fluid availability, explaining that two manufacturers had difficulty in supplying the volumes of fluid required and that there were difficulties with bulk volume storage both with the supplier and at the aerodrome. There had also been transportation problems, especially in mainland Europe. As a result of this winter's experiences, Servisair now has an IT system that reports fluid stocks on a real time basis, so there is now an automated delivery process.

The DfT mentioned that they had been dealing with de-icing fluid transportation issues as well. It subsequently became apparent that there had been no communication between Servisair and the DfT on this subject. The DfT explained that the Secretary of State for Transport had asked for an independent review of the transport industry's response to severe winter weather, to be headed by David Quarmby CBE. DfT's response to the Review's initial Call for Evidence will be submitted shortly, and will include details of the airport pavement and airframe de-icing issues that arose during the 2009-10 severe winter weather. Also some airport operators have assisted in supplying information on lessons learnt from last and this year's severe weather.

Then followed a general discussion regarding the prioritisation of snow and ice clearance e.g. runway first, then taxiways, then apron area and stands. This prompted the question of how the aerodrome can properly assess if the apron / taxiway is safe i.e. fit for purpose. The CAA view was that this is not possible to quantify, it is down to the judgement of the aerodrome on the day whether the surfaces are fit for purpose and therefore operational.

Some aerodromes already have pre-winter meetings with their airlines to discuss issues such as the snow clearance plan, including how aerodrome and aircraft de-icing is coordinated to ensure that the aerodrome is available when the aircraft are also ready and vice versa. This practice was encouraged by the CAA. There were enquiries as to whether the aerodrome should clear the full width of the runway, or whether snow banks were acceptable. There was also some discussion about whether the UK needs to operate a 'back to black' policy when some Scandinavian aerodromes allow operations on snow. It was requested that the CAA clarify the information in CAP 168 as the document uses the terminology "snow banks should not exceed" and it was not clear if this was guidance, best practice or a requirement. There was also a request for some clear guidance on what level of contamination is 'safe'. The CAA replied that this is difficult to define when the actual situation can change on an hour-by-hour basis. CAP 168 provides the framework, but the aerodrome is responsible for defining its snow-plan and assessing the situation on the day.

Action 2.2: CAA to review information in CAP 168, with input from industry, with a view to providing further clarification if necessary.

Gatwick Airport mentioned that they had issued a survey on their snow/de-icing/winter performance and were requesting airlines using the airport to clarify what their requirements were. BAA also circulated the survey across its aerodromes, however only 10 replies had been received.

Action 2.3: BALPA to encourage their members to complete and return survey.

Thomas Cook suggested that there should be further consideration given to moving de-icing stands closer to the runway threshold, in order to minimise problems with hold-over times and reduce the amount of de-icing fluid used. This would involve consideration of aircraft shut down and start-up and the need for headset men at a remote part of the airfield, as well as new disposal arrangements. Therefore a risk assessment would need to be made by the aerodrome should it choose to change the de-icing procedures.

Whilst a number of common themes emerged, it also became clear that each airport experienced different problems and dealt with these individually.

3. Runway Incursions by Vehicles

The CAA briefed that runway incursions by vehicles continue to be a problem as the CAA had received several MORs over the winter period. BAA stated that they had varied training levels of snow vehicle drivers across their airports and that they had found outsourcing snow clearance to be successful, with drivers under escort in some cases. Servisair reminded the meeting of the excellent ongoing work of the GHOST / ECAST with respect to training of ground handlers, which should help to mitigate runway incursions in the future.

The CAA stated that MOR data showed that often the problem is positive knowledge of whether the runway is actually open or closed, due to communication problems between airfield operations and ATC. This operational interface needs to be addressed so there is total clarity at all times with regard to who has control of the runway.

Action 3.1: CAA to distribute MOR information.

Action 3.2: CAA to review the operational interface issue and develop guidance as determined.

4. Runway Friction and Braking Action

The CAA gave an overview of the work of the Friction Task Force and explained the work undertaken by EASA and the FAA. The FAA's TALPA ARC matrix (Takeoff And Landing Performance Assessment Aviation Rulemaking Committee) was discussed in detail, particularly with regard to the correlation of the matrix to aircraft performance and the science behind this project. It was stated that the matrix already has approval from Airbus and Boeing and that there is a possibility that the FAA will introduce the matrix this winter. Douglas pointed out that although trials have been conducted using this matrix, they were conducted on low-volume runways, and that the matrix refers to a μ value; however, it was not clear whether this value came from the μ meter or the grip tester (which operate on different principles and therefore give different μ readings). In addition, Douglas stated that new technology is already available to measure specific contamination on runways, but there has been no demand for it.

BALPA stated that they would support the adoption of the TALPA ARC matrix, in order that the solution is interoperable with other States, and suggested that the CAA support the matrix in the UK. However, other representatives from the industry requested that there should be a consistent message from the CAA, as there had been mixed messages from different operational areas of the CAA with regard to runway friction measurement. It was requested that a FODCOM / ATSIN / NOTAL be issued to clarify the situation. A working group will be convened to review the guidance and information to the UK industry to ensure clarity and consistency.

The CAA stated that the principle of the matrix is supported but there is further work to be done before the TALPA ARC matrix can be agreed in the UK. A working group will be convened to take on this task. In the meantime, the CAA will continue to contribute towards the international work as it progresses.

Action 4.1: CAA to convene a cross-disciplinary CAA/Industry WG to ensure clarity exists on the UK winter ops position before winter 2010/2011.

Action 4.2: All to advise the CAA if they wish to participate in this WG.

5. Any Other Business

easyJet raised the issue of dissemination of runway information, in that some airports were not updating their information frequently enough e.g. not changing the SNOWTAM for 6 hours. easyJet requested that airports consider updating their runway information on a more frequent basis such as every 30mins or 60mins wherever possible. Caution was urged with regard to local solutions such as text systems notifying airlines, as this can lead to pilots not getting the message.

Action 5.1: *Airports to consider whether they need to update their runway information / SNOWTAM more frequently.*

BALPA stated there had been some problems where an airport had closed and aircraft had then diverted, only to find that their alternate airport was now closed. BALPA requested that airports that are traditionally paired (to cover each other's diversions) could better coordinate their closures so that they don't close at the same time.

BAA stated that, through CDM (Collaborative Decision Making) they were looking at more accurate ways of predicting the weather and whether an airport is likely to have to close. This work is being done in conjunction with the Met Office.

The CAA brought the meeting to a close and thanked all of the participants for the full and frank discussion.

**Notes prepared by Sarah Doherty
27 May 2010**