



WINTER WASH UP MEETING 3
14 July 2011, CAA, Aviation House, Gatwick Airport

Attendees:

Graeme Ritchie	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards (Chair)
Ian Witter	BAA
Dave Whittington	BAA Heathrow
Trevor Waldock	BAA Stansted
Peter Cox	BALPA
Rob Cooke	Birmingham Airport
John Conlon	British Airways
Kirsten Riensema	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Sarah Doherty	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Justin Rothwell	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Andrew Badham	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Simon Isaacs	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
John Muir	CAA - Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Jerry Stubbs	CAA - Flight Operations
Peter Lavender	CAA - Flight Operations
Geoff Latham	Department for Transport
James Vickery	EasyJet
Bob Horton	Flybe
Alex Fisher	GAPAN
Jason Cole	Health and Safety Executive
Robin MacRae	HIAL
Fiona Longford	Infratil (Prestwick & Manston Airports)
Neil Thompson	Luton Airport
Rad Taylor	Manchester Airport
Tim Willet	Menzies
Phil Robinson	NATS Gatwick
Tony Denchfield	NATS Gatwick
Simon Kirwin	Servisair
David Anderson	Swissport
Rich Jones	UK Flight Safety Committee
Tim Willet	Menzies

Apologies:

Mervyn Counter	AAIB
Jennifer Mearns	BAA Edinburgh
Chris Farnaby	CAA Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Paul Fraser-Bennison	CAA Aerodrome and Air Traffic Standards
Bob McLellan	Loganair
David Anderson	Swissport
Steve Solomon	Thomas Cook Airlines

1. Welcome and Introductions

The CAA welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate discussion amongst industry stakeholders and with the CAA, with the aim of sharing lessons learned and suggesting improvements for future winter operations. Additionally the CAA outlined its intention to publish an Information Notice to advise industry of the good practices learned and being implemented across UK aerodromes.

2. Presentation on Winter Resilience from BAA Heathrow

DW gave a wide-ranging presentation on the winter resilience work being done at Heathrow following BAA's own internal review and the Begg Inquiry report into the events in December 2010. Key issues identified were:

- The need for airport-wide communications and maintaining links with all organisations;
- That stand clearing is an H24 effort even with the airport closing at night;
- Improved winterisation to improve readiness, although this recognises that investment is required into equipment and resources;
- The need for improved understanding of and commitment to the airport snow plan by all organisations at the airport;
- The need to review aircraft de-icing processes;
- The need for improved crisis management processes;
- Improved and effective training.

3. Discussion

AF opened the discussion by emphasising the need for close involvement with ATC, noting the mismatch between slot times and aircraft de-icing and holdover times. There was support for the slot system being made more flexible in conditions of significant disruption to enable it to be driven by aircraft readiness rather than the planned schedule. NATS advised that they had contacted the CFMU to do precisely this for Gatwick.

Especially the case at Heathrow but also noted elsewhere was complexity in the de-icing process, being highlighted by:

- The variety and number of organisations undertaking de-icing of aircraft;
- The number of different processes and products required as airlines have their own preferred procedures, the result often being pressure on the de-icing companies to cope with differing requirements;
- The pressure placed on de-icing companies by the airlines;
- Concerns about the quality of training;
- The need for management of the supply chain to ensure product availability (for aircraft and airport de-icing products);
- Widespread concerns about the complexity of the current system.

Building on this, several people mentioned the benefits of remote and/or dedicated aircraft de-icing, which was seen as being more efficient in terms of time, management/operating procedures, as well as bringing environmental benefits through product recapture. It was supported by the airlines as it enables them to double-truck and can be slot coordinated, noting the potential costs for airports of not being open and available to operate. Despite the potential infrastructure and cost issues several airports advised that they either already have or are planning some remote de-icing at specific locations and BH reported that Flybe works with all the airports it serves to provide guidance to the de-icing teams and thereby improve service quality and consistency; this involves aircrew when they visit which has the added benefit of improving the pilot's knowledge.

Several airports and two of the ground handlers present advised that they have significantly increased their airport storage capacity. It was noted that the industry might need to work with product manufacturers to ensure consistency of availability and also with the aircraft manufacturers to seek to standardise procedures and products used. The CAA offered to work with industry on this.

Discussion turned to stand clearance and its impact on all the organisations that operate on the stands and their contribution to the snow clearance efforts. DW had pointed out health and safety issues at Heathrow, which had resulted in most staff (other than dedicated snow teams) not assisting the clearance effort. From the discussion there appeared to be a growing health and safety issue, with fewer organisations willing to allow their staff to help clear because of their fear of a health and safety backlash in the case of an accident. JC (HSE) advised that the HSE has issued guidance across the UK to which users should refer, which might help to reduce local variations. **Action: HSE to provide link to the guidance.**

This led to discussion about the conditions within which ground handlers and other organisations would be expected to operate and continue to handle aircraft. In general it emerged that most would not handle aircraft unless stands are in good condition (several airports have introduced a red-amber-green system to inform users about stand conditions), although one airport advised that it had placed conditions in their ground handling contracts to involve them in snow clearance.

The differences in culture and attitude towards snow events between the UK and Europe were identified - it was agreed that culturally there is not an acceptance of snow in the UK whereas, especially in northern Europe, it is an accepted working condition.

This led onto discussion about how to improve this perception, with several points emerging:

- Closer involvement with airlines and ground handling organisations in the snow plan, to increase their understanding and gain better involvement;
- There was broad agreement to the concept of an MOU¹ between the airport and its users so as to clarify expectations. DW offered to provide additional information on this based on the Heathrow work to those interested;
- Improved reviewing and testing of snow plans, to improve both individual and corporate knowledge;

¹ Memorandum of Understanding

- Several airlines indicated that they have improved their winter operations manuals and training following last winter – airports could work with them to provide awareness of each other's issues, the aim being to share information so that airline and airport procedures and requirements can be better understood and harmonised where possible. BH advised that Flybe gets its crews to work directly with de-icing teams at all their locations so that aircraft de-icing is carried out to their requirements; additionally, it had helped crews to improve their own knowledge;
- RJ advised that the UKFSC is willing to share good practice – what systems exist for information exchange? It was suggested that this be considered by the Flight Operations Liaison Group. **Action: CAA to discuss with FOLG.**

Linked to this a recurring theme was the variety of airline procedures and requirements, notably for aircraft de-icing and it was suggested that contact be made with the manufacturers to see if improved standardisation or consistency could be pursued.

As had been identified at Heathrow, training concerns were raised by many. RM advised that HIAL has developed a maintenance of competence scheme for snow and winter operations, supported by the necessary structured training programmes. Noting that it provides handling at many of its aerodromes HIAL acknowledged that this would be easier to achieve, but it has started to train ground handlers. The benefits had been in staff competence and confidence, with de-icing equipment being set up and used more effectively, thereby reducing operational impacts. It was pointed out that training/vocational standards exist for aircraft de-icing which should help consistency and improve efficiency. **Action: CAA to investigate further what training/qualifications exist or could be developed.**

Those aerodromes that had visited Scandinavian countries had noted the amount of training undertaken and that outside staff from specialist contractors were used in snow clearance and removal activities, their view being that such staff were used to operating plant and this had been seen to reduce both inefficiency and downtime. This led on to discussion about snow removal, with airports noting the amount of haulage required to remove snow to remote locations, especially from the stands and taxiways. Comments were made about difficulties with access for such contractors owing to security issues and GL (DfT) offered help to work with the AOA to progress this. **Action: DfT and AOA.**

In summarising the discussion GR advised that the CAA will publish an Information Notice to inform industry of the good practices identified. **Action: CAA to publish an Information Notice.** (Post-meeting Note: This will incorporate the existing NOTAL 2010/09 *Winter Operations 2010/2011*.)

4. Winter Runway Condition Reporting Trial

GR informed the meeting about the progress made in the FAA-led TALPA/ARC² trial and about the CAA-led Winter Information Group (WIG). This group had published updated information last year and had set up a similar trial into runway condition reporting. However, only very limited results had been obtained and the group had agreed to repeat the trial, updating it with output from the TALPA/ARC work and widening the number of airports involved. It was stated that the TALPA/ARC matrix already has approval from Airbus and Boeing and that there is a possibility that the FAA will introduce the matrix this winter, although it was considered that next winter is more likely.

² Take-off And Landing Performance Assessment/Aeronautical Rulemaking Committee

GR advised that the UK trial will last for the full winter season (1 November to 31 March); Paul Fraser-Bennison would lead the planning and that he would contact and work with airports to ensure that both they and their airlines would be prepared for the trial. **Action: CAA to publish an Information Notice regarding the trial.**

Allied to this GR advised that, in its research, the WIG had identified other factors which could have an impact on operations in conditions where contamination is present and therefore, a further Information Notice will be published offering guidance, chiefly to aircraft operators. **Action: CAA to publish an Information Notice.**

5. Any Other Business

A question was asked about runway and taxiway clearance widths, which led on to discussion about airline requirements. Again the variability was seen but it was noted that this is being overcome by the airports reporting their conditions frequently, for all relevant parts of the airport – stand clearance is as important to maintain the operation.

6. Close

GR brought the meeting to a close and thanked all of the participants for the full and open discussion.