

Ground Handling Webinar Q&A Response

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Chapter 1

Introduction

During September and October 2024, the CAA held two industry engagement webinars to introduce the work on the proposed ground handling regulations. The webinars were supported with representatives from the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Several questions were raised during both webinars, which have been reviewed, and answered.

This document provides the questions raised with our responses.

Chapter 2

Questions & Answers

- Q1 Are these new UK ground handling regulations mirrored by similar / exact same regulation in EU?
- A1 We recognise the importance that the ground handling regulations are clear, concise and capable of working in tandem with EASA regulations, especially considering the international nature of the industry and the fact that many Ground Handling Service Providers and Aircraft Operator's operate across both jurisdictions. It cannot be guaranteed that there will be no discrepancies between EASA and UK regulations.
- Q2 Please confirm the aerodrome operator only needs access to training regarding their procedure
- A2 The objective of the proposed ground handling regulation is to improve co-operation between aircraft operators, aerodrome operators, and ground handling organisations to reduce the likelihood of accidents and incidents, improving the quality of safety management systems. We anticipate receiving the second ICAO State Letter in Spring 2025 detailing the organisational requirements for aircraft operators, aerodrome operators and ground handling organisations. Once the State Letter has been reviewed, we will consult with industry on the proposed ground handling regulations.
- Q3 What do you mean by GSE vehicle controls. Physical controls?
- A3 Ground Service Equipment (GSE) controls refer to the systems, procedures, and technologies used to manage, monitor, and ensure the safe and efficient operation of equipment that supports aircraft while on the ground.
- Q4 What will be the audit oversight model? How will this work for a supplier who works across multiple UK stations?
- A4 The CAA expect to commence working through options on what the future oversight model is in January 2025 and expect to consult on the options with industry once the second ICAO State Letter has been received. The consultation is expected to launch in Summer 2025.

Existing Health and Safety law such as the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, mandate that you should already have a management system which follows the process of Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA). Across multiple sites you should have a review process in place that allows for local audits and then more formal audits, for example swapping staff, national health and safety management.

- Q5 What will be the application process for a GSP?
- A5 The CAA is currently reviewing the options regarding the process on how a ground handling service provider (GHSP) notifies us. The options considered will be consulted on with industry. The consultation is expected to launch in summer 2025.
- Q6 What operational Manuals need to be shared with Carriers and Airports by a GSP? This was not clear.
- A6 The CAA is expecting the second ICAO State Letter in the spring of 2025. Once received and reviewed, we expect to consult with industry in more detail. The consultation is expected to launch in summer 2025.
- Q7 Are there any plans for external training companies providing ground handling training to become approved/registered for ground handling related training under any new schemes?
- A7 At this time, we do not have any plans to approve or register external training organisations for ground handling related training. Ground Handling organisations would need to assess as part of their Safety Management System if the training that an external training organisation provides meets their business and safety requirements.
- Q8 Will the Fuel Overseer role requirements be outlined in the regulation?
- A8 The objective of the proposed ground handling regulation is to improve co-operation between aircraft operators, aerodrome operators, and ground handling organisations to reduce the likelihood of accidents and incidents, improving the quality of safety management systems. There is currently a regulatory requirement for a fuel overseer within Air Operations UK(EU) 965/2012 and would expect the ground handling organisation to be able to demonstrate how they are complying to their aircraft operators' requirements within their own Safety Management System and their procedures.
- Q9 Will there be specific requirements in the regulation for CAT helicopter operations v fixed wing operations, or is the intention to apply the regulations over both sectors
- A9 It is proposed that the ground handling regulations will apply to aircraft operating at both certified and licenced aerodromes. Existing Health and Safety Legislation applies equally to helicopters and fixed wing.
- Q10 Cooperative oversight - how do you see this implemented for companies that operate UK/non-UK bases - will there be any cooperation/mutual recognition?
- A10 The CAA will commence working through options on what the future oversight model is in January 2025 and expect to consult on the options with industry once the second ICAO State Letter has been received. The consultation is expected to launch in Summer 2025.

Q11 Supervision; how do you see this requirement for pan European companies?

A11 The CAA is expecting the second ICAO State Letter in the spring of 2025. Once received and reviewed, we expect to consult with industry in more detail. The consultation is expected to launch in summer 2025.

Q12 DGR training; are there any discussions to have this as part of the scope of the regulation?

A12 Existing Dangerous Goods regulations will continue to apply for ground handling organisations as they do today. Ground Handling organisations would need to assess as part of their Safety Management System what level of dangerous goods training is required to satisfy the Dangerous Goods Regulations based on their business model and safety risk requirements.

Q13 Single air business grouping - how would this be recognised and implemented for companies like TUI that operate in multiple countries

A13 Organisations that operate across multiple regulatory jurisdictions will need to comply with the proposed ground handling regulations within the UK.

Q14 Overview of declarations - EASA is working on a platform for the CAAs to coordinate this activity and to support pan European companies to declare their activities only one time. Is there any plan for the UK to participate on this project or do something similar?

A14 The CAA is currently reviewing the options regarding the process on how a ground handling service provider (GHSP) notifies us. The options considered will be consulted on with industry. The consultation is expected to launch in summer 2025.

Q15 How much of these regulations will apply to small rotary operators operating from unlicensed sites?

A15 The proposed ground handling regulations will apply to ground handling activity performed at certified and licenced UK aerodromes. Any ground handling activity being conducted at unlicensed aerodromes is not in scope.

Q16 Since Health and Safety Regulations already cover the requirements of the proposed new aviation regulations, and are applicable to ground handlers and air operators, why is the UK introducing more legislation?

A16 Ground handling is currently reflected in CAA's top ten risks under 'inappropriately managed contracted activities leading to a reduction in safety performance. Existing Health and Safety legislation and oversight would continue as is today. However, the CAA believes that additional operational safety regulations are required, which will be developed in accordance with ICAO.

Further Information

Stakeholders seeking clarification on any of the questions or answers detailed should contact our Ground Handling Policy Team via email with the subject header “Ground Handling Webinar Q&A” at ground.handling@caa.co.uk