

Unit Arrival

Types of Arrival Passengers

When an aircraft arrives at its destination, it will taxi to the parking bay. The flight crew will then allow the passengers to disembark from the aircraft. The aircraft is generally either parked at the inner bay that has a jet bridge attached to the terminal, or a remote bay from where the passengers are transported to the terminal building. It is the responsibility of the on-duty ground service agents to ensure that the arrival passengers are heading toward the right location to either connect to another flight or proceeds to the arrival facilities. Three types of passengers disembark an aircraft: **transit, transfer, and arrival passengers.**

Transit passengers

Transit passengers arrive and depart via the same aircraft. Since the passengers will be traveling on the same airline, the respective boarding passes are issued to the passengers for the connecting flight at the time of check-in at the departure airport. In the United States, passengers are allowed to stay in the aircraft during the stop and are only issued one boarding pass. In most other countries, passengers are required to disembark during the stopover and they will be issued a transit card. Therefore, passengers are required to know the gate number of the following flight so that they may proceed to the gate for boarding. Due to increased security needs, transit passengers' baggage will be automatically reloaded to the next flight after the security check.

Transfer passengers

Unlike transit passengers, transfer passengers need to immediately connect to another flight to a desired destination. This may be with the same airline with a different flight number or with another airline. If the passenger has to connect with another airline, in the instance whereby there is an interline agreement between two airlines, the passenger will also be issued a boarding pass for the connecting flight at the departure airport. This would require the passenger to identify the gate number of the connecting flight at the transfer

airport before proceeding to the respective gate. Passengers who have to connect with another airline without any interline agreement between the airlines are required to proceed to the transfer counter of the connecting airline to obtain their boarding passes for the next flight before departing from the gate. The airline often stations a ground service agent (GSA) at the top of the jet bridge with a list of connecting flights and their corresponding gate numbers. This facilitates the movement of passengers to the correct gate, especially at a hub where many flights are landing and taking off within a short period of time.

Arrival passengers

Domestic passengers who arrive at their destination are required to depart from the airport following a very straightforward process. They simply need to collect their baggage from the baggage hall and exit from the airport terminal

International passengers need to go through a more complicated and time intensive procedure. As they may have been on a long journey, are quite tired, and possibly jet-lagged, they often find the process frustrating. The GSA's job is to answer their questions and assist those with special needs.

The first step of their arrival process is to proceed through immigration. They then collect their baggage and pass through the customs formalities before making their way out of the airport.

Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ)

Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) refers to the process that international passengers must go through when arriving from an international flight. All passengers, regardless of citizenship, need to clear CIQ upon entering a country from overseas travel.

Customs

Governments reserve the authority to inspect the arrival passengers' belongings for two primary purposes: to ensure that no prohibited items are brought inside the country and to collect taxes when individuals bring in commodities apart from those that the government allows in as tax free.

Prohibited items include drugs, weapons, fireworks, excessive cash, pornographic materials, infringing goods, counterfeit trademark goods, and

endangered animals and their body parts such as elephant tusks and tiger paws.

Immigration

Immigration is an authority issued by the government with the responsibility of inspecting the arrival passengers' documents before they enter a country. The aim is to ensure immigration control and to prohibit unauthorized persons from entering the country.

Quarantine

The quarantine department is a government body that is responsible for controlling a country's borders to minimize the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering inside the country. The department monitors both human and animals' health conditions. Many countries integrate the customs and quarantine facilities. It is not uncommon to see dogs sniffing the baggage of the arrival passengers for drugs, explosives, and wildlife (such as flora or fauna) of any sort.

Some countries divide the quarantine department into two functions with one running a thermal check on incoming passengers to identify those who may be ill and the other to control against pests being carried in via raw fruit and plants as well as to prevent the illegal smuggling of animals.

Arrival Preparation

Before the aircraft lands at the airport, it is essential for the airline ground agent to arrange for the necessary support for arrival passengers.

When an aircraft is assigned to park at a remote parking area, the arrival agent will be required to co-ordinate with the operation staff to arrange for the transportation of passengers to the airport terminal. The airport apron bus is used to provide this service. The number of trips required will be based on the passenger count on the flight. For example, Thai Airways International's bus model COBUS 2700-S, which can hold a capacity of 77 and their carry-on baggage, is used to transport passengers at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok. During rainy weather, some airlines require their staff to arrange for raincoats for the passengers as the passengers will be disembarking from the aircraft by the airstairs and proceed outdoors onto the

apron bus. Other airlines provide umbrella cover from the aircraft door to the apron bus.

Arrival Manifest

There are no computer facilities available at the arrival gate. As such the ground agent will need to rely on the flight manifest to identify the following:

- The number of passengers in transit.
- The number of passengers in transfer and their connecting flight information.
- The number of passengers requiring special handling includes:
 - Passengers requiring wheelchairs,
 - Meet and assist passengers,
 - Unaccompanied minor on board flight,
 - Deportee or inadmissible passenger, and
 - Passengers carrying pets in the cabin.

Number of transit passengers

Some transiting flight at an airport allows passengers to choose between staying in the cabin and disembarking from the aircraft. Passengers who decide to disembark will arrive at the arrival concourse of the airport terminal with all their personal belongings. If they have to leave the concourse, they will have to go through a security check before proceeding to the departure gate. If an airport has a multi-level design, the passengers will have to go through security at the departure level to re-board the plane. Since these passengers do not have an additional boarding pass, the airline will issue them **a transit card** instead. The transit cards issued from the arrival gate will be collected at the boarding gate at the time of boarding the flight.

Number of transfer passengers

The manifest will provide a list of passengers who will be connecting to other flights via the same airline or with other airlines. The ground agent is required to identify whether there are any tight connection passengers. Tight connection passengers are those who connect to another flight with a connection time close to the minimum connecting time (MCT). Knowing the exact number of these passengers helps the airline ground agent to make preparations to either provide assistance to those passengers to rush to the

connecting flight's gate once they disembark or to rebook them for a later flight if they have missed their connections. There are situations whereby the passenger(s) from a flight might not have the MCT due to flight delays at the departure airport. In this case, the GSA must book the passengers with alternative flights and/or provide the necessary amenities.

Passengers with special needs

Wheelchair passengers

The wheelchair special service requests (SSRs) on the manifest, allow the ground agent to make arrangements for sufficient wheelchairs to be available upon the flight's arrival. These days many airlines outsource their wheelchair service to other companies and therefore, advance reservation is necessary to ensure an adequate number of wheelchairs are on hand once the passengers who require wheelchairs disembark from the aircraft. If the aircraft is parked at the remote bay, arrival agents need to arrange for the high lift truck to disembark the wheelchair passengers from the aircraft. The wheelchair passengers will then either be transported to the airport terminal by the high-lift truck or to the apron bus (WCHS and WCHC).

Unaccompanied minor (UMNR)

Identifying Ums on a flight allows the airline ground agent to make appropriate arrangements before the flight arrival. The airline ground agent will contact the unaccompanied minors' parent or guardian at the destination city to confirm the estimated time of arrival (ETA) to ensure that they will arrive to meet the unaccompanied minor passenger when the ground agent is escorting he or she to the arrival hall's greeting area. Alternately, if the UM is transferring at the airport, the GSA to be responsible for the UM until he or she boards the next flight.

Meet and assist passengers (MAAS)

Identifying MAAS passengers allows the airline ground agent staff to pay extra attention to these passengers who require assistance for transfer, transit, and arrival. Generally, airlines deploy additional ground service agents to provide escort services to passengers who require assistance to either get to the respective gate for their connecting flight or reach the arrival hall.

Deportee and inadmissible passengers

Passengers who are deportees or those who are refused entry into a country are required to be presented to the immigration office upon arriving back to their country of origin. Airline ground agents are required to identify such passengers by the information provided on the manifest. In addition, the ground agent is required to make contact with the immigration office in advance to notify them of such events. Upon flight arrival, both deportee and inadmissible passengers are escorted by the ground service agent to the immigration office for further interviews and investigations by the immigration officer.

Pet in cabin

Many governments require the airline to notify the quarantine office in advance when there are passengers who arrive with their pets. Therefore, it is important for the ground agents to examine the manifest carefully in order to identify the passengers who have been assigned a pet in cabin (PETC) code so as to inform the quarantine officer accordingly. Quarantine officers will receive the arriving passenger and inspect the animal for quarantine purposes.

Flight Arrival

Upon flight arrival, the agent knocks three times on the aircraft door and looks through the small window of the aircraft's door to obtain a thumb up signal from the flight crew before the aircraft door is opened.

This procedure was developed to ensure that the aircraft door is disarmed for the deployment of the emergency slide and that the door is clear and ready to be opened.

After opening the aircraft, the ground agent receives the arrival documents from the flight purser including the **flight manifest, general declaration (GD)**, and **other relevant documents** such as company e-mails. Before leaving the arrival gate area, the ground agent is required to be present to ensure that all passengers have disembarked the aircraft.

Arrival documents received are to be filed for the station copy from a period of 30 days up to a year.

Additional responsibilities

Inadmissible passengers on arrival

If a passenger is refused entry by the immigration officers upon arrival either due to the lack of travel documents or other reason, the passenger will be deported back to country of origin. The airline ground agent on arrival duty will be responsible for providing assistance to the passenger for the return flight, making reservation, and preparing the necessary air ticket

Crew assistance

International arrival, the crew members are required to proceed to crew channel at the immigration before leaving the airport terminal. Crew must present their GD in order to proceed, GSA is required to prepare the GD and provide a copy of the same at the immigration area's crew channel counter to assist in the disembarkation of the crew members.

Firearms

Upon arrival, the arrival agent will be required to assist air marshal to turn in their firearms to customs or the police authority at the airport. Paperwork is issued of the respective weapon is then retrieved when the air marshal departs from the airport.

Emergencies

In some emergency cases such as instance of sick passengers or misbehaving passengers while en route, the captain will contact the dispatcher before landing to request assistance upon arrival. The GSA will be responsible for contacting different authorities to coordinate to required assistance. Such as purport authority, airport security, ambulance, and law enforcement.

References:

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