



15 Jun 2001

Ramping up airport safety: Sheikh Ahmed praises teamwork for programme's success

Dubai Civil Aviation (DCA) has recently conducted an intensive training and awareness programme to increase safety in connection with foreign object debris (FOD) or litter, on the runway and surrounding aprons at Dubai International Airport. So far some 3,000 personnel from 50 companies and authorities have attended 118 presentations on FOD as part of the airport's on-going ramp safety-training programme.

"It is a never ending programme," said Alan Skennerton, DCA Manager Safety and Security who headed the Strategy Team, which included representatives from Emirates, DNATA and Air BP.

"The greatest dangers are sharp objects on the runway that can cause tyre blowouts, and things being sucked into the jet engine intakes, which can cause extensive damage. Thankfully we seldom have significant incidents, but this is a track record we need to constantly work at retaining," Skennerton said.

The programme included a training presentation to alert everyone to the dangers of FOD reinforced by posters, badges, and other promotional materials. In addition, brightly coloured FOD disposal bins have been positioned at every aircraft bay and a recognition scheme instigated to reward good FOD behaviour and reprimand litterbugs via their employers.

Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of DCA and chairman of Emirates, said the scheme has already been a great success in reducing FOD, even during a period of extensive construction work.

"Because the airport is also open to debris flying in from the desert on shamal winds it is particularly important for everybody working on

the ramp to realise FOD is everyone's responsibility, not just the designated cleaners," said Sheikh Ahmed.

"Because of this we are delighted that there is such a spirit of teamwork among all the 50 plus organisations who regularly use the ramp, particularly the co-sponsors of the programme: Emirates, DNATA and Air BP," said Sheikh Ahmed.

"Our goal is quite simple: To make Dubai to best airport in the world. And it is only by working together as a team that this can be achieved," Sheikh Ahmed concluded.

The FOD programme was recently presented as a case study at the North American Airport Design and Development Conference in Chicago under the title "Maintaining Excellence Through a Major Construction."

Said Tim Bingham, general manager of Air BP: "Dubai International Airport is one of the most progressive in the world and we are delighted to have played an active part in this project."

Bingham pointed out that in 1998 the DCA Safety and Security Department instigated a ramp driving safety programme that won the 1999 Air BP Global Award for Best Ramp Safety Initiative.

The DCA Safety Department also plans to introduce an environmental campaign in the near future.

One of the fastest growing airports in the world, Dubai last year handled 12.3 million passengers, more than 12 times the population of the emirate. Some 95 airlines currently fly to 137 destinations from Dubai, with Emirates now accounting for 46 per cent of passenger traffic.