

**OPERATIONAL SAFETY INSTRUCTION**

Version C

Issued 14/02/2022

Aircraft Towing

Issued By Airside Operations
and Safety Manager

Ref BRS-OSI-GO-016

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OSIs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their Supervisor or Manager.

1. INTRODUCTION

This instruction sets out the procedures to be followed by airside drivers who are trained and authorised to tow aircraft.

For aircraft pushback criteria, refer to BRS-OSI-GO-017 Aircraft Pushback Procedures.

2. COMMUNICATION WITH BRAKE OPERATOR

Prior to the commencement of towing, there must be a clear line of communication between the tug driver and the brake operator.

Two-way communication must be maintained between the brake rider and the tow team until the aircraft comes to a stop at its final parking position.

3. RADIOTELEPHONY STANDARDS

- a) Tug crews operate under positive control from ATC and must therefore be appropriately trained and competent in radiotelephony and hold an 'M' or 'R' Airside Driving Permit (ADP), according to the areas in which they will be towing. Guidance can be found in CAP 413 Supplement 2 – Radiotelephony Phraseology for Aerodrome Drivers. Standard phraseology must be used for all verbal communication between the flight deck and tug crews.
- b) An illuminated red stopbar means STOP. Tug crews must not push or pull any part of the aircraft beyond an illuminated stopbar until it is extinguished, and ATC permission has been received. If an intermediate stopbar is unilluminated then it can be disregarded.
- c) Tug crews must give full readbacks to ATC instructions. If there is any doubt, tug crews must seek clarification from ATC.

- d) Tug crews should adopt 'sterile cockpit' conditions, minimising distractions and unnecessary conversation. Communication between the towing team regarding route and traffic information is encouraged to maximise situational awareness.
- e) Tug crews without an 'R' ADP must not cross a runway unless under a leader escort from Airside Operations. The tug crew should wait until the leader vehicle has arrived before pushback/towing clearance is requested.
- f) Tug crews must inform ATC if they are unable to execute an instruction or face difficulty in executing an instruction.

4. BRAKE RIDING

An engineer or member of the airline's handling agent will be required to cover the brake riding position in the cockpit throughout the tow (except for where towbarless tugs are used). This person must be trained and competent in the task; it is the engineering company or ground handling agent's responsibility to determine their requirements to achieve and maintain competency, and to establish criteria on the minimum number of tows that a brake rider must successfully complete under supervision, to be deemed competent.

5. AIRCRAFT LIGHTING DURING A TOW

It is requirement that aircraft under tow must have their anti-collision lights illuminated.

Aircraft under tow on the manoeuvring area at night and during low visibility operations are required to have their navigation and anti-collision lights illuminated. If the required lighting fails, tug crews must inform ATC. ATC will take appropriate action, which may include the following procedures:

- a) During push-back (for a towing manoeuvre), if an aircraft suffers lighting failure it shall be instructed to pull back on to stand.
- b) ATC may consider instructing the tug driver to stop briefly to attempt to re-establish the aircraft lights, provided that doing so would not unduly increase the risk to other aircraft or vehicles.
- c) Runway crossings will entail ATC contacting Airside Operations to provide a leader vehicle to shadow and provide lighting for the unlit aircraft. The tug driver will be advised by ATC.

6. TOWING IN LOW VISIBILITY OPERATIONS (LVO)

Essential aircraft tows **are** permitted whilst the airport is in LVO. The following are essential circumstances:

- Repositioning an aircraft onto a contact stand for a first-wave departure
- Repositioning an AOG aircraft to a remote stand to improve contact stand availability, or for engineering purposes
- Parking an aircraft into wind for safety reasons
- Any other circumstance not listed above but agreed by the tow team with Airside Operations

Pushbacks associated with towing in LVO must be performed with a serviceable headset.

RMS shall pre-advise Airside Operations of essential tows in LVOs, including the start and finish location. Airside Operations will inform ATC prior to the tow commencing and shall monitor the tow.

7. **RADIOTELEPHONY ASSISTANCE FROM AIRSIDE OPERATIONS**

If the tug driver does not hold the correct category of ADP required for the tow, assistance should be requested from Airside Operations, who can request authorisation for the tow via radio from ATC, on behalf of the tow team. Airside Operations will provide a leader vehicle for the duration of the tow and maintain communication with ATC. This may be chargeable as per Bristol Airport's Fees and Charges publication.

8. **TOWING ACROSS THE RUNWAY**

Aircraft that are being towed across the runway to/from the south-side aprons will require a following Airside Operations vehicle to check for FOD falling from the tug or aircraft. It is the responsibility of the tow operator to request attendance from Airside Operations with advance notice, prior to commencing the tow.

9. **TOWING ACROSS THE CRITICAL PART BOUNDARY**

Tug crews must be searched by a security agent after completing the tow from the south-side to the north-side – refer to the instructions in BRS-OSI-GO-012 South-Side Aircraft and Ramp Operations.

10. **GENERAL ENQUIRIES**

Any enquiries should be addressed to Airside Operations on **01275 473705** or **07712 792235**.