

## Ground handling authorisations at Zurich Airport

### Legal basis

When the EC Council **Directive 96/67/EC** of 15 October 1996 on access to the ground handling market at Community airports came into force, the liberalisation of the ground handling market in Europe has been started. The directive defines ground handling activities and prescribes that airport operators have to open their markets to interested handling agents. Therefore, airport operators have to ensure that handling agents get access to the required infrastructure and, as far as possible, can obtain the necessary production area.

Due to bilateral agreements, Directive 96/67/EC has been implemented in Switzerland as well. It has been taken over into Swiss law by **Art. 29 lit. a and b of the Swiss Regulation on the Infrastructure of Air Traffic** (Verordnung über die Infrastruktur der Luftfahrt - VIL). This prescription allocates the responsibility for implementing the directive to the airport operators.

Flughafen Zürich AG as operator of Zurich Airport has taken over these prescriptions into the **Operation Regulation of Zurich Airport (Betriebsreglement) in Art. 128 and in Annex 1.**

### Implementation

Handling agents that are interested in offering and carrying out ground handling at Zurich Airport need a **ground handling authorisation** by Flughafen Zürich AG. Therefore, they have to pass through an application procedure where they have to prove reliably to have the necessary personnel and financial resources in order to carry out ground handling at Zurich Airport according to the applicable legal prescriptions during a medium term period and in a high standing quality. If Flughafen Zürich AG has verified the fulfilment of these criteria positively, the applicant will be accepted.

According to Directive 96/67/EC, a ground handling authorisation is subdivided into **several possible ground handling activities**. Ground handling authorisations are issued not for the sum of all but only for the ground handling activities that the respective handling agent can and will carry out at Zurich Airport.

Additionally, ground handling authorisations are subdivided into **self handling authorisations and third party handling authorisations**. A holder of a self handling authorisation is allowed and obliged to carry out the authorised ground handling activities for flights operated by himself. By means of a third party handling authorisation, a handling agent is allowed and obliged to offer and carry out the authorised handling activities also for flights of other companies that he has contracted. All handling authorisations are issued for a duration of seven years.

Due to capacity and security reasons, only a **restricted number of handling agents** is admitted for certain handling activities. At Zurich Airport, baggage handling, ramp services and freight handling are restricted. For each of these activities, Flughafen Zürich AG may and has to grant up to four self handling authorisations. For third party handling in ramp services and baggage handling there are also a maximum of four handling agents admitted. The restricted authorisations are not issued on basis of the regular application process but on basis of a public tender. They are valid for seven years. The next tender for restricted ground handling authorisations will take place in 2011.

Until June 30, 2008, ground handling authorisations have exclusively been issued for flights operated via terminals. Since July 1, 2008, due to higher security requirements of the European Community, there is a ground handling constraint also for general and business aviation flights. At Zurich Airport, all flights that transport up to 24 passengers and / or up to 200kg freight and that are handled via the General-/Business Aviation Center, are defined as general and business aviation flights. The ground handling authorisations that have been issued up to now and that will be issued in the future for terminal traffic, also apply to general and business aviation. Handling agents that are only active in the field of general and business aviation, obtain a ground handling authorisation only for this field starting from July 1, 2008. The restrictions in baggage handling, ramp services and freight handling do not apply to these ground handling authorisations.

