AIRLINE PUSH-BACK STANDARDS AT RIC

Richmond International Airport

Safety, communication, and training standards for aircraft pushback operations.

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Airline Push-Back Standards

INTRODUCTION

The Air Carrier Ramp at Richmond International Airport (RIC) is comprised of 28 aircraft gates with designated parking areas and jetways for deplaning and boarding passengers and crew from commercial aircraft. The gates are split evenly with 14 on Concourse A, and 14 on Concourse B. The frequency of airline operations varies hour to hour, day to day, and year to year. Each gate has a unique layout and requires a diligent and consistent approach to the parking and dispatch of aircraft.

In order to dispatch aircraft for departure all gates at RIC require push-back operations using personnel and equipment to safely position the aircraft for taxi. Aircraft push-back operations require coordination between push-back crews, flight crews, and in some cases RIC Air Traffic Control (ATC) to ensure they are performed in a safe and efficient manner. Push-back crews are subject to their own company's policies and requirements, as well as Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Capital Region Airport Commission rules and regulations.

This document outlines some of the recommended standards for airline push-back operations at RIC.

SAFETY

- Individuals assigned to push-back operations must be trained and certified by their company to perform this duty.
- The Airport defers to each airline's standards when it comes to the use of "wing-walkers" or "guide-persons". Each push-back operation must have a minimum of one crew member whose responsibility includes positioning themselves in such a manner that they have the ability to monitor the path of the aircraft for potential collision hazards. The Airport recommends two "wing-walkers" or "guide-persons" whenever possible.
    - After the push-back operation has commenced if a conflict or potential collision with an object like a vehicle or another aircraft is perceived, the "wing-walker" or "guide-person" must immediately signal to the push-back driver to stop the push-back (using approved company hand-signals and/or wireless communications if available).
    - In instances where there is no indication that the aircraft is ready to commence the push-back operation, "wing-walkers" or "guide-persons" should be proactive by signaling vehicle traffic that it is okay to cross behind the aircraft while it remains parked.
- Push-back crew members should wear reflective, hi-visibility garments.
- Push-back crew members should utilize high visibility orange wands during daytime hours, or illuminated wands during darkness to signal both the push-back driver and approaching vehicles.

- The aircraft's red, flashing anti-collision lights or beacon must be illuminated immediately prior to commencement of the push-back operation and remain on during disconnect and taxi.
- Aircraft push-back crews must give way to aircraft that are already taxiing, or preparing to taxi.
- When maneuvering to the final stopping position to disconnect and dispatch the aircraft, push-back crews should be mindful that the aircraft has sufficient room to be well clear of the vehicle service road during turn-out or taxi. "Wing tip growth" must be taken into consideration.
- Once the push-back procedure is complete and the push-back tractor is in the act of disconnecting from the aircraft, the Airport recommends a member of the push-back crew remain in view of the flight crew to alert them to when personnel and equipment are clear and it is safe to taxi.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Whenever available the Airport recommends the use of two-way communications between push-back drivers and flight crew using the aircraft's interphone system, radio systems, or wireless technology.
    - In the event that verbal communication is not available due to equipment failure then push-back crews should confer with flight crews to discuss the push-back operation, utilizing company approved alternative measures.
- No aircraft shall announce the intent to push back unless they are immediately ready to do so.
- CLEARANCE TO PUSH-BACK **IS** REQUIRED FROM CERTAIN GATES AT RIC. Clearance is obtained from RIC Air Traffic Control on frequency 121.90.
    - Concourse A gates – A8, A10, A12, A14.
    - Concourse B gates – B7, B9, B11, B13.
- CLEARANCE TO PUSH-BACK **MAY** BE REQUIRED FROM CERTAIN GATES AT RIC IF IT'S REQUIRED FOR ANY PART OF THE AIRCRAFT TO BE PUSHED OVER THE MOVEMENT-NON MOVEMENT BOUNDARY MARKING. Clearance is obtained from RIC Air Traffic Control on frequency 121.90.
    - Concourse A gates – A2, A4, A6, A16.
    - Concourse B gates – B1, B3, B5, B15.
- CLEARANCE TO PUSH-BACK IS NOT REQUIRED FROM CERTAIN GATES AT RIC. THE NON-MOVEMENT AREAS (RAMP) ARE "UNCONTROLLED". "Courtesy calls" are encouraged may be made with RIC Air Traffic Control on frequency 121.90.
    - Concourse A gates – A1, A3, A5, A11, A13, A15, A16.
    - Concourse B gates – B2, B4, B6, B10, B12, B14, B15.

TRAINING

- Push-back drivers must have successfully completed RIC Airport's Non-Movement driver course which is indicated by the imprint of either an **"N"** (Non-Movement) or **"M"** (Movement) endorsement on the individual's SIDA badge.
- Push-back crews must be authorized by their companies to perform their duties and have received company sponsored training on push-back procedures and aircraft specific differences training.

- For push-back or aircraft repositioning without a flight crew present, push-back drivers and "brake-ride" qualified employees must have completed the RIC Airport TUG/TAXI/TOW Movement Area training.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Aircraft with known delays are not permitted to remain on the Air Carrier Ramp (other than parked at gates) for more than 5 minutes. Flight crews must either return to the gate or request to taxi to a designated hold area by coordinating with RIC Air Traffic Control on the RIC Ground frequency 121.90.
- Push-back operations at certain gates require that aircraft be pushed to a position on the movement area (Taxiway "A"lpha) that is clear of intersecting taxiways.
  - Concourse A – aircraft pushed back from Gates A10, A12, and A14 must be stopped clear of the Taxiway "C"harlie intersection with Taxiway "A"lpha.
  - Concourse B – aircraft pushed back from Gates B11 and B13 must be stopped clear of the Taxiway "E"cho intersection.
- Engine starts at idle thrust prior to or during push-back are permitted.
- **Engine runs above idle thrust and cross bleed starts are strictly prohibited on the Air Carrier Ramp, including gate areas.**
- Push-back crews should scan parking and ramp areas for foreign object debris (FOD).
  - FOD should be removed whenever detected.
  - FOD that cannot be quickly or easily removed should be reported to RIC Airport Communications at 804-226-0001 for removal by Airport Operations or Maintenance.
  - Equipment or tools used during push-back operations must be monitored and secured so as not to become FOD.
  - Airline personnel should employ good housekeeping measures around parking areas, and in or on ground service equipment like pushback tractors, baggage tugs, and belt loaders.
- Aircraft chocks left in vehicle travel lanes and on ramp areas between flights pose a hazard to drivers and pedestrians. Chocks should be stored in safe, designated areas whenever not in use.
- A document that details recommended push-back paths and gate specific information is available as an appendix (Appendix A) to this document.

RESOURCES

- **RIC Ground Vehicle Operations Training Manual**
  - Available for download on the Airport Operations website: https://www.ricairportal.com/
- **FAA Advisory Circular – Ground Vehicle Operations to include Taxiing or Towing and Aircraft on Airports**
  - Available for download on the Federal Aviation Administration website: https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/150-5210-20A.pdf
- **FAA Safe Tug and Tow Operations**
  - Available to watch on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc4XJwu-oF0