

Swissport awarded ground handling licence in South Africa

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Johannesburg/Zurich, July 16, 2008 – Swissport International, the world’s leading supplier of ground handling services to the air transport sector, has been awarded a licence to provide such services at ten airports in South Africa. The licence, which will enter into effect on September 1 and will be valid for five years (with the option of a subsequent five-year renewal), will enable Swissport to further expand its present ground handling activities.

Swissport is no stranger to the South African market: the world industry leader provided its ground handling services at four airports in the country between 1998 and 2007. Last year the national airport authority reissued the country’s two ground handling licences to new providers, forcing the existing handlers to reposition themselves in the market (Swissport’s cargo services were unaffected by these developments).

In response to the new situation, Swissport South Africa embarked on a productive collaboration with South African Airways, under which the carrier has entrusted the ground handling of all its flights to Swissport since last February. In the meantime, the national airport authority has decided to open up the ground handling market to a third provider; and Swissport has now been awarded this third ground handling licence.

The new licence will enable Swissport to offer its services to other international and domestic airlines in addition to prime customer South African Airways. Swissport South Africa currently has a workforce of some 1 800 personnel and handles over 200 arrivals and departures a day.

“I am delighted that we have been awarded this new ground handling licence,” says Willy Hallauer CEO of Swissport South Africa. “I’m sure that the outstanding expertise and the high service quality which we have been demonstrating daily for several months now were a key factor in securing it. And we’re looking forward to welcoming many of our previous long-standing airline customers back on board.”

The South African aviation sector has been steadily expanding and maturing over the past few years, and has now settled at a strong growth rate. Indeed, the latest projections paint a positive picture for air transport in Africa as a whole, with traffic volumes expected to be 8.9% up on their prior-year levels in the third quarter of 2008 and 10% up for the year as a whole.

Further sizeable growth is expected to be generated by the 2010 World Cup Finals, which are to be staged in South Africa, and the attractive business opportunities (and associated traffic flows) that the event should create. And this is a further reason why Swissport is keen to develop its long-term involvement in the country and is convinced that the local market holds strong growth and profit potential

Swissport International Ltd., which is owned by Ferrovial, a leading European infrastructure and service corporation based in Spain, provides ground services for over 70 million passengers and 3.2 million tonnes of cargo a year on behalf of some 650 client companies. With its workforce of around 30 000 personnel, Swissport is active at 187 airports in 43 countries on five continents, and generated consolidated operating revenue of CHF 1.9 billion (EUR 1.3 billion or USD 1.8 billion) last year.
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